

Urbana School District 116

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Urbana High School Student Donates Thousands of Dollars for Literacy *Bar Mitzvah Gifts to Upgrade Urbana School District Libraries*

Urbana School District libraries will benefit from a 9th grader's generosity. Last year Daniel Downie decided that instead of gifts for his Bar Mitzvah, he wanted to give something back to the local schools. "Mitzvah' means 'good deed' so I had to do something that would help others. For my mitzvah project, I decided to help raise funds to purchase children's books. I believe that without a diversity of books, a child's desire to read is decreased," Downie says.

Downie's guests donated a total of \$6,600; \$1,085 went to the Leal Elementary School Library, \$1,275 to the Champaign-Urbana Schools Foundation, and \$4,300 went to First Book, a national non-profit organization that distributes new books to children of low-income families to read on their own. The CU Schools Foundation has already donated the money it received from Downie to the Urbana Middle School's high interest library.

Downie hopes that his donation will help more students read books. "It really makes me feel good to promote literacy," Downie says.

To schedule an interview with Daniel Downie, please contact Deborah Downie at dkatzdow@uiuc.edu or 337-7535.

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