

Making waves in schools with reading

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Here's a campaign that aims to open up the joys of reading to those children who can't afford to buy or borrow books. The Read it? Spread it! campaign, an initiative of Hippocampus, aims to inculcate the reading habit in children and offer reading resources to children belonging to all sections of society. By collecting over one lakh books, Hippocampus hopes to create the longest virtual bookshelf in the city. These books will be used to set up libraries in government schools, NGO-run schools and various community learning centres.

"The initiative aims at collecting books through three



main channels — corporates, retail and schools," says Umesh Malhotra, co-founder of Hippocampus.

Till now, they have collected over 4,000 books and a major chunk of these books are from various schools in the city including

Sri Kumaran's, Vidya Niketan, Stepping Stones, Stella Maris and from the children at Hippocampus. It

BOOK MANIA

aims to get as many schools as possible involved in this effort.

Nalini Ponnappa, principal of Vidya Niketan, Hebbal

says, "It takes initiatives like these to make a substantial impact in the lives of lesser-privileged children, and in turn the community at large. For any country to be progressive, reading is necessary and the most critical determinant in developing reading skills is access to books." Malhotra adds, "The books can be in any language — English, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu as long as they are of interest and relevance to children. The idea here is to make books their window to the world — a world that is filled with opportunities for a child who reads."

Says Sister Therese Marie, headmistress, Stella Maris High School, Vyalikaval, "It warms my heart to see these

young children give away their valued belongings (books) to someone. They all understand that this will help underprivileged children improve the quality of their life. It's a great chance for us to give back to the community."

According to Seetha Krishnaraj, principal, Stepping Stone International School, "The best gift that a parent or a teacher can give to a child is helping them to discover the joy of books and foster healthy reading habits. Our children at Stepping Stones who experience the joy of books every day are now able to share the same with the less fortunate children."

If you have books to contribute, you contact 6630206.