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Author donates 2,000 books to Erie schools

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Erin Lewis

Jun. 7, 2010 (McClatchy-Tribune Regional News delivered by Newstex) – Erie schools had an early Christmas gift this year.

The Erie School District received 2,000 books donated by a Pennsylvania children's author.

The books arrived in early May and have been delivered to local elementary schools for the delight of city students.

Nonfiction, fiction and illustrated books were sorted and divided among schools by literacy coaches led by Erie School District literacy coordinator Nora Dolak.

"It was amazing to see 2,000 brand new books come out of those boxes," Dolak said.

Each book is recommended for a specific grade, instructional level and reading level, making it easy for literacy coaches and teachers to know which books are appropriate for each student, Dolak said.

Additional copies of each title were provided so that students can read together, with their literacy coach or independently.

Eastern Pennsylvania author Bruce Larkin said he decided to donate to Erie because he has sent books nationwide, but not many to his home state. In 2009 alone, he donated more than 400,000 of his books to more than 50,000 schools nationwide.

Larkin has been donating books to children for years, and says he does not plan to stop. His goal is to encourage children to read.

"I give books to children because I am 53, not married and I don't have kids. I could sleep on a mattress full of money, or I can give back by giving books to kids," Larkin said. "It is easy and fun to donate books to kids, and so rewarding. They send letters and pictures to say thank you.

"And best of all, donating books doesn't interfere with my golf schedule."

Larkin is the author of over 700 books for children in prekindergarten through second grade and writes a variety of books for varying reading levels.

His humor, which is incorporated into each book, is intended to make learning to read fun for children.

Larkin has more than 15 million books in print in 90 countries.

He recently received the Local Author Literacy Hero award from West Chester Public Library, in West Chester. He was acknowledged for his efforts in teaching children to learn to read now so they can read to learn in the future.

The Erie School District could receive even more free books in 2011.

Glen Jensen, spokesman for Larkin, said the author is planning another donation of books for Erie schools to celebrate National Reading Day in January.

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Larkin's books are published by Wilbooks, a division of Wilmington Book Source, based in West Chester.

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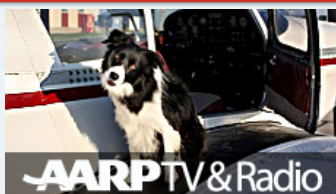
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