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Reader numbers tripled

BY PAUL J. HENDERSON, THE TIMES MARCH 8, 2012

STORY

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Mayor Sharon Gaetz draws winning ballots Tuesday for the Citywide Literacy Challenge with the help of Glenda Hemminger of Chilliwack Childcare Resource and Referral.

Photograph by: Paul J. Henderson , TIMES

Debbie Denault beamed on Tuesday as she recounted the huge response to the 2012 Citywide Literacy Challenge.

The Chilliwack Learning Community Society reading challenge had 1,517 participants this year, a massive increase over the 450 who took part in the last challenge in 2010.

"I would like to think we are developing a culture around lifelong learning in Chilliwack," Denault said, when asked why she thought the numbers increased so much.



But also important in the growth of the reading challenge was the promotion by the Times, StarFM, the Chilliwack Chiefs, through Facebook and with help from the various organizations and businesses that had ballot boxes.

Mayor Sharon Gaetz drew the names of winners of 28 donated prizes for

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the seven age group categories before Tuesday's meeting of council.

"All of us know that the major building block to success in life is to be literate," Gaetz said.

The Citywide Literacy Challenge challenges participants to read for 20 minutes a day for 21 days.

In her presentation to council, Denault said they heard from parents reading to little ones, avid readers reading more than normal, proud parents recalling how hard children worked to read each day, and even a boy who read in Braille.

? For more on the challenge visit www.chilliwacklearning.com.

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