

The Project FLIGHT Book Bank

The Project FLIGHT Book Bank: To collect and distribute books annually in the Buffalo area to **empower underprivileged children and families** in the effort to increase literacy. By virtue of the tremendous number of books made available to students in need, pre-k through senior high, all four of the Regent's Standards are addressed. The Book Bank provides the laboratory in which students are given age and content appropriate reading and reference materials. Examples of specific programs supporting student language arts performance include the following:

- **The Books for Kids (Co-Founder-1995-current).** *The Books for Kids Program* with the theme "Give a book touch a life," has donated over 2.5 million books to children in over 1,800 schools and agencies and has created or contributed to 710 on-site libraries. This program specifically addresses the need for children to read for meaning and interpretation, for literary response and expression, and for social interaction (NYS Standards 1, 2 & 4).
- **Libraries for Kids, (Co-Founder-2000-current).** This program, extends the notion of book donations to schools and community centers and has resulted in the refurbishment of eighty-seven area libraries. This program specifically addresses the need for children to read for meaning and interpretation (NYS Standard 1).
- **Braille Library for Children in the Buffalo City Schools, (Founder- 2005).** This program, which has been established at the Buffalo Public School number 3, with Evelyn Pizarro as principal who has retired to provided over 500 Braille books and large print books for students who are blind and visually impaired. The books were obtained from a grant written to the American Braille Association of America. Project FLIGHT has partnered with the New York State Commission for Child and Family Services, and the Buffalo City Schools to establish the first library of this kind in this area.
- **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Literacy Initiative (2004-to present).** In promoting literacy for New York children, New York State, in partnership with Project Flight, established the Martin Luther King literacy drive, in 2004 that was held in New York City, Albany, and Buffalo, representing the 3 areas of the state. For this literacy drive, all state agencies were asked to collect new books for children. All books and monies donated during the MLK literacy drive are distributed to children in the 3 areas noted. In each area, Project Flight along with the representatives of the school district select the recipient school most in need. In the spirit of Dr. King, Project Flight and the New York State Martin Luther King commemoration committee asked the question, "Why is reading important, and how does it change people's lives?" Dr. Martin Luther King always emphasized the importance of reading, and education. He talks about being judged by the "...content of your mind, not by the color of your skin." The importance of reading cannot be overstated.
- **The Cecilia Bard Multicultural Library for Peace.** Project Flight founded in 2004 an on-going special book collection that fosters peace for the E.H. Butler Library. The library receives approximately 500 volumes a year, including scholarly, adult, reference, and children's books that include groups such as African-American, Asian,

Latino, African, Arab, Caribbean, Native American; various religious denominations such as Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim, etc., and books on special constituencies, such as women, for the creation of the Cecilia Bard Multicultural Library for Peace. This special collection of over 7,000 volumes now worth \$129,000 is available to anyone in Western New York .The collection was named after Dr. Bard's mother who died an untimely death. According to Dr. Bard, these books, "...will improve students' lives, and provide a way for them to appreciate the beautiful mosaic that makes up world cultures; these books also offer pathways for students to discover a common ground for unity and peace as well as respect for their differences. " The creation of this collection also aids the college, the largest teacher-education institution in the state, in addressing 3 issues of importance: the New York State Standards for Education, and for the National Certification, Accreditation for Teacher Education Programs (N-CATE) and Middle States accreditation process for the college.