



Kenai Peninsula Borough School District  
Golden Apple Award | February 2, 2015

*Lisa Whip*  
*Librarian*

“Over the past eleven years, Mrs. Lisa Whip has turned the West Homer Elementary library into the heart and soul of our school, where students flock to find new books to read and sources for research projects, as well as a place to find a supportive ear and safe place to relax,” said Lyn Maslow, educator. “Teachers go to the library to find materials to support curriculum, scour the professional library that Mrs. Whip has developed, and find the latest cool book or series that was purchased.”

Mrs. Whip's specialty is finding a magic book or series that switches a reluctant reader into an independent reader who keeps coming back for more. She has many strategies that help students become lifelong readers.

Mrs. Whip helps support innovative school programs. For example, when the school developed a nature trail, Mrs. Whip gathered resources and books that would support the science activities that would take place along the trail. She helped preserve and house a herbarium that the students created from the trail. When the school planted a garden, she put together a gardening section for the library. She has been an integral part of schoolwide programs such as Battle of Books, Book Fair, and Readathon.

Mrs. Whip implemented the Scholastic Lexile measure system *Reading Counts* into the library so that students would have school wide access to determine their Lexile levels—which led to students reading books on just the right level. She then helped students set goals for their reading, and a means to achieve those goals. The program has raised the number of books students read in order to meet personal goals. To accomplish this, she solicited funds, and coordinated volunteers from staff and the local Rotary Club to spend weekends Lexile formatting books. She coordinates two successful book fairs every year which draw many people from the community, and has evening book nights. Additionally, she has an ongoing book swap at a designated spot outside of the library, so students can exchange personal books for new ones.

Mrs. Whip works collaboratively with the children's librarian at the Homer Public Library to increase the technology component of the West Homer Elementary library. This helps develop the role of technology in both the school and community libraries. “She procured funds to purchase iPads for each teacher in the school,” said Maslow. “And over the past two years we have been sharing different apps that are beneficial for our students.”

A tireless advocate for all students and teachers, Mrs. Whip has taken professional development classes with teachers, and then added resources from the classes to the professional library at the school. Over the past three summers, several educators participated in the Writing Institute at the Teacher's College at Columbia University, in New York City. During the institute, Mrs. Whip collected recommended mentor texts that teachers could use in their language arts curriculum. The students would not be the successful student readers, nor West Homer Elementary be a Blue Ribbon School, without her passion for literacy.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education is proud to recognize Lisa Whip for her dedication to the students of the school district—past, present, and future.