




IPEI Grant Funds Digital Books for ICSD Libraries

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Ithaca City School District (ICSD) middle and high school students will have access to 23 new digital audiobooks this year, thanks to support from the Phyllis B. Brodhead Library Media Technology Grant, managed by the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI). The grant, which is designed to help library media centers keep current with technological advances, will fund materials by Catalist Digital Audiobooks for ICSD libraries.

"Audiobooks are a viable alternative to the traditional method of reading, giving students across the academic spectrum the opportunity to access and enjoy the benefits of the printed word," said Annarose Foley, teacher-librarian at Boynton Middle School.

The new books can be opened directly from the library computer catalog and read on any device. They include fiction and non-fiction curriculum-based titles such as 'The Lightning Thief' and 'D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths,' which are used in one of the 6th grade English Language Arts modules, as well as popular titles like 'The Hunger Games' and 'The Maze Runner.' ICSD secondary schools will pilot the program with the intention to expand it to elementary school libraries in the future.

"This will add so much to the mobility of access to the library and books," said Nan Bell, library media specialist at Ithaca High School. "Students will be able to open up a book on whatever device is available to them, wherever they are, for free. The libraries already loan out Nooks, Kindles, and CD players for audio, and will be adding MP3 players and iPads. Whether students have their own devices or not, the library will make it possible for them to use our latest acquisitions."

The Phyllis B. Brodhead Library Media Technology Grant was created after her death by Chuck Brodhead, Stuart Basefsky and other friends and family members. Chuck (aka Charles W. Brodhead), a founding board member of IPEI who continued active participation until his death in 2011, made a generous bequest to IPEI that resulted in a new fund in both of their names. Each year, several IPEI Red and Gold Grants are designated by the review committee and announced that they are in memory of Chuck Brodhead for his many instrumental contributions to IPEI's growth and success. Grants in Phyllis' memory honor her 33-year career as teacher and librarian at Boynton Middle School during which she realized the educational value of technology in school settings.

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