

Camp Allen Elementary School to receive library makeover

By Katisha Draughn, Naval Support Activity Norfolk Public Affairs

This Winter, Camp Allen Elementary School students will receive an educational gift that will stimulate their minds and give them access to all sorts of new information.

Camp Allen Elementary was one of 42 schools chosen from across the country to have their library receive a complete transformation as part of the Target Corporation and Heart of America (HOA) READesign School Library Makeover Program.

“I think it is very exciting that Camp Allen was chosen for the makeover,” said Elaine Marrion, Senior Coordinator of Library Media Services. “Target and Heart of America really have a commitment to reading and literacy.”

According to the HOA website, READesign and Target School Library Makeover recipient schools are targeted and prioritized by need and qualified by interviews and site visits. In addition to validating need, site visits evaluate the quality and commitment of the schools staff and obtain assurances that books that are donated will reach the children and be appropriately used. In this situation, Target representatives contacted Marrion because they were looking for a school with a high military population. Camp Allen Elementary School has more than 390 students with military parents.

Target and HOA have partnered on this program since 2007 when it originated. HOA is a non-profit foundation headquartered in Washington, D.C., and combines volunteerism and literacy with its initiatives. The organization’s focus is to provide children in need everywhere with the tools to read, succeed and make a difference. The Target School Library Makeover Program draws on the HOA expertise in making community connections and rallying citizens, especially young people, to help make a positive difference in someone else’s life. They transform school libraries by redecorating, revitalizing technology, replenishing book shelves and by renewing community support and interest in enriching students’ lives.

Library makeovers have been completed at schools all over the country to include St. Louis, Mo., Santa Ana, Calif., Miami, Fla., Boston, Mass., Waimanalo, Hawaii, Atlanta, Ga. and Philadelphia, Pa.

“We are so happy to be able to complete this makeover for this school, the children and the military families,” said Tamar Gertner, Director of READesign with HOA.

Target, HOA and Norfolk Public Schools representatives met on June 8 to discuss how they can support the efforts of the school and build a remarkable library to support the Camp Allen Community. Some of the students were even brought into the discussion and were asked to design their dream library.

“With the school budget cuts continuing to decrease, these types of partnerships are crucial and extremely important,” said Dr. Sherri Archer, Principal at Camp Allen Elementary School.

The makeover begins with the Target, HOA and General Contractor (John S. Clark Company, LLC) team taking the measurements and reviewing the school’s wish list items and the students’ ideas to formulate a design outline for the new library.

The general contractor will then begin the construction phase which consists of new shelving, paint and floor tiles. The library will receive age-appropriate furnishings such as tables and chairs, computer workstations and reading corners. There will be up to 150 volunteers to help with book packing, furniture assembly and relocation setup during the makeover.

“We want to continue to make this library the heart and soul of the school,” said Gertner.

The school library will receive 2,000 new books and each student will be given seven new books to take home to add to their home libraries. New technology, such as smart boards, computers and iPads can also be added into the library.

“I can’t thank Target and HOA enough for all their help in ensuring that our students have a successful future through this makeover of our library,” said Archer.

Construction on the library will begin in October and is scheduled to open in November. Naval Support Activity Norfolk will provide assistance and support during the makeover and will continue to build a positive relationship with the faculty, students and parents at Camp Allen Elementary School.