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Books for Bimini school

Bimini's three schools are to benefit from a gift of over six thousand books.

A Canadian organisation in Whitby, Ontario, near Toronto, has collected and donated the books under a scheme known as "Bimini Bound." The programme was established by John Ecker, a visitor to Bimini, who wanted to give back to the island something in return for its remarkable hospitality, friendly spirit and natural beauty.

"I have been to Bimini with my family on more than one occasion and we have been impressed by the people there and their amazing Bahamian hospitality. We feel so safe and so welcome in Bimini." said Ecker, who is Director of Communications and Public Affairs for the Ontario Trillium Foundation in Toronto.

As a result, Bimini Bound was formed and the people of Whitby were asked to commit to a drive to gather books suitable for school students and young adults. Expecting perhaps one thousand books, Ecker says he was overwhelmed by the response of more than six thousand. The books were then sorted by a committee of teachers and other volunteers into subject areas and age groups.

A Canadian shipping company donated their freight services to Miami and G&G Shipping of Florida brought the books to Bimini. "I saw the Bimini police station website, www.biminipolice.com, and contacted the station in Bimini to assist me in co-ordinating the operation in The Bahamas and their community relations person took charge and made it possible for the books to reach the island and to be distributed to the schools", added Ecker.

The Royal Bahamas Police in Bimini contacted the the island's schools about the project and received enthusiastic endorsements. Teacher-parent committees were established in Bimini to coordinate the distribution of the books.

"This is the type of initiative which the police service is delighted to be part," commented Assistant Superintendent of Police Stephen Newbold, officer in charge of Bimini.

"The police are proud to have been partners with this Canadian group and to have assisted with the distribution of these wonderful books," he added.

"Our current community policing programme in Bimini, themed "We're in the Neighbourhood" exists to support this type of partnership," added Newbold.

Bimini Member of Parliament and Minister of Tourism Obie Wilchcombe also supported the endeavour and praised the efforts of the Canadian group and the police officers in Bimini for the partnership that was established making the project a success. Administrator Brenda Bullard-Colebrooke and Bimini Chief Councillor Tasha Rolle also expressed their appreciation to Ecker and the Canadian group for the books.

Ecker and his family expect to visit Bimini again in early 2007.

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