

# Giving the gift of READing



Tammy Moore, child and youth co-ordinator for the Victoria READ Society, along with Anya Nielsen-Rhoads and Kieran Strange.

*Don Denton/News staff*

By [Charla Huber - Victoria News](#)

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With the season of giving looming ahead, there is no greater gift than the gift of literacy.

This year [Black Press](#) has added the Victoria READ Society to its list of Pennies for Presents recipients.

**“If you can read, you can go creative places in your head. If you can’t, your life is what is in front of you,”** said Claire Rettie, executive director of Victoria READ Society.

The READ Society offers extra attention and help for children struggling with literacy or math.

**“Your world is very limited (without literacy),”** Rettie said. **“There is a lot of research that kids who struggle (with reading) feel very isolated and more disconnected.”**

Funds donated from the Pennies for Presents campaign will help sponsor tuition for 80 students who attend programs via tuition assistance. Each year about 120 students are taught at the society’s four Greater Victoria locations.

By helping youth in Victoria focus on their reading, writing and math skills, the society is helping improve the income and health of these children when they become adults.

**“We are giving them a creative future and opportunities,” Rettie said.**

Rettie stressed the importance of identifying children who struggle with literacy as young as possible – **children have a much harder time learning if they can’t read by Grade 3.**

Students on tuition assistance attend the program for 10 months. Most come twice a week.

**“We have a continuous intake,” Rettie said. Ss more money is donated, the society sponsors more children.**

The teachers at the society create individual programs based on on strengths and interests of the students.

**“Some kids are really good at listening and others are really good at looking at pictures and making stories up,” Rettie said.**

If a child is interested in rugby, Rettie said the teachers will base lessons on rugby using stories, pictures and games. **“In our assessment we find something they are good at,” Rettie said.**

By supporting the **Black Press Pennies for Presents** campaign Rettie said, **“What you are doing is creating community. You are donating to your neighbourhood.”**

For more on the READ Society, see [www.readsociety.bc.ca](http://www.readsociety.bc.ca).

### **How you can help**

- **Cash donations can be dropped** off at Black Press head office, 818 Broughton St. and at the *Goldstream News Gazette*, 117-777 Goldstream Ave. in Langford.
- For a list of businesses that are accepting donations, watch for notices in the *Victoria News* and *Victoria News Daily*.
- **Schools** interested in participating can call 250-381-3633 ext. 269 or email [kslavin@saanichnews.com](mailto:kslavin@saanichnews.com).