



AT THE LIBRARY

By Julie Winkelstein
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“Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) reading scores increase with increases in the following characteristics of library media (LM) programs: LM program development, information technology, teacher/library media specialist (LMS) collaboration, and individual visits to the library media center (LMC).”

-From “How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards, The Second Colorado Study,” April 2000

In my library school classes, there were several students who were interested in becoming school librarians. Their thorough papers and passionate comments made me look more closely at exactly what a school librarian does. Even though I have attended meetings with the school librarians in the Albany Unified School District and even though I spent hours in the school library when I was in elementary school, I hadn't really thought about the critical work these librarians and library aides do.

In some ways, their work has changed. One of my fellow students wrote a paper about this change and what it means to the profession and to the schools. He pointed out that as the emphasis in education has shifted to what is called “self-directed” student learning, school librarians - or school library media specialists, as they are also known - must collaborate more with the

classroom teachers to help students develop independent thinking and creative problem-solving skills. They must also provide training on how to access all kinds of information, not just books. And, of course, like any librarians, they must maintain a current and useful collection and provide a well thought out library environment. It's a big job.

Why am I telling you this? SchoolCARE - Schools and Citizens of Albany to Rescue Education - is in the middle of their fourth fundraising drive, which runs from March through July, and one of their biggest concerns is the continued funding of school libraries in Albany. Each school site gives a priority list to SchoolCARE and, according to SchoolCARE's Amy Tick, libraries have consistently been at the top of the list at most schools.

As Albany parents know, there have been many cuts in the schools' budgets in

the recent past. SchoolCARE was initiated by parents who want to preserve programs that might otherwise have disappeared. As their mission statement says: “SchoolCARE is committed to the development of long term funding support for quality education in the Albany Unified School District (from SchoolCARE website). Examples of these are: student activities and services, art electives at the high school and the middle school, counseling and libraries.

One of the difficulties with providing ongoing support for any kind of program is that, as time passes, and issues are no longer in the news, supporters don’t realize their help is still needed. I know from my own giving that each time I donate money to an organization I believe in, I like to feel I am making a choice. Maintenance just isn’t as much fun as that enthusiastic first

check. But whether it is your first one or one of many, it is always appreciated and always needed.

Frances reviewed three books by the same author for this week’s review. They are books 1, 2 and 3 of a science fiction series called *The Dolphin’s View* by local author Mookeo. These three books are about: “Mookeo, who is saved from oil and pollution by some humans.... He forms a pod with other dolphins and they are transformed by aliens so they have arms and legs and can live on the land for a while before returning to the ocean.” Frances likes these books because “they are a great blend of information and lots of fun. You learn very much and they make you want to just jump up and help marine animals.”