



For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Snapdragon Book Foundation raises money to diversify school library on Edisto

Jane Edwards Elementary School

Edisto Island, SC – The [Snapdragon Book Foundation](#) raised \$6,915 through a [fundraiser](#) for Jane Edwards Elementary School's library.

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

The money will be used by librarian Jill Smith to purchase new books.

Karolyn Belcher
Chief Academic Officer

"We greatly appreciate the Snapdragon Book Foundation and the generous donors for supporting our school's goal of connecting students to the cultures of the world through books," said Principal Jarmalar Logan. "Our incredible teacher librarian, Mrs. Smith, continues to revitalize our library and library services in many ways. She has prioritized updating our book collection and this has made a positive impact on our school community."

Michelle Simmons
Associate Superintendent
Elementary Learning Community

The Snapdragon Book Foundation was created in December 2008 to provide funds to improve school libraries for disadvantaged children. Founded by a former school librarian, this foundation exists to put books in the hands of kids in a time when many schools are reallocating their funds to technology and audiovisual equipment.

Jarmalar Logan
Principal

"Jane Edwards Elementary School is a small, rural Title I school that serves a diverse community," explained Smith. "The school has 70 students from a wide variety of backgrounds and does all it can to help them learn about the world and the people in it. However, the library's book collection is aging and does not represent the reality of the students, the community they live in, or the world at large."

"This is such an incredible opportunity for the students at Jane Edwards," said Christy James, Library Media Services Coordinator for Charleston County School District. "Ms. Smith continuously works to provide a more inclusive and compassionate library collection and this generous gift from Snapdragon Book Foundation is going to add so many beautiful books towards this goal."

Books that celebrate inclusivity and diversity like "Amira's Picture Day" and "It's OK to be Different" will be read during story time and featured in the library. Students will grow their compassion for others by reading "We Could be Heroes" and "Some Kids Use Wheelchairs."

These books will be recommended to classroom teachers as well as students, and prominently displayed for student checkout. In addition, Smith will engage in conversations with students about the diversity they encounter in the books they read together, and when appropriate, students will participate in novel engineering challenges, where students will identify problems from these stories, design realistic solutions, and engage in a design process while reinforcing their literacy skills.

Smith explained that she was compelled to apply for the grant after a preK teacher came to her asking for books with children in wheelchairs. The library only had one book on that subject. That led Smith to do a diversity audit.

According to the audit, the collection suffered from an inadequate representation of marginalized groups, like the student who is wheelchair-bound.

"She is not the only student who would be considered marginalized," said Smith. "We have African-American students who need to hear their own voices represented in the books they read. We have Hispanic students, some who have been here all of their lives, but others who came to America only a few years ago. I want them to see themselves in the stories that they are reading, but I also want other students to see characters like them in those same stories."

Smith hopes that through these books, her students will learn about the plight of others and, hopefully, come to find a part of themselves.

"This project will help students see themselves in books as well as letting them look through windows and learn about characters who live different lives, with an end goal of helping the students realize that we are not so different after all," said Smith. "Miss Jane Edwards, the school's namesake, knew this in 1954 when she said, 'reading is the key that unlocks the door to everything'."

Smith's grant request was to fund a library project called 'Opening Windows to the World Through Reading.' The purpose of this project is to allow students to experience the diversity of the world through an all-inclusive library collection.

For more information about the Next Up Fundraiser visit www.snapdragonbookfoundation.org. To learn more about Jane Edwards Elementary contact the school at (843) 869-2124.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), music and other creative and performing arts, career and technical preparation programs, and military.