

Citizen of the Year Nominee: Catherine Brown

Nominator: Lisa Silva



In 2019, Frederiksen Elementary School teacher Catherine Brown created a program at her school, “One School, One Book,” in which every student at Frederiksen read the same book at the same time. The program was such a success, that Catherine had the idea to take the program citywide in 2020. “One City, One Book” was born! She went to the Dublin Unified School Board and the Dublin City Council to pitch her idea. Both organizations were overwhelmingly in support of the idea. She started by reading dozens of books to find the perfect story that would captivate everyone from kindergarten through high school and beyond. She settled on

Flora and Ulysses by Kate DiCamillo. Next, she began coordinating, funding, pitching, and purchasing one book for EACH teacher and support staff (i.e., librarian, office staff, resource, and administrator) per school site, which included four high schools, five middle schools, and ten elementary schools. (As it was a “one city” program, she involved the Dublin private schools, too.) This coordination took over 12 months of outside teaching time and working weekends and nights communicating with a variety of people within our Dublin community.

Catherine continually negotiated and found support from our Dublin community including Camp Parks; Rotary Club of Dublin; Dublin Partners in Education (DPIE); Sybase; Kevin Dielissen Real Estate; Dublin Chamber of Commerce; and private supporters. She negotiated with Barnes and Noble to supply all of the hardbound books at a discount, and then began the logistics of getting each book to all school sites.

In addition, she worked with City leaders (City Council, Dublin School Board) to select their favorite children’s book and had them placed in a variety of parks throughout town. Families and others were able to search for the books, take them home to read together, and then replace them for others to experience. Her goal was to use reading as a way to create "inclusion" in our community.

Catherine put together a scope and sequence for teachers of all grade levels to use so that classes would read each chapter simultaneously during the month of March. This gave classes an opportunity to work together, regardless of grade level, on the extension lessons that went with each chapter. Teachers could do all or nothing. We could collaborate with schools across town or down the street, connecting all students with the same five elements of a story and continue with the connection long after the story was over. She even had guest readers from our community read each chapter in case a student was not able to listen to the story from

their teacher that day. This also added a level of transparency as the parents and family members could join in and listen at their leisure.

Catherine is truly an amazing and inspirational part of our community. Her level of dedication goes far beyond what is expected for a teacher, a citizen, a mom, daughter, wife, and friend! I highly recommend her for Citizen of the Year!