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Big Red Bookshelf

You may have noticed the Big Red Bookshelves around town stocked with children's books.

United Way and Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton has partnered with the Yankton Area Literacy Council to create this initiative focusing on childhood literacy.

"United Way already offers Imagination Library, a program that offers books to children birth-5 years. It's super successful and has about 700 kids enrolled at a time," said Lauren Hanson, United Way Executive Director. "We found many of the previous enrollees in Imagination Library were wondering what they could do with the books their children had outgrown."

Hanson said they brainstormed ways to recycle the books and get them into the hands of other children who would enjoy them.

"We really believe that increasing book ownership is important for children to foster literacy," she said. "In November 2012, we began the Big Red Bookshelf program at a few locations."

The program currently stocks books at five locations – Yankton Medical Clinic, Modern Woodmen, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital – Pediatric Unit, The Banquet and Fryn' Pan Restaurant. The books are free to any children who want to pick one out.

The Fryn' Pan location is the newest location and by far the most successful, Hanson said.

"We partnered with Yankton Morning Optimists to begin the Big Red Bookshelf at Fryn' Pan," she said. "We circulate more than 100 books per week at that location alone."

Hanson said the best part of the program is the involvement of all types of volunteers.

"We have the Yankton Area Literacy Council keeping track of the books, volunteers stocking the shelves, Retired Senior Volunteer Program volunteers helping, the Yankton Morning Optimists, local businesses and individuals working together to make this program work," she said.

Hanson said the goals of the Big Red Bookshelf are to increase book ownership by families, encourage parent-child interactions with books, involve community members in this literacy effort through book donations, and keep books circulating within the community.



USD Intern Brittany Mikkelson stocking a Big Red Bookshelf. (Submitted Photo)

"It's been really successful and we're really grateful for all the volunteers," Hanson said. "We are constantly needing appropriate books to fill the shelves."

Hanson said books may be dropped off at the United Way office, 610 W. 23rd St., Suite 11 or individuals or groups can pick up a book drive kit and host a book drive.

"We are looking for books that are appropriate for children through fifth grade," she said. "We go through all the books and make sure they are in good shape and scratch off names and addresses that may be in the books and put a Big Red Bookshelf label on them."

If you are interested in donating books, volunteering to stock books, hosting a book drive or allowing a Big Red Bookshelf in your business, contact United Way & Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton at 605-665-6766.

■ By Tera Schmidt

When colon cancer is found early the chance of being cured is... Nearly 100%



Last year, 160 South Dakotans lost their lives to colorectal cancer.*



Colorectal cancer is **nearly 100%** treatable when caught at an early stage! According to the Centers for Disease Control, screening and removal of precancerous polyps can reduce the number of deaths from colorectal cancer by 60%! Over one third of South Dakotans do not participate in screenings.

Colorectal cancer is preventable! 50 or older? Get Screened!

The recommendation for colorectal cancer screening is a blood stool test every year or a sigmoidoscopy/colonoscopy every 10 years for persons age 50 years of age or older.*



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Call 668.9670 for more information or to arrange your colonoscopy today.

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*Source: Colorectal Cancer in South Dakota 2012, Project In Check, South Dakota Council on Colorectal Cancer.