

# Diane Hamilton

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*"The readers of today are the leaders of tomorrow." – Unknown*

My name is Diane Hamilton and I am a 3rd year teacher from Prescott, Arizona. I discovered the Book Love Foundation and Penny Kittle during my first year of teaching while attending a series of literacy workshops in my home state of Michigan. That year, armed only with an assigned novel unit and a stack of worksheets, I faced a classroom full of students day after day who were apathetic about and averse to the idea of reading. Frustrated and ready to quit, I knew in my heart there had to be a better way. When I discovered Penny's work and the work of others who share her philosophy, it was like the clouds parted and the sun came out—finally, here was a model of literacy instruction that supported what I knew to be true, as a lifelong book lover, about creating readers. Here was

what the teaching of English could and should be.

The gift of a Book Love Foundation library has allowed me to follow through on my mission of building a community of readers in my eighth grade classes. The sheer number of choices, genres, subjects, and levels of books I can now provide has made an enormous difference in the students' enthusiasm for reading. As we share favorite books, set goals, and read every day in class, I know that I am cultivating (or in some cases, rekindling) a passion that my students will hopefully carry throughout their lives. I am also providing them with perhaps the single greatest tool for achievement in school and beyond. As one of my favorite quotes states, readers today are leaders tomorrow, and I can't wait to see the places reading can take my students. So far, the journey has been incredible.