



Aroostook County Action Program

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## *News Release*

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# **Caribou Rotary Club donates hundreds of books to NMCC/ACAP effort; more books needed to brighten the lives of County children attending December 4 Holiday Light Parade in Presque Isle**

*Aroostook County* - Hundreds of children's books have come in since students and employees at Northern Maine Community College and the Aroostook County Action Program turned to the community earlier this fall for assistance in collecting books to give away along the route at the annual Star City Holiday Light Parade on December 4. However, according to project organizers more are needed to ensure all children along the parade route receive a book during one of the most anticipated events of the Holiday season.

This is the third year in the seven years NMCC has undertaken the initiative that the College has turned to the community for book donations to assist in their efforts and the first year the institution partners with ACAP. The call for books put out in October resulted in many individuals, community members, NMCC students and ACAP students and families, bringing in new and used children's books to the College and ACAP sites throughout Aroostook County.

In addition, several County organizations, including Box of Books, First Book of Aroostook and Zippel Elementary School, have contributed boxes of books. The most recent donation of more than 300 books was made by members of the Caribou Rotary Club.

"We wanted to support this very worthwhile community project," said Joyce Knorr, Caribou Rotarian and NMCC alumna, who brought the project to the club's attention. "Members have been bringing books to donate at each of our weekly meetings for the past month and we were pleased to present them last week."

NMCC student Dustin Graham of Mapleton was present at the Caribou Rotary's November 17 meeting to receive the books. Graham has taken a leadership role on the project this year along with Colleen Harmon, a business technology instructor at NMCC who launched the project seven years ago and has been the driving force ever since.

“We are so thankful to members of the Caribou Rotary Club for their support on this project. Children from all over Aroostook County attend the Holiday Light Parade and receive a book as a result of this effort every year. It is because of the generosity of individuals and organizations, like Caribou Rotary, that we are able to make this happen,” said Graham.

The initiative evolved both as an idea to give-away something that had a connection to the nature of the College and what it offers the community, as well as providing area children with something from which they would benefit. Acting in the capacity of Santa’s literary elves, the NMCC and ACAP volunteers plan to hand out hundreds of books to kids of all ages enjoying the December 4 parade.

“We really want to have at least 3,000 books on hand in time for the parade. The more children we can provide with a book, the better,” said Harmon. “Everyone should be able to read and everyone should be able to have books without worrying about it taking away from paying for fuel to heat the home or food for the table. With the current state of the economy, this is especially true,” said Harmon. “Sharing a book is like sharing an adventure, and we want to make certain all children have the opportunity to enjoy an adventure.”

Individuals or organizations with new or used children’s books to donate toward the project may drop off books to the information window in the main lobby of the Christie building at the College, 33 Edgemont Drive Presque Isle; ACAP Main Office, 771 Main Street Presque Isle; ACAP Park Street Center, 44 Park Street Presque Isle; ACAP Employment & Training, 91 Military Street Houlton; ACAP Fort Kent Child Care Center, 40 Alfalfa Avenue; or ACAP Caribou Child Care Center, Bowles Rd Caribou.

The book collection effort will continue through December 1st. For more information, or to arrange for a pick-up of a larger quantity of books, contact the NMCC development and college relations office at (207) 768-2809.

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*Caribou Rotarian Joyce Knorr (left) and Caribou Rotary Club President Mark Draper (center) present NMCC student Dustin Graham with more than 300 children’s books collected by club members in recent weeks. The books will be given by volunteers with NMCC and ACAP to children lining the parade route at the annual Holiday Light Parade in Presque Isle on December 4.*