

## **EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES – NARRATIVE 2025 WOMAN’S CLUB OF LACEY, INC.**

**Bridge of Books Foundation**, an organization that provides an ongoing source of books to underserved children in NJ, welcomed participation of the WCOL for the fourth year. This fall, a remarkable collaboration unfolded between the dedicated members of the Woman's Club of Lacey and the enthusiastic participants of Lacey Elks Lodge 2518. Together, they collected an astounding **1,538 children’s books**. The initiative began with a simple idea: to gather gently used children’s books that could be passed on to children who may not have easy access to them. The spirit of generosity surged as members of both organizations dug into their personal collections and rallied friends and family to contribute.

Throughout the 3-month book drive, a buzz of excitement filled the air as boxes began to overflow with vibrant stories and colorful illustrations. The Bridge of Books Foundation was eagerly awaited the arrival of the treasure trove of books.

Volunteers from the Woman's Club gathered to sort, count, package, and deliver the books. The joy on the faces of the Bridge of Books staff as the books arrived said it all. They expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the generous donation during a time when the joy of giving and the magic of reading were intertwined.

The books will soon find their way into the hands of children, nurturing a love for reading that could last a lifetime. The Woman’s Club of Lacey and the Lacey Elks Lodge extended their heartfelt thanks to all the members who participated, and especially to the volunteers who dedicated their time and effort to making this initiative a resounding success.

### **Book Discussion/Book Club**

The Literature Club of the Woman’s Club of Lacey meets on the third Thursday of each month at the community center to discuss the latest title supplied by our local library. Members contribute \$2.00 per month to contribute to fundraising efforts. The chair of this group coordinates the selection of books, pick up and drop off with the Ocean County Library Lacey Branch. This year the Literature Club read and discussed the following books: *Book of Two Ways*; *The Sleepwalker*; *This Time Tomorrow*; *Iona Iverson’s Rules for Commuting*; *Marsh Queen*; *Blame Game*; *The Flight Attendant*; *Daring to Drive*. Lively discussion over refreshments always ensues. The final meeting before summer the members had a Pot Luck luncheon and December warm greetings for the holidays are shared. This year we had a guest author Andra Napoleon who presented her children’s book “Grandma has Alzheimer’s Disease”.

### **Read Across America**

In February, the four elementary schools were contacted regarding their interest in having our club members once again serve as guest readers to classroom children during **Read Across America** week. All schools wished our participation. A schedule was set up by teachers and members who had signed up in September were contacted. This interest was so great this year that many members read to multiple classes in multiple schools. Overall the WCOL read to over 40 classes during March Read Across America Week.

**School Poster Contest** Tied in with March Read Across America ,WCOL continues to sponsor a “My Favorite Book” poster contest for all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in the district. Members ran the contest in coordination with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers culminating in the best posters from each school being displayed at our March meeting where members voted on their favorites. Prizes and “participation pencils” were then delivered to the children in each of the schools.

**Special Needs Students** This WCOL raised \$1500.00 for the special needs children on the autistic spectrum in our school district. Joe Bond, Supervisor of Special Services was extremely grateful for this our 3<sup>rd</sup> donation to finance Sensory Decompression Rooms in the two schools where these children are placed. He acknowledged that without the ongoing support of our club, these rooms would not exist. This effort is funded by our monthly 50/50 run by our very special chairperson, Mariana, who has an adult grandson with autism.

### **Scholarships**

On May 29, four outstanding students at Lacey Township High School were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Woman’s Club. Our committee of five reviewed over thirty applications and essays in their selection. Scholarships are fund by members and the community by supporting our Calendar Club fundraiser.

**GCI Scholarship** WCOL sponsored two delegates to Girls Career Institute at Douglass College in 2025. Committee members contact the high school guidance counselor in January to set up a schedule of girls to be interviewed. The members of the committee interviewed each girl and make their selections. They work with parents to set up all the arrangements and accompany the girls to the orientation in the spring. Girls are invited to come back to a general meeting and tell the members about their experience.

### **Special Needs Class Support**

Each month a 50/50 raffle is held at the general meetings of the Woman’s Club of Lacey. A table is set up and raffle tickets are sold. I am happy to say we were able to visit the new Sensory Decompression Room at the Mill Pond School. The room is near completion and being used for our autistic children at Mill Pond. We presented them with a check to complete this room and for further upcoming projects. More pictures will be posted on our website.