

Goddard School aims to donate books

BY ANNA STECEWYCZ
Jackson Suburbanite

JACKSON TWP. Underprivileged children — ages newborn through 5 years old — in Stark, Summit and Cuyahoga counties will benefit from the generosity of The Goddard Schools, the next time they listen to their favorite book at bedtime.

Thanks to a program established by Bright Star Books in 2014, a total of 14 Goddard Schools in Stark, Summit and Cuyahoga counties rallied and set goals to donate new and slightly used books to Bright Star Books during the month of January.

Bright Star Executive Director Keith Seher, based in Macedonia, started the organization in May 2014.

"The mission of Bright Star Books, Inc. is to promote a culture of reading by increasing access to and ownership of books for limited-resource children in the Greater Akron region," Seher said. "We aim to do this at the earliest possible age to ensure children grow up habituated to the potential of books as

sources of learning and joy."

At The Goddard School in Jackson Township, Owner Karen Marinos reported they had exceeded their goal of 500 donated books. The goal thermometer at the entrance of the school showed they had collected 710 books as of Jan. 24.

"I was told there are families that do not have even one book in their homes, that is sad," Marinos said.

Parents at the Jackson Township Goddard School who donated 10 or more books were given special recognition with their names posted at the school. Teachers, likewise, were challenged to donate as many books as possible in their individual classes.

"The Goddard schools have been a boost to our efforts and we are reliant on groups (such as Goddard) to help us meet our goal," Seher said. "With little cost, we can make changes in these children's lives that will impact them longterm."

Seher stated that the goal of Bright Star Books is to give 10 gently used, age-appropriate books to each of the more than 7,000 chil-

dren served by WIC of Summit County each year.

Seher's wife Christin, who is a nutrition professor at the University of Akron, learned of the need through her job.

Marinos explained that Bright Star books will pick up their donated books at the end of January and take them to be sorted and distributed. Seher said their goal is to secure a warehouse to house all of the donations.

The Goddard School in Jackson Township wrapped up the book drive by celebrating National Literacy Day and inviting teachers to dress up as their favorite literary characters. The result included appearance by Thing One and Thing Two from Dr. Seuss' "The Cat in the Hat" and Belle from "Beauty and the Beast." Marinos said the staff and parents enjoyed the event.

Groups interested in donating books to Bright Star Books can contact Seher at 234-206-2300 or email him at: keith@brightstar-books.org. You can also go on their website for more information at www.brightstarbooks.org.



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■ Jackson Township Goddard School teacher Brackin Fish, dressed as Belle from "Beauty and the Beast," greets Lena Widders, 2, of Canal Fulton during a National Literacy Day celebration held at the school Jan. 24.