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News Release

Weber Elementary School Library Selected to Receive \$10,000 for Rebuilding; Grant Arranged by Colorado State Library

Weber Elementary School Library received a \$10,000 grant from discount retailer Dollar General and the American Association for School Librarians (AASL) to rebuild its library media program affected by last summer's fire.

The opportunity to apply was made possible through the cooperative efforts of staff at the Colorado State Library and the Colorado Association of School Libraries.

"Weber Elementary School is honored to be a recipient of this magnanimous grant award. The arson fire on June 1, 2007 completely devastated our library, destroyed our learning materials, and seriously impacted the education of our students," said Maureen Graff, principal at Weber Elementary. "This grant will enable us to provide a state-of-the-art library information center to our very deserving students and staff. We are deeply indebted to Dollar General and the American Association of School Librarians for their generosity."

Added Eugene Hainer, director of the State Library at the Colorado Department of Education: "School libraries are a crucial part of the educational experience. Good libraries help students develop a love of reading and instill skills to learn with books and online in ways that can last a lifetime. We are pleased to have played a role in helping Weber's library get back on its feet."

Weber Elementary, with a student population of 447, was impacted by an arson fire that caused over \$4 million worth of damage. For the first three months of the 2007-2008 school year, students were housed at three neighboring elementary schools while the Weber school building was being rebuilt. At the core of the rebuilding project was the library, which sustained extensive fire damage. Due to the damage, the entire library needed to be replaced including books, media and other resources provided to the students and staff.

The grant will be used to purchase books, media, and library equipment that support learning in a school library environment and is part of "Beyond Words: the Dollar General School Library Relief Program." The \$800,000 initiative is administered by AASL, a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The National Education Association (NEA) serves on the grant review committee.

"Following recent disasters in our country, we recognized the need for support of school libraries impacted by these tragedies," said David Perdue, Dollar General's chairman and CEO. "Through this program, we want to ensure that children whose schools have been impacted by a disaster have the opportunity to learn and grow through reading. This is particularly important when many children only have access to books at their school library."

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898 in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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