Literacy Committee Report April 2021

The Literacy Committee has supported two projects this biennium.

The first was $550 for the Lemong’o Project, started by retired Anchorage teacher, Carolyn Tague. DKG Alaska’s donation allowed her to continue the free school lunch program feeding 500 children daily by now providing masked, socially distanced monthly food distributions.  Our donation also went toward providing funds for follow-ups on medical referrals made during the previous summer's free medical clinics.  The advent of Covid restrictions meant that Carolyn was not able to travel to Kenya last summer, but she continues to assist the community by helping women sell their beadwork and by finding sponsors for high school and college students. She asks me to, “Please send our gratitude to DKG AK State Organization for their support.”

Last fall, this board donated $500.00 to the Alaska Imagination Library Fund. This Fund has an application process which prioritizes communities most in need, due to economic or other situations and also supports individual children referred from early Head Start and other intervention services. The Imagination Library mails an age-appropriate book to each child every month from birth to five.

DKG Alaska’s $500.00 was matched by a donation from within our membership, and so in October 2020, a check for $1,000.00 was given to Amie Collins, the Communications & Development Director at Best Beginnings, the umbrella organization for early childhood development (and the Imagination Library) in Alaska.

Ms. Collins says, “Our numbers are starting to increase, and we’ve had volunteers open new programs in the communities of Bethel, Mountain Village and Ketchikan and just today I received an inquiry from Unalakleet. Bringing these new communities onboard definitely contributed to the growth we’ve seen this spring, and the gift Delta Kappa Gamma gave allowed us to offer seed funding to these communities through our mini grant process to help them cover costs as they get started. As far as funding goes, while we had fewer individual donors than usual, those who gave really stepped up to fill the gap. Thanks to you and Delta Kappa Gamma for being part of that! We were also able to receive a few grants from CARES Act relief funds to help balance our budget. As of now the funds we receive from the state are still in the budget should it pass as is, so we are cautiously optimistic about our future ability to sustain Imagination Library in Alaska.

A new 5-year study is about to be released, but the data is in, and it shows that students who have been part of the Imagination Library were more likely to be ready for kindergarten and, by third grade, scored an average of 6% points higher in math and reading than their peers who had not taken part. You can sign up to get a copy of E**ncouraging Early Literacy in Alaska: An Evaluation of the Imagination Library Program 2021**

once it is released at < <https://mailchi.mp/bestbeginningsalaska/imagination-library-in-alaska-report>> Submitted by Lynn McNamara