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Stanley School Keeps Dollars in Town

By Trina Audley



Book Fair at Stanley Middle School Photo provided

Fall school sales capitalize on the community's desire to benefit schools while making holiday purchases. But what if that "bang for your buck" could go even further? At one Stanley Middle School event, it does.

"The only thing better than supporting a local school in this economy," says Elena Toohey, parent committee chair of the Stanley Book Fair, "may be supporting a local school and a local business at the same time!" Each year in October, for the past fifteen years, Stanley Middle School and local Lafayette Book Store have teamed up to run the successful Stanley Book Fair.

Unlike many school book fairs that are run through large publishing houses, the Stanley Book Fair keeps income and employment in town. In addition, "there isn't all the shipping to keep the books moving around the state," adds Angie Cozad of Lafayette Book Store, "so we can be a little more green." Cozad, who coordinates book fairs for the store, also proudly points out that "you won't see toys or plastics for sale either. We handpick books tailored to each school's interests."

With budgets tight and an eye on the environment, choosing a local bookstore to host school book fairs seems to be catching on. "We've had to turn some schools away this year," says Lafayette Book Store owner Dave Simpson. And he feels he knows why. For Stanley School, for instance, Simpson donates a high percentage (20%) of sales while also offering special orders on any book in print. He sells custom gift certificates, and makes his entire bookstore part of the book fair by inviting anyone "to mention the Stanley Book Fair at the store the week of the book fair or the week after and Stanley will receive 20% of your purchase, same as if you bought the book at the book fair."

As for the planning of the fair, Stanley Librarian Barbara Stevens is glad for the personal relationship with Lafayette Book Store. "We work closely together and that goes beyond book selections," says Stevens. On one night of the fair each year, store and school co-host an author night featuring a panel of local and celebrity authors. It is an open forum where the public can approach an author to ask direct questions. Authors will sign books and/or illustrators will demonstrate their techniques for interested students. Stevens notes, "The evening can really personalize literature for the kids and the community."

The Stanley Book Fair runs Monday, October 27th in the Stanley School Library and through Thursday, October 30th 8am-4pm. The author night is Tuesday, Oct 29th from 6-8pm.

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[back](#)

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