

Tim Wheeler

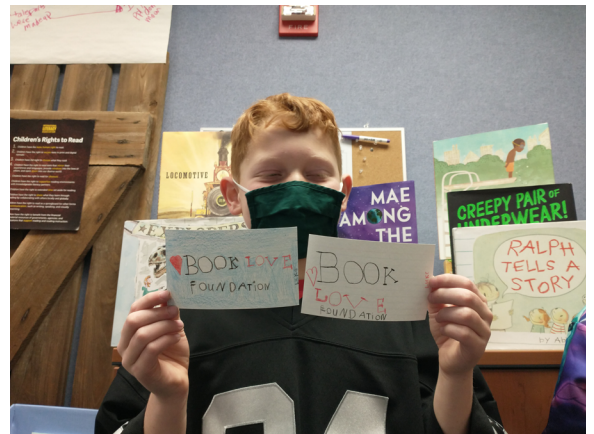
Riddle Elementary School Mattoon, IL

A hush falls over my room on an October weekday, but the room is not empty. This. This is a sacred space. The students are present in body, but also absent as they venture into graphic novels, fantasies, picture books and more. This moment is more than students and more than books.

A choir practices in parts, perfects in practice, and performs in the quiet of a concert hall. This October weekday, the carpet is our stage and our curious brains are part and parcel to our performance. We are equal parts learning, relaxing, being entertained, informed, or persuaded. The totality of this equation is more than 100%. Books make this possible.

The 20-21 school year is my third year teaching third grade. In my first year, I scoured yard sales and was gifted books from classmates of my own children. I knew I needed a robust library of books. My first classroom library was passable. Weathered and uneven in selection, but passable.

I applied for and was granted a Booklove grant that year! When the books arrived in my classroom, the students buzzed. It was midyear and I did not have enough time to label, sort, and put away 6 cases of books. Paperback books. Hardcover books. Timeless picture books. Short chapter books. An entire set of Lunch Lady books! We marveled at our good fortune.

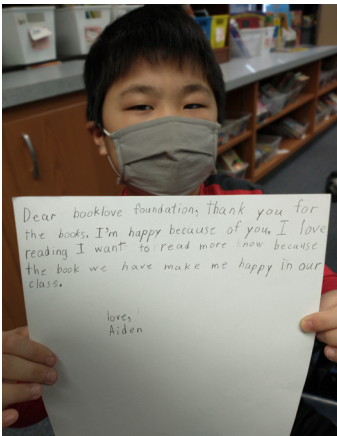


The students jumped into action, practicing their emerging understandings by sorting books, labeling boxes and using my coveted “Mr. Wheeler’s Classroom” stamp and pad.

Students discover facts and new worlds in the pages of the books they choose to read. We discover that in our classroom, there is a book for everyone. We relax and listen to an

entertaining read aloud - that magic moment we look back on nostalgically, magically present each year in third grade. We summarize and analyze. We imitate, create, and re-create.





When you give to the Book Love Foundation, you empower these moments in other classrooms. When you apply for a grant, you open yourself to the possibility of increased choice, voice, and representation to the students in your care.

