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NEWS

Food bank adds books to grocery list

Literacy and nutrition together can feed the mind. This is the basic concept behind a pilot project being launched in Maple Ridge, "Feed the Mind."

Black Bond Books which had been selling books in the Maple Ridge area for 25 years, approached the Friends in Need Food Bank to see if it way interested in promoting literacy in children through the food bank. Vicki Travis, the executive director of Friends in Need, thought it was an excellent idea "anything to help our clients."

To get the program started, Black Bond Books donated a bookshelf and 300 books for children and teens to the food bank. Travis has set the bookshelf up in the common area of the facility where the books can be easily accessed by those using the food bank's services. "It was only set up yesterday and the response has already been excellent," commented Travis. "It's a great idea. It's amazing how a simple thing can help so many people."

According to Travis, little things like the bookshelf also help to make the food bank feel more welcoming, and the books give children something to do on days when there are long lines.

Those who are registered with the food bank are welcome to borrow one book a week. The book may be returned the following week, passed on to someone else, or it can be kept indefinitely.

Shari Craig, manager of Black Bond Books in Haney Place Mall, said the program is focusing on children right now, but they are monitoring its success and will consider expanding the selection if the program is well received. "We know that just having access to books encourages reading so we are open to expanding to books for adults," she added.

Black Bond will continue to contribute books to the program on a regular basis but it is encouraging the public to get involved as well. The Haney Place Mall location will accept donations of new or gently used children's books that they will then sort, store and deliver to the food bank on a regular basis. Both Craig and Travis agreed the program is "really a win-win."

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