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Blind Date with a Book program raises funds for fire victims

By Vera Kochan



Blind Date books ready for purchase at the checkout counter. Photo Vera Kochan

As a way to help raise money for fire victims, Orinda Books owner Maria Roden is capitalizing on a unique idea: her Blind Date with a Book program. Book stores typically receive a free copy of a new book given by a publisher, for promotional purposes, to booksellers before the book is printed for mass distribution. Roden said, "I get so many books for free and am not allowed to sell them, so I decided to give them away to various causes on a regular basis."

The Blind Date with a Book program utilizes these books, which are wrapped in plain paper. Roden writes just a hint of what the book is about on the front. The books range in topic and are fiction or non-fiction. There's even a category for kids denoting a suitable age range included with the short synopsis.

The suggested cash donation is \$5, but Roden said, "We'll take any amount. I just set out the basket of

books on Thursday (Nov. 15), and already we've taken in over \$700! One person wrote a check for \$300. I can't fill the basket fast enough. It's been amazing!"

When asked how long the fire relief promotion is expected to last, Roden foresees it going to the end of the year. And it doesn't stop there. Orinda Books is generously matching all donations dollar for dollar. "Every month we 'Blind Date' for a new cause, but this a very urgent one."

Orinda Books has consistently given away books to various causes over the years. They've sponsored an author school visit, providing 130 books, donated books to local Title 1 low-income schools, and participated in the Reach Out and Read program, which underscores how reading aloud promotes language development and early literacy skills.

All money collected from the Blind Date with a Book program will be sent to Global Giving, which in turn forwards the donations to The California Wildfire Relief Fund. Global's website says, "This fund will provide relief to people impacted by the fires in the form of emergency supplies like food, water, and medicine, in addition to long-term recovery assistance to help residents recover and rebuild." To donate directly visit www.globalgiving.org.

To support Blind Date with a Book, stop by Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda, visit their website: www.orindabooks.com, or call (925) 254-7606 for more details.

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