



Photos by Donna Agusti

ABOVE LEFT: Graham Elementary School kindergartener Adelina Peplinski, 6, of Harrison Township used a pig puppet to help act out the storyline of "Barnyard Song" during her class's visit to the Harrison Township Public Library on June 4. ABOVE RIGHT: Melissa Goins, volunteer director of the Harrison Township Public Library, shows Graham Elementary School students one of the incentives of joining their Summer Reading Club.

Library shows students benefits of summer reading

Inventory growing due to state funding

BY JULIE SNYDER
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HARRISON TOWNSHIP — Looking for a good book about pirates or animal adventures, or one about young heroes and heroines saving the day? The Harrison Township Public Library apparently has it all.

Because when volunteer librarian Ellen McKee asked more than 50 Graham Elementary School students, who visited the morning of June 4, who had been to their hometown library before, each eagerly raised his or her hand. And each had something to say about what they like to read.

"Pirates," said 5-year-old kindergartener

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Jacob Lariviere of the particular subject matter he fancies. "Books about fighting bad-guy pirates."

Fourth-grade student Dazmen Smith, 11, said his favorite book is by many of the students' favorite author, Dr. Seuss.

"I really like 'One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish,'" he said.

It's this love for books and reading why the many volunteers responsible for keeping the Harrison Township Public Library up and running are spreading the word to local students about the countless valuable learning tools that can be found there and the many programs that are being offered.

"We want to show them there s a chance for them to continue reading throughout the summer," said volunteer Library Director Melissa Goins. "Reading shouldn't stop just because school is out."

And the Harrison Township library is continuing to build on their inventory, thanks to recent penal funds that were released this past year. A bill introduced by former township supervisor and current State Rep. Anthony Forlini, R-Harrison Township, was signed by Gov. Rick Snyder last June. The bill enabled a township board in a county having a population between 750,000 and 2 million to be eligible for state funding in some instances. Macomb County's population is about 840,000. The range of population under previous law was between 1 million and 2 million.

The passage of the bill ultimately released some much-needed state funding to Macomb County libraries, including the one in Harrison Township, which has been volunteer-run since 2009, some five years after the narrowly-failed millage that aimed to bring a full-time library to the area. It operates in a space adjacent to the current township offices on L'Anse Creuse Road.

Goins said the library received $20,000 this past year, and more is expected on an annual basis.

And all that funding is goin g toward purchasing more books.

"We've really been able to expand," she said.

Goins said even though they've had to do away with library membership fees, which is an annual loss of approximately $4,000 from their budget; the library is more popular than ever.

Last year, they began hostin g an end-of-the-school year program with Graham Elementary School, located in walking distance from the library in the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools district; the program is called "Story Hour and Introduction to the Library."

Volunteer Ellen McKee said it's been a tremendous success, as students enjoy listening to a few interactive books during their visit, and they hear about some of the summer reading programs that are available.

"Honestly, the older ones seem to enjoy it just as much as the younger ones," said McKee, following a rousing farm animal puppet show and story.

What did the students really think of their local library?

"It has a lot of books," Lariviere said. "And it's peaceful."

"I like the library becaus e I like that if you don't have anything to do, you can come to the library and pick out a book — whatever book you want," said Smith.

Harrison Township Public Library hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday, noon to 8 p.m. Wednesday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. It's located at 38151 L'Anse Creuse at Town Hall Road. For more information, call (586) 329-1261.

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