



Lincoln-Way District 210

News Release

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RE: Lincoln-Way students account for 20 percent of statewide reading program participants

Every school year, Lincoln-Way students are encouraged to participate in "Read for a Lifetime," (RFAL) a statewide program to promote enjoyment of reading. In the spring of 2017, the program released statistics for the 2015-2016 school year, revealing the impressive drive of Lincoln-Way students. The data showed:

- Lincoln-Way students made up 20 percent of the total student participants in Illinois.
- Of the 4,014 books read throughout the state of Illinois, Lincoln-Way students read 1,016—accounting for over 25 percent of the total books completed.
- Throughout the state of Illinois, 37 students earned the "four-year award" for participating in RFAL throughout their entire high school career. Fourteen of the 37 four-year participants were Lincoln-Way students.

Lincoln-Way East Senior Dana Co will be one of this year's four-year award recipients. "I've always grown up with a love of reading," she says. "I think the issue nowadays is that too many teens prefer social media to reading; that's not the kind of life I want to live. Reading has so many benefits that teens don't realize. It helps with comprehension, with writing, and on the ACT and SAT."

In order to receive recognition for participation, a student must choose four pieces of literature from a list of 25 books. The student must then read the four books within the school year.

Students juggle hefty class schedules between books. "Many of these students take very challenging classes and/or are involved in many activities or have jobs," says Lincoln-Way East Media Center Director, Jennifer Siemann. "These students definitely meet/embody the mission statement of the program as they truly have a love of reading and are well on their way to becoming lifetime readers."

Despite her varsity athlete status and a packed class schedule, senior Griffin Lauren LaDere has also found time to earn herself a four-year award in the RFAL program. "I really love this program," she says. "I feel like it's something really important to do because reading is so underappreciated."

Student participation from 2015-2016 clearly carried into 2016-2017, as numbers have continued to increase throughout District 210. So far, this school year at Lincoln-Way East alone, 153 students participated in the RFAL program. Of those 153 students, 14 read all 25 pieces of literature from the booklist. Freshman Alex Perez is one of those students. "I like to read in general and I like challenges," he says. "So this keeps me active." To date, according to the RFAL website, only 12 high school seniors

throughout the state of Illinois have completed all 25 titles every year. Given the drive of these freshmen Griffins, that state-wide number could nearly double within the next four years.

It's not only students who participate in the RFAL program, either. State-wide, 14 adults participated in 2015-2016; of those 14 adults, nine—or 64 percent—were from Lincoln-Way Schools. "East also has many teachers that participate and complete the program," says Siemann. "Thus, setting a great example for our students and what it means to be a lifetime reader...I'm looking forward to seeing how East matches up with the statewide statistics for next year."

In addition to a certificate of achievement, students who participate in RFAL also receive recognition on their transcripts. Siemann says, "The students are encouraged to include this achievement on college and job applications...It just might be something that is a deciding factor because literacy is so critical to being successful in college and in the workforce."

LaDere takes pride in the RFAL program, and also in her Lincoln-Way education. "I bleed black and blue," she says. "I'm so engrained in this school. To be able to say that we're this involved in this program is just one more reason why people should be proud to go here."

