

We received this very special note from one of our Canadian Literacy Partners, Success by 6, to whom we donated copies of Idries Shah's *The Farmer's Wife* in 2017. They, in turn, donated copies to the Public Health Nurses in Vernon, British Columbia, CANADA.

In the past year we shared the ICE books with our Public Health Nurses, which we had not done before. They were so incredibly grateful for them and shared this story with us that I thought you might like to provide feedback. We are so pleased with their response and it made us realize what a great opportunity it was to strengthen our relationship with the nurses, and with the many families who visit the health unit, and to bring literacy into their practice. The nurses loved the choice of books and they could not believe that we could give them so many books for free. The books are such a great way to connect and we have found that the PH nurses are very willing to participate in our community events such as the Early Years Fair or Sunshine Festival, even on a Saturday.

“This year for our kindergarten immunization clinic Vernon Public Health Nurses received enough books to provide one to each child we immunized – and what a gift this was for us to give. As each 5-year-old entered my office, I would direct my attention towards him or her and ask two questions, ‘Can you tell me your name?’ and ‘When is your birthday?’ Without fail, no matter how nervous or shy, each boy and girl lit up when they got to share with me when their ‘special day’ was, and as soon as they did *I* had something to share with *them*! From the pile of brightly coloured books on my counter I took one off the top and said, ‘Well this is an extra special birthday present for YOU!’ I could instantly see the nervousness melt away as each child excitedly held their brand new ‘birthday gift’ in their hands. They would flip through the pages as I discussed with their parents the vaccines due that day, and I could see their eyes skimming over the letters that they would soon be learning how to read. The simple act of giving a book created an entirely fresh and settled atmosphere at an appointment that is often laced with anxiety about needles. It not only provided a healthy distraction in the moment, but also provided each family with a beautiful story to share at home throughout the years to come.”

“During our kindergarten immunization clinics this year each pre-kindergarten student was given a brand new book to take home with them, and during their 15 minute wait after their appointment was over they were encouraged to go out on the lawn and participate in a story walk that was borrowed from the local library. Dozens upon dozens of children received books and participated in this walk, and the kindergarten clinic received rave reviews from families and nurses alike. The week after our kindergarten clinic, I happened to be immunizing the younger sister of one of the little girls I had given kindergarten boosters to the week before. As soon as she entered my office her face lit up with a smile and she said, ‘I saw you last week! Do you have another book for me? How come there isn’t the story outside?’ The books, not the needles, were this little girl’s lasting memory of our appointment. This, to me, is a beautiful gift. A gift I hope we can continue in years to come!”

*Lynne Reside*

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