

Donor is one for the books

More than 80 percent of California school libraries offer Internet access to their students, according to the state Department of Education. But Internet access doesn't decrease the need for books.

Just ask the students in the Hueneme Elementary School District. Each day of the school year, they can sit in their campus library and read a book because of the late Marie Theresa "Tessie" Bach.

Once a bookkeeper for the school district and later a librarian, Tessie established the first library in the district. She retired after 30 years of service leaving 11 campuses with libraries.

Tessie and her contractor husband, George Bach, moved to Port Hueneme in 1932. The pair never had children and lived frugally. George passed away in 1993.

When Tessie died in 1998 at 87, she left \$350,000 to fund the George and Marie Theresa "Tessie" Bach Charitable Endowment Fund for the Libraries of the Hueneme School District.



Photo by Hannah Davey

Hueneme Elementary School sixth-grader Alexis Garado enjoys rereading her favorite book, "Inkdeath" by Cornelia Funke, in her school library. Garado has read over 90 books from the library and is the star reader in the school's Accelerated Reader Program. "When I read, I can imagine I'm in someone else's shoes rather than this life," she said. A photo of Tessie Bach overlooks the Hueneme Elementary Library, which houses around 15,000 children's books.

Most years, the \$20,000 or so the district realizes from the fund pays for books. It also has provided money to enlarge one school's library and replace the district's antiquated system for tracking books, said Debra Reeves, the school district's chief business officer.

"Tessie's fund has made a huge difference for our children," Reeves said.



vccf.org

THE GEORGE AND MARIE THERESA "TESSIE" BACH CHARITABLE ENDOWMENT FUND FOR THE LIBRARIES OF THE HUENEME SCHOOL DISTRICT

Longtime Ventura County resident Tessie Bach had a well-known love of books, reading and children. So it was no surprise when she established her endowment fund in 1994, she sought to benefit student readers. Since its inception, the fund has given over \$255,000 to the libraries in the Hueneme Elementary School District.

*Philanthropic Stewards for Ventura County.
Investing together. For good. For ever.*