



## CATAWBA COUNTY

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### JUNIOR BETA CLUB AT RIVER BEND MIDDLE SCHOOL COLLECTS BOOKS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

**HICKORY** — Members of the Junior Beta Club at River Bend Middle School recently held a book drive that collected more than 2,000 books for children in need.

The books were donated to Catawba County Social Services and will be distributed to children living in the county's group homes and to other children in need served by Social Services. Book ownership is one way to cultivate literacy and a love of learning.

Regina Arrowood, Social Services manager, said: "These books will be welcomed by the children we serve. We have reading programs for our children in foster care, and for those living in group homes. Having books available will encourage these children and teens to improve their reading skills, which will have a positive effect on their academic performance."

She added, "We would like to commend the students at River Bend Middle School for thinking of our children and teens. The donation of these books is a wonderful way to give back to the community."

Melinda G. Hamilton, seventh grade social studies teacher and club adviser, said: "The Junior Beta Club sponsors one community service project each month. The students are responsible for selecting the project, leading the project, and all logistics required in organizing the project. They came up with the name Santa Books since the book drive was during the month of December. Their original goal was to collect 1,000 books, and their final total was 2,104 books collected. The students were very excited to reach their goal, and it gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment that they are giving back to their community."



*Some of the students in the Junior Beta Club at River Bend Middle School are shown with a few of the more than 2,000 books they collected through their Santa Books project in December. From left to right are Lilly Ly, Aaron Little, Taylor Murphy and Ashley Baucom. The club donated more than 2,000 books to Catawba County Social Services, which is distributing them to children and teens they serve.*

Catawba County Social Services welcomes the donation of new or gently used books suitable for children and teens. In addition to distributing these books to children living in foster homes or group homes, the agency also places books in the Food Assistance lobby. Children visiting this area with their parents or guardians are allowed to read a book while waiting and to take a book home with them.

Catawba County Social Services encourages county citizens to assist their neighbors in need through donations and by volunteering their time with several different programs. For more information about how you can help, go to <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/dss/howyoucanhelp.asp>.

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