

The Bensenville Community Public Library's goal for implementing the Jan Stauber Grant was to create a fun introduction to Sherlock Holmes for young people by providing an interactive experience based on "The Hound of the Baskervilles" and to foster the continued appreciation of the Holmes works in a younger generation. Through the experiences and feedback that we received over the course of the implementation of the grant, we believe that this goal was accomplished.

Upon receiving the funding from the grant, Technology Librarian and Adult Services Department Coordinator Christopher Sloan purchased the materials indicated in the grant application, these included: 24 copies of the Hound of the Baskervilles (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform edition, 2015), 24 copies of the Hound of the Baskervilles graphic novel (Campfire Classics. 2011), and one Season 2 DVD of the BBC produced show "Sherlock" —an updated take on the Sherlock Holmes stories that take place in the modern day. Season 2 was purchased as opposed to Season 1 because the second season contains the episode based off the original Hound of the Baskervilles story.

When the materials arrived, the Bensenville Community Public Library School Liaison Penny Mandziara scheduled times with the English teachers at the middle school located next door (called Blackhawk Middle School) so that she could disseminate and then later hold classroom discussions on the story. The 24 CreateSpace editions of the Hound of the Baskervilles were given to the English department in February, the students in grades 6, 7, and 8 were given time to read the story during class (the books stayed in the classroom so that the 24 copies could be used by multiple students simultaneously).

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Mandziara conducted classroom visits and held book talks about the story of the Hound of the Baskervilles. She talked to one English class for each grade level. In her introduction to the book talks, Ms. Mandziara gave the students some background information on Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle and on the Sherlock Holmes character. The students were asked to answer the following questions: "What did they think of the story?", "How did Sherlock Holmes use his observations to realize there was more to Mr. Stapleton than meets the eye?", "What surprised you about the case?", "How did Dr. Watson help Sherlock during the case?" and finally, "Are you interested in reading more Sherlock Holmes stories in the future?"

The consensus from each of the classes was that the students did indeed enjoy reading the story. From their answers to the additional questions it was apparent that most had completed the assignment and had thought about what they had read. Of the 93 students who read The Hound of the Baskervilles 59 said that they would be interested in reading more Sherlock Holmes stories in the future.

At the end of each book talk, Ms. Mandziara explained the next aspect of the Hound of the Baskervilles classroom activities- that they would be reading a graphic novel adaptation of the same story, and participating in "Reader's Theater", where students are assigned different roles and read the story aloud as if reading lines from a play. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Mandziara conducted three classroom visits to the same 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English classes to lead the live reading of the graphic novel. Because there were more students in each class than there are characters in the story, students had to switch at different points to insure that each student was allowed to participate. It was apparent that many

students enjoyed this activity immensely, and several attempted over-the-top old-timey British accents when reading their lines.

At the end of these classroom visits (all of which occurred on the same day), Ms. Mandziara introduced the third and final activity in the Hound of the Baskerville series- the *optional* after school viewing of 'The Hound' episode of the BBC show "Sherlock". It was a necessity to make the screening both optional and that it take place outside of school hours because of the strict in-school movie policy. Students must have signed permission slips from parents and the material must be reviewed by school officials before a material can be approved for in-classroom viewing. Realizing that this would create serious problems where some students would be allowed watch and others would not- as well as having the suitability of the content decided by school officials, it was determined that it would be best that screening take place at the library after school.

On Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 21 of the 93 students from the 3 English elected to attend the screening- 14 x 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 6 x 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and 2 x 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The students who attended the screening were given refreshments, and seemed to enjoy the show's updated take on the story, and Ms. Mandziara reported that some of the students also talked about having seen the American adaptation, "Elementary" on CBS and enjoying it as well.

Through the verbal surveys taken by Ms. Mandziara on whether or not the students would read other Sherlock Holmes stories, 59 out of 93 (or roughly 63%) said that, yes, they would read another Sherlock Holmes story in the future. Given the inclination of junior high students to lack enthusiasm for most things, we consider this response as a sign of success in meeting our goal of creating a fun introduction to Sherlock Holmes through interactive experiences and activities, and promoting the continued appreciation of the Holmes stories for future generations.

This grant had an impact of the students through positive exposure to a Holmes story, but it also had an impact on the Bensenville Community Library itself. Through the implementation of the grant, the library further fostered its relationship with the community, by strengthening bonds with teachers and creating new and fun reasons for students to come to the library; which has hopefully helped create a pattern of lifelong library use.