

To the Board of the Hilo Rotary Foundation,

I was dismayed to hear the Foundation has denied the grant request for 3rd grade dictionaries. I have been a member of this Club just shy of 8 years and have participated in the dictionary delivery every year.

If you have not participated, you have missed seeing the surprise of the keiki when they are handed the book and instructed to write their name on the inside. That alone solicits tears because many cannot believe they have a book of their own. Then as the Rotarian in charge of the presentation of the dictionaries engages the children in discovery of the contents of a dictionary, you can see the excitement of the students as they learn where to find the longest word in the English language, their home state, presidents of the United States, and many other collections of data besides just definitions.

When I first tagged along to assist with the distribution of dictionaries, I was a 'non-believer' thinking today's students are not interested in a printed book when computers are so close by. I also felt the same about Keiki kindergarten reading. But one of our past members, Jenny Richardson, told me a story of an interaction with one of the children she was reading to.

At the end of the reading on her first day, she approached a little boy and told him he could take the book she gave to him. With a sad face, he replied to her that he could not do that. Jenny asked him why. He said, "because I don't have a bookcase to put it in."

My heart breaks every time I think of this story. While it true that many of our keiki have two parents who take the time to read every night with their children and provide a house full of reading material, it is also true there are many families where books are not a supported part of the ohana.

This is a chance for our Club to make a difference in a little boy's or girl's appreciation of the printed word. I hope the Board will reconsider their decision and vote favorably for the Dictionary Project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Treena Breyfogle