Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Dickinson County partners with the Bedell Family YMCA’s Kinship Program and Okoboji Community School District to provide literacy enrichment opportunities for kindergarten students.

Trained volunteer mentors meet once a month with children to read classic books that “EVERY child wants to hear and read over and over again,” according to classroom teacher Susan Ostrum. Her testimonial to the impacts of the New Reading Buddies Program is quoted here...

“The students receive a book packet each month from Extension. The books are just amazing. Along with the rich literature, the lessons are aligned with the Common Core and what I am teaching in my classroom. Each packet also contains a take-home packet and an outline of what was read at school, suggestions for activities to do at home, and many times a craft project. EVERYTHING you need is in the packet, and the children get to keep it all.

I would highly recommend this Reading Buddies Program to ANY teacher! It helps to keep students excited about books and reading. It improves their listening, speaking and reading skills in a fun, exciting way, and we all know that reading success is KEY to being all around successful in school.”

Mrs. Susan Ostrum
Okoboji Kindergarten Teacher

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