

# IMPACT



Jefferson County, 134 N. Clark, Room 30, Rigby, ID 83442; 208-745-6685; Fax 208-745-6686

## Parents As Teachers Educators Bring Books to Rural Residents

### *The Situation*

In Jefferson County the public library is not a free service to all residents. Many families in the rural areas of the county find the cost of the library beyond their budget. Because of this high cost many children in the county had a very limited exposure to books. The Parents As Teachers Program research shows that early exposure to books is a main contributor in the areas of language development, social development and intellectual development. Research shows that the brain makes new connections for language every time you talk, sing, read books, and make noises with your child. Vision, hearing, and language areas in your child's brain have a sensitive period for development. Referred to as, A Window of Opportunity, most prime times for learning begin very early, certainly during the first three years of life. Severe lack of stimulation during the brain's prime times can result in developmental delays, stress, or undesirable behaviors. After a window of opportunity has closed, it is harder to change the structure of the brain to accommodate new learning. Because books play such an important part in learning Parents as Teachers educators saw a need to make more books available to more residence within their area of service.

### *Our Response*

Parents as Teachers educators teamed up with the Family Career Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) group from Rigby High School. This is a youth service group who were looking for a project

to serve the community that would fill one of their goals. A book drive seemed to be a perfect fit for both parties. The members of the FCCLA organized the drive and put donation boxes around the school and community. Two weeks after the book drive members gathered the books, and brought them to the Parents as Teachers group meeting. The parents helped clean and sort the books and put them into bags, donated by the governor's office. Many books were not appropriate for the birth to 5-year age range. Parents were invited to take one book for each of their older children. The reminding books were then taken to the public library and a local elementary school library.

### *Program Outcomes*

The service project yielded 12 bags of 10 books each ranging from board and vinyl books for babies to longer storybooks for older children. Each bag was filled with a wide range of books. The bags are brought to the Parents as Teachers visits each month and then traded for a new bag the next month. Thirty-five families in rural areas of the community have currently benefited from the book bags. The families are grateful for the books, and often the Kids have a favorite book that they will ask for again and again. One family said they would read the books over and over until the children could tell the story back to them. One family said these were the only books their kids had access to except for about 5 children's books that the family owns.

## ***For More Information***

Lorie Dye, Extension Educator  
University of Idaho Extension—Jefferson County  
134 N. Clark, Room 30  
Rigby, Idaho 83442  
208-745-6685  
Fax: 208-745-6685  
Email: [ldye@uidaho.edu](mailto:ldye@uidaho.edu)

Ann Ahrendsen, Parents as Teachers Program  
University of Idaho Extension—Jefferson County  
134 N. Clark, Room 30  
Rigby, Idaho 83442  
208-745-6685  
Fax: 208-745-6685  
Email: [jefferson@uidaho.edu](mailto:jefferson@uidaho.edu)

65-051dye-pat.doc  
12/05