



Reds Reads Is Catching On



It's a simple idea, but a really good one.

It's the one-month-old Reds Reads book area at the other end of the Newark High School hallway from where the bustling Reds Threads used clothing exchange area is located and where high-interest teen books can be dropped off or taken.

And if the partially empty shelves are any indication, it has really caught on since its inception in early December.

After some NHS English teachers attended a Young Adult Literature conference at RIT in late November and were inspired to find ways to get more students reading titles they are interested in, they kicked around ideas with English Department Leader John Dalton who teaches English 11 and AP literature.

Focusing on how they could foster a greater love of reading among NHS students, Dalton suggested something similar to the popular *Little Free Library* book sharing movement.



Amy Austin, who teaches English 10 and Humanities and who initiated the conversation after the RIT conference, suggested a space be dedicated for just such a purpose in the school where the donated books could be housed and taken.

An alcove in the hallway near English 10 and 12 teacher Katie Ganter's room is located seemed like a perfect spot. Dalton asked NHS Principal Tom Roote for permission to use it.

With Roote's permission, English 9 teacher Chelsea Fladd donated a bookshelf. The English Department got the word out and asked staff to donate popular teen titles.

Soon, books began appearing on the shelves and curious students were stopping to take a look and leaving with one in their hands.

The difference between Reds Reads and the school library is that these books don't have to be returned.

With no restrictions, books are disappearing from the shelves nearly as quickly as they are donated _ and that includes some popular children's' titles that students are taking home to younger siblings.

Dalton said NHS Library Media Specialist Jackie Miller is fully onboard with the concept that gets more students reading just for the fun of it with no obligation to return books within a specified time frame.

"There are certain titles students are reading in English class and should have knowledge of, but of equal value is for students to read what they enjoy. Our goal is to create life long learners and reading is a wonderful part of that," Dalton said.

Individuals who are not school staff who would like to donate popular teen and children's books may leave them at the high school office.

The English Department also would not be averse to receiving monetary donations that could be used to purchase more popular teen titles to put on the Reds Reads shelves.

For more information contact Dalton or Austin, via e-mail at john.dalton@newarkcsd.org or amy.austin@newarkcsd.org