

Delight Valley, Bohemia students win \$500 scholarships through "Reading is an Investment"

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The statewide literacy and financial education program, "Reading is an Investment," has now become a literal saying for three South Lane School District students who each received a \$500 Oregon College Savings Plan scholarship for their participation in the course. Delight Valley first-graders Nicole Paulus and Merridith Gullickson and Bohemia Elementary second-grader Zoe Heintz were three of 50 students honored at an awards ceremony held Saturday, May 3 at the Portland Children's Museum.

Their names were randomly drawn from more than 1,600 Oregon children who completed the reading program during the 2007-2008 school year to earn a scholarship. Mary Nisewander, a first-grade teacher at Delight Valley, was thrilled to learn that two students in her classroom had won the award.

"It's such an amazing thing for them," Nisewander said.

The program, sponsored in partnership by State Treasurer Randall Edwards and the Oregon College Savings Plan, is designed to highlight the importance of reading while teaching students about money and basic financial concepts. Since October 2006, the annual program has donated new books to all public elementary school libraries in the state. These books teach a variety of financial lessons, like saving, counting and spending money wisely, how money circulates and the role it plays in our society. The books also follow state math, language arts and social science standards adopted by the Oregon State Board of Education.

The children earn various prizes as they read the books and progress through

the program . And upon completion at the end of the year, they receive a certificate of achievement from the State Treasurer and a chance to win one of the college scholarships.

Last year, nearly 2,000 elementary school children participated in "Reading is an Investment ." Bohemia Principal Jackie Lester said educating kids about investment and finances is wonderful and it can do nothing but help them in the future.

"I think it's great to have an awareness of investment, especially in times like this," she said.

Lester believes that connecting financial literacy to any part of a child's life is a huge benefit , and she anticipates that more students will get involved.

"I hope we can get the big kids as excited as the little kids," she said.