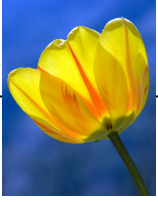


Spring 2023



FRIENDS TO FRIENDS

Quarterly Newsletter
of Oconee County Friends of the Library



The Winner of the Friends Essay Contest is Jacob Renzo

Jacob Renzo is the winner of the First Annual Friends Scholarship Essay Contest for 2023. Jacob receives the \$500 award to help him in pursuit of his future studies.

The subject for the contest was: **How books have made a difference in my life.**

Jacob [seen below] is a senior at West-Oak High School and the recipient of the \$500 scholarship award established by **Friends** for the purpose of encouraging scholarship, furthering education, and promoting the love of reading in our community. The contest was open to all 12th grade students in Oconee County, and, of the many that submitted essays, Jacob's essay was judged to be deserving of the award. Jacob's essay is on page 3 of this newsletter.

The committee judging the submissions was impressed with both the quality of the writing and the ingenuity of thought that was apparent in all of the essays. **All of our members were really encouraged to discover that all of the students exceeded our expectations by being as articulate as they were.** They presented their ideas logically and coherently, and above all, they were interesting.



Here's Jacob in his own words:

"My name is Jacob Renzo. I am 18 years old and a senior at West-Oak High School. I'm very involved in sports as I am one of the varsity football team captains, and I am a member of the varsity baseball team at WOHS. I have a lot of hobbies, but I like to sing, go out with friends, travel, and hang out with my mom and family. My plan for my future is going to North Greenville University to major in Elementary Education and minor in Coaching. I wish to help and inspire my future work mates, students, and my players in the same way my teachers, workmates, friends, and coaches inspired me and helped me through life. I am beyond honored to be the very first recipient of the FOL scholarship."

Hello and Welcome! New Members

Christie McKenah, Seneca

Yvonne Scott, Seneca

About the Importance of Summer Reading [The picture without words shows it well]

To our Supporters and Customers, we gratefully rely on your donations and purchases to support our programs such as **Summer Reading** to aid our underfunded libraries - **Thank You!**



Your \$10 in support and book purchases help us to spend in excess of **\$3,000** to fund Summer Reading each year.

Each year we try to promote the Library's Summer Reading to forestall the loss of students' reading abilities by offering enjoyable programs that encourage reading with age-appropriate books that delight, entertain, and improve and engage youthful minds.

But the need for students to read in the summer is quite simply this:

Summer reading not only forestalls losses in learning, but research confirmed by many demonstrates that **learning is improved with summer reading for the next year** by increasing cognitive abilities and improving memory retention and comprehension.

Here are only a few of the disheartening facts that confront us. A child who cannot read on grade level by 3rd grade is 13 times less likely to graduate.

Since reading instruction after 3rd grade is replaced by math, science, and other studies, children not reading at grade level are destined continually to fall behind in all subjects with little hope of catching up.

Dropouts can face chronic unemployment, public assistance, and economic marginalization.

We all bear these nearly incurable consequences.

Help is at hand with this year's Summer Reading Program

The Program begins **June 1st and runs to July 28th**. Theme: Kindness and Friendship

Registration opens on **May 22nd** both online at oconeelibrarybeanstack.org or in person at any library branch.

The calendar of events will be available on the library website oconeelibrary.org.

And here are the Major Programs:

Kick-off - Friday, June 2nd @ 11.00 - 12.30 PM @ High Falls County Park

Porkchop Productions - **Imperfect Strangers** - Tuesday, June 6th @ 11.00 at Walhalla Performing Arts Center

Critter Keeper - Tuesday, July 11th @ 11.00 AM at Walhalla Performing Arts Center

End-of-Summer Bash - Wednesday, July 26th @ 11.00 AM - 1.00 PM at South Cove County Park

Reading Goal - Read for 600 minutes to win a ticket voucher for a Greenville Drive game

This year, you can log reading with paper logs or on our new app, Beanstack.

Every 600 minutes of reading also counts as an entry for our **Grand Prize Drawings**. Available prizes include Fire tablets, books, free adventures, toys craft kits, and more.

How Books Have Made a Difference in My Life - Jacob Renzo

Books changed my life when they became an escape from reality. Real life was not always easy or pleasant for growing up; there were no knights, no dragons that had magical powers, no serene landscapes where battles were fought and won. Books were my friends, and the story lines kept my mind off problems at home. Living with my mom and her boyfriend in Tennessee was physically and verbally abusive to me so I was sent to live with my Dad in North Carolina. However, living with my Dad was not much better; there were drugs and verbal abuse there as well. In 2015 I came to South Carolina to live with my grandparents. I read now mainly for enjoyment and entertainment as well as for school assignments.

People use a lot of different processes or ways of thinking when choosing what types of books they want to read. I usually choose a book based on my personal interests and what I find interesting as well as entertaining. I love fiction; the first piece of fiction that I fell in love with was the Harry Potter series. I read this series during a time in my life where I dreamt about a place where I wanted to live like Hogwarts with knights, dragons, and magical powers that would one day rescue me.

Over the years as my personal life changed; so did my interests in reading material. My interests have expanded since Harry Potter, and currently one of my favorite genres is sports. Two of my favorite authors are Mike Lupica and Tim Green. These two sports authors' writing styles have the ability to capture my focus in that I can visually see myself in the specific moment of a particular story line. Two of my favorite books are *True Legend* by Mike Lupica and *Deep Zone* by Tim Green. In *True Legend*, Drew is an outstanding high school basketball player who will eventually reach the NBA. The main character in *Deep Zone* is Ty who is an exceptional wide receiver with impressive speed who has a brother, Thane, who plays in the NFL. Both of these books are sports adventures, but through the pages life's lessons are learned. There are several places in the stories where trust is pivotal for relying both on your own instincts and trusting family and adults in general. Choices and ethics are two of the main themes throughout the books.

Reading is not only relaxing, fun, adventurous, and magical, it also allows you to experience things and places that you may never get to travel to or actually learn about. People, places, experiences come alive as you read, and I forget about the remains of a boring day or the frustrations that I have encountered on a particular day. Additionally, reading has helped me to develop my imagination and creativity, and it has improved my vocabulary and my abilities in class discussions.

Reading is an escape without physically going anywhere; it's stimulating as well as entertaining. You can experience feelings and emotions in lives you will probably never actually be in. Books are engaging because when you read it's all in your head, but it feels so much more real because you are an active partner.

Books give you the opportunity to know some of the great minds of the past and present and have the power to change your life if you let them. Allow books to influence you; open your mind and expand your horizons just by reading.

My career path is elementary education, so this will definitely give me a platform to share with my students the importance of education and the love of reading. Books have helped get me through some of the darkest times of my life and for that I will be a lifelong reader.

I appreciate the opportunity of writing this essay and hope it conveys how much reading has made an impact on my life as well as my character.

Last Words are from Mary Ritter Beard, Phi Beta Kappa, DePauw University, on the Progression to Higher Education:

Action without study is fatal. Study without action is futile.

Friends would love to have you as a member.

Each new member and renewal receives a punch card that is worth 5 Book Bucks toward your next purchase of books after \$25 is spent and recorded on the card.

In addition, every member receives 1 Book Buck for each \$10 spent for joining initially and for renewing. And with most books priced from 50 cents to \$3, Book Bucks go a long way.

___ New Member ___ Renewal ___ Donation

If you would like to volunteer, and we sincerely could use your help, check here___

Annual Memberships: ___ Individual \$10 ___ Family \$20 ___ Patron \$50

___ Donor \$100 and up ___ Benefactor \$200 and up ___ Golden \$500

Name_____

Address_____

City, State,

Zip_____

Phone_____ **Email**_____

Clip and Mail to: **Friends of the Library**
 501 West South Broad Street
 Walhalla, SC 29691

Oconee County Friends of the Library
501 West South Broad Street
Walhalla, SC 29691

Bulk Rate
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT # 09
WALHALLA, SC 29691

Current Resident or