

March 4, 2011

For immediate release

(Williamsport, Pa.)—A local institution recently received a helping hand from Brodart Co., 500 Arch Street, Williamsport. The Academia (formerly Mertz Academy), 2233 Linn Street, Williamsport, received approximately 100 books and book shelving from Brodart.

According to Debrah Krauss, one of the founders, The Academia accommodates children grades kindergarten through sixth with special needs and/or those who are unable to thrive in the public school system. The Academia officially opened Aug. 30, 2010 and currently has seven students but will take up to 15. The school is housed in St. Matthew's Lutheran Church.

On Thursday, Feb. 17, at 11:30 p.m. several personnel from Brodart delivered two totes of books to The Academia. Included were all types of children's books and young adult selections. Representing Brodart were Gretchen Herman, vice president of Brodart Books and Automation, Lisa Griffin, marketing production manager, Dennis Keith, exhibits manager, and Graham Webster, exhibits coordinator. On Friday, March 4, Brodart, in coordination with the Contract Furniture division at McElhattan, delivered a shelving unit.

Krauss and her husband, Erik are founders of the Academy and are volunteer administrators for the institution. Sarah Hauck, from Pennsylvania College of Technology's Human Service program, is an intern helping out at the school. Fraternity members from Phi Mu Delta, also from Penn College, assist with various projects.

Krauss notes that many people in the community have helped in various ways, including projects involving origami, cooking, and swimming. The Muncy YMCA has been instrumental in providing swimming lessons by awarding a grant to the school. She says, "All the children have made remarkable progress in the water and for our students on the autism spectrum, it has been an invaluable form of therapy for them."

For learning, the students use cyber curriculum which is state-accredited. The Academia also has a certificate from OCDEL for before- and after-school child care. The arts are also stressed by including things like Glee Club, cooking class, and sign language into the daily activities.

Students pay to be enrolled at the Academia, although several are receiving funds from STEP.

Like most other institutions, The Academia is always happy to receive donations. They can be found online at www.the-academia.org, e-mailed at the.academia@yahoo.com, or phoned at 570-329-3574.

Brodart, in accordance with its support of *literacy in the community*, last Fall donated 100 books to participating area schools during an invitation-only event during which tours were given and books presented.

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