



THE LAURA BUSH FOUNDATION  
FOR AMERICA'S LIBRARIES

## Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative August 2006 Grant Recipients

**Bay-Waveland Middle School**  
**Bay St. Louis, MS 39520**  
Library Media Specialist: Kay Covode  
Amount of Grant: \$45,000

On August 28, 2005, the library contained 6570 books for student, faculty, and community use. Every book was lost a day later. The entire school was flooded, and the library had 3 ½ feet of water. The school reopened November 7, 2005. The library, which moved four times during the repairs to the building, opened with 300 donated paperback fiction books and one set of donated World Book Encyclopedias.

After Katrina, approximately 90% of Bay-Waveland Middle School's families were displaced or homeless. Approximately 390 students, grades 6-8, are expected to return to school this year. In 2005 before the hurricane, the library circulated over 10,000 items and served 500 classes; students and teachers used the library each and every day. "A viable dynamic program that took five years to build was wiped out in two hours."

**Benjamin Franklin High School**  
**New Orleans, LA**  
Librarian: Idella Washington  
Amount of Grant: \$70,000

Benjamin Franklin High School was ranked the #1 public high school in the State of Louisiana before Hurricane Katrina. It received the 2003 Blue Ribbon No Child Left Behind Award in 2003 and produced the second largest number of National Achievement Finalists in the nation in 2004. It closed on August 29, 2005, and re-opened on January 16, 2006 as a public charter school. Franklin's charter status is approved by the Orleans Parish School Board and operates under an initial 5-year charter granted by the school board. Pre-hurricane enrollment was 935 students, grades 9-12. Approximately 85% of the staff has returned, and 628 students attended in 2006. The school anticipates returning to its pre-hurricane enrollment numbers within two years.

The temporary library is located in the foyer of the school's second floor. Approximately 1/3 of the library's 12,500 book collection may be salvageable, as the library personnel work to individually check and sanitize each book for mold.

**Brother Martin High School**  
**New Orleans, LA**

Librarian: Keiren Aucoin

Amount of Grant: \$10,000

Brother Martin High School, founded in 1869 and operated under the auspices of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, is a private Catholic school offering a college preparatory curriculum for boys in grades 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the school re-opened in Baton Rouge on Sept. 19, 2005 to serve 450 of the displaced students and others from the New Orleans area. They were able to return to their original location in New Orleans in January of 2006, and projected enrollment for 2006-2007 is 1,250 students.

The school has been able to bring all other services back to pre-Katrina levels, but the library is not yet fully functional. The previous collection included of 26, 706 books. Only 10,500 volumes were salvageable, and the school was able to rebuild some of its collection with insurance money and donations. Volunteers worked alongside staff to sandblast and paint salvaged metal shelving and to remove mold from salvageable books and furnishings.

The school requested a grant in the amount of \$10,000 to replace 543 fiction volumes in its collection.

**Dozier Elementary School**  
**Erath, LA**

Librarian: Christie LeBlanc

Amount of Grant: \$40,000

Dozier Elementary was the largest elementary school in Vermilion Parish prior to Hurricane Rita, serving 860 pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. The campus sustained damages to over 50% of its facilities, and the library and its collection of 9,000 books were completely lost. The school was moved to temporary facilities almost thirty miles away, sharing a campus with another elementary school and holding classes on alternate days of the week. The school board provided property for a new temporary location closer to the original site where a FEMA funded, fully functional, portable school building will be used until the original Dozier Elementary is renovated. They hope to be back in their original facilities by the opening of school 2007.

The librarian, with no library nor books, served the students last year by visiting classrooms to encourage reading. Two portable buildings have been provided for this school year, and the librarian is working to "transform the space into an inviting, warm, and fun-filled elementary library for all ages to enjoy...[our] Pre-K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students deserve to have their library restored. They are the future of our community."

## **Salmen High School Slidell, LA**

Librarian: Nancy McKee

Amount of Grant: \$70,000

Salmen High School, of the St. Tammany Parish Public School System, opened in 1969 and is situated very near Lake Pontchartrain and about ten miles north of New Orleans. Hurricane Katrina's surge covered the buildings to the rooftops. Everything was completely destroyed except the newly built science building, which only had six inches of flood water. The future existence of the school came into question immediately, as most homes and businesses in the community were destroyed. The principal, feeling strongly that "the school was very important to the restoration, economic development and identity of the south side of Slidell," led the effort to convince the School Board of the need to rebuild and open the school again.

Salmen relocated and shared classrooms with two different area schools, while its home campus was rebuilt. The original enrollment was 1025 students, but only 350 students returned immediately after the storm. "As FEMA trailers, Red Cross workers, faith-based volunteers, and contractors arrived, more Salmen families returned with them, determined, tough, and resilient." The enrollment has risen to about 700 students; and, as homes are once again habitable, more students are expected to return.

The library collection of over 13,000 books and materials was completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Restoring the collection to at least 8,000 books with reference materials is the immediate priority. When the newly rebuilt school is opened, the library space will be more than adequate for the school's enrollment, and the plans include a computer lab, workrooms and space for students and teachers.

## **St. Mary's Dominican High School New Orleans, LA**

Librarian: Diane Rossi

Amount of Grant: \$70,000

In the weeks and months following Hurricane Katrina, St. Mary's Dominican High School "faced some overwhelming challenges as well as some of its proudest moments," Dominican personnel and volunteers came together to do what was necessary to prepare for students to return to campus. Three buildings sustained significant damage and were in need of extensive remediation due to flood waters and mold growth. St. Mary's Dominican High School welcomed its student body back to campus on January 17, 2006, barely four months after Hurricane Katrina. The school provides a college-preparatory education for over 900 young women in grades 8-12, down from 1065 students before Hurricane Katrina. It serves students from every part of the greater New Orleans area.

The home of New Orleans' first circulating "Young Ladies' Library" founded in 1884, Dominican has a long tradition of housing an outstanding library. The library, which housed over 17,000 books and 144 computers, was a total loss. Every book, computer, piece of furniture, and all library fixtures were lost to Katrina. "In the Dominican tradition of life long learning it is vital that complete restoration of the library be accomplished."

**St. Stanislaus College****Bay St. Louis, MS**

Librarian: Virginia Gex

Amount of Grant: \$60,000

St. Stanislaus College is the oldest, continually operating school on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Founded in 1854 by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, it is a college preparatory school for boys in grades 6-12. It operates as a day and boarding school with a full academic program and extracurricular activities. The St. Stanislaus College library also serves as the library for Our Lady Academy. St. Stanislaus is the largest Catholic boarding school in the United States. The students come from all over the world including: Africa, Korea, China, Vietnam, Mexico, Central and South America and the United States.

The library, with a collection of over 15,000 books and other resources, was a complete loss, except for 15 books that were in student book bags off campus. The library was completely flooded and all contents destroyed after the floor collapsed into the basement. The school library began checking out books manually from a gathered collection of paperbacks and gift books on the day it opened on November 1, 2005. All money from insurance was used for clean up of the campus and building, with no resources available to rebuild the library collection. The library has been relocated to the second floor of the building and is prepared for new books and resources.

**South Plaquemines High School/South Plaquemines Elementary School****Port Sulphur, LA**

Library Media Specialist: Cindy O'Brien

Amount of Grant: \$60,000

South Plaquemines High School/South Plaquemines Elementary School is a newly created school, combining the students into one facility from three different communities and several previous schools, including Buras Elementary, Middle and High Schools, all of which were completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

The schools lost their entire book collections, estimated at 25,000 volumes, and other library resources. "Overnight the library had become a home of debris and water. The only way you could get close [to the school] was by boat. The water that submerged the library stayed for weeks.....There were no books, computers, table, or magazines. There was nothing but debris." The new library is building its collection for grades K-12, as it is now serving all grades until new facilities are finished and the schools and collections can be divided according to grade level.

**Trent Lott Middle School****Pascagoula, MS**

Librarian: Tommy Saunders

Amount of Grant: \$45,000

Trent Lott Middle School began in 1945 as a junior high, but now exists as a middle school with approximately 500 students. Post-Katrina enrollment is down to 427 but as homes become available again, they anticipate the enrollment to rise. The students are both economically and ethnically diverse including black, white, Hispanic and Asians.

The entire school was completely covered in four feet of water from Hurricane Katrina. The library was a total loss as it was flooded and water seeped under the cement floor, causing it to rise about four feet. The roof was torn off, and rising water and water coming in from the ceiling caused total destruction of everything in the library. Currently, the library is housed in two classrooms until a new one can be built. The previous collection included 18,000 volumes.

**Warren Easton Senior High School****New Orleans, LA**

Librarian: Nancy Hernandez

Amount of Grant: \$70,000

Warren Easton is the city's oldest public high school. Its predecessor schools date from 1845, and it moved into its current location on Canal Street on September 22, 1913. The school was initially a boys' high school, became co-ed in 1952, racially integrated in 1967 and became a fundamental magnet school in 1977. Warren Easton is the only public high school in the state of Louisiana that is a historic landmark and the only New Orleans public school that has an Interact Club which is a youth component of the Rotary Club. The students that participate in the Interact Club devote 6,000 hours of community service work during the school year.

Water damage was extensive to the second and third floors of the school, which opened as a shelter during the storm. The library originally had 13,190 books in its collection. Due to water damage, less than half have been salvaged and many may eventually be discarded due to mold.

"The library media program is the bridge that connects students and teachers with the information resources they need. The library is the heart of the school, providing programs, learning opportunities and support for the academic and individual interests of our diverse and multi-cultural student body." Warren Easton Senior High School will reopen in September 2006.