

Dictionaries still a hit with kids



St Patrick's School students Charlee Hape, Portia Curry and Kayln MacDonald, all aged 8, with the Rotary Illustrated English Dictionary they received from the Rotary Club of Invercargill North.

The internet age may be taking over but books are still a hit with Southland's kids.

This was illustrated when more than 40 Year 4 students from St Patrick's School in Invercargill received tailor-made children's dictionaries, complete with pictures, from the Rotary Club of Invercargill North on Tuesday.

Their smiles told the story.

The rotary club has been giving Year 4 students in Invercargill's primary schools, and outlying areas, dictionaries for more than a decade, with the latest versions rolled out this week.

Rotary Club of Invercargill North dictionary convenor Anne McCracken said the club had given away about 8000 dictionaries worth between \$70,000 and \$80,000 in the last 10 years.

A teacher at an Invercargill school had suggested on Monday that their children wouldn't need dictionaries this year, given the advance of the internet. But when the children were asked they said "we want a dictionary", McCracken said.

"There was a school previously who decided their children didn't need dictionaries but the parents found out and there was a big change of heart."

Dictionaries had three advantages over the internet, she believed. They don't break when dropped, they don't need recharging and children can take them to bed and hug them.

St Patrick's School principal Callan Goodall was all for the dictionaries, saying it was all about boosting reading and writing skills.

The children used them in their schoolwork and could take them home.

"Anything that gives them a leg up in terms of literacy is a good thing."

Rotary Club of Invercargill North president David Goble said literacy was hugely important to the club.

About 900 Year 4 children in Invercargill's 26 primary schools, Stewart Island's school, three schools in western Southland and Winton schools are receiving dictionaries from the club this week.

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