

End of the Year Gifts – PTA Projects – Grandparents Gifts: The Little Author has it All

By Sophie Braccini

This year, every room parent can easily get a great end-of-the-year gift for their favorite teacher: A book in which original pieces of work from every student, such as drawings, writing or collage, are printed and bound to last. The company offering this service is The Little Author. They scan the artwork, you decide on the lay out: first the dedication, second each of the 24 pages, with text (more can be added), and finally the “about the authors” page with class picture.

The Little Author is an Orinda company that was created in 2005. It all started when Maxton and Sharon Beck’s children began to ask about their art: “What will we do with it Mommy? Could it be in a book?” Maxton, a broker of Municipal Bonds and artist during his free time, designed the project with his wife to make their children’s dream come true. It has been growing steadily since and has attracted a lot of attention lately with an appearance on ABC and reviews in Diablo Magazine. The couple is constantly working on improving the web site (<http://thelittleauthor.com/>) so the process is easy. They want to make it extra simple for school fundraisers: All

you have to do is inform the parents and they will get a special code to include their child’s art in the group project. “This is perfect for auctions and end-of-the-year gifts” says Sharon, who had been working with the Orinda school that her children attend. 15% of the proceeds come back to PTAs. “It brings tears to parents’ eyes when they see their children’s art in a book” adds Maxton.

Of course, this technique can be of great service for families too. All of us have a large box in a garage closet where the art work that our kids have been producing for years is stored. Sometimes we keep it because it made them so proud, sometimes we keep it because these pieces are the expression of a real emotion, of a special moment or highlights their unique talent and we just can’t do away with it. Will we let them disintegrate in their box, will we throw it away when the kids leave the nest? Now, you can create books (or note cards) from those masterpieces.

If your child writes stories and illustrate them, this will work beautifully; if you want to make a grand-parent gift with pieces from all of their grand-children, that will work as well. You can do a book per year, a “best of”... your imagination and your children’s creativity is the limit.

The cost of the hard cover, 24-page book is \$68, and a soft cover book is \$45. You can order 10 note cards with envelopes for \$15. This is not inexpensive, but we live in communities where 4th

graders get cell-phones and middle-schoolers will not be happy if theirs is not the latest technology. At least, we can keep these books, share them later with the next generation and won’t have to keep all those drawings stuck on the fridge until they drop.



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