

The Hour

The Independent Voice of The Community For 144 Years | Edition 283 Vol. 143

Ride the 'rails of imagination' with a free train station book

By **ROBERT KOCH**
HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — Katherine Ruiz, who is in the 2nd grade, smiled as she took a free book from the bookshelf recently placed at the South Norwalk Train Station by the Norwalk Public Library.

"I know the whole story because my teacher just read it for me," said Ruiz, opening 'A Color of His Own' by illustrator Leo Lionni, as her mother and sister looked on. "You're supposed to read and when you (learn to) read, you can read anything."

Ruiz was not alone in having found a good book at the train station.

In the one week since the bookshelf went up at the New York-bound side of the station,

the library has restocked it four times with a total of 200 books, according to Sharon Daniel, circulation systems manager for the library and impetus behind the book giveaway that began several years ago at Calf Pasture Beach.

"I give them enough books to keep them busy for the next two weeks," Daniel said. "The whole idea behind it is to give back to the community. That's what I'm trying to do and I do it for all ages."

Among the grabs available Thursday at the South Norwalk Train Station were "Hunger" by young adult author Jackie Morse Kessler and "East of the Sun" by novelist Julia Gregson.

Under the program, books for all ages are available for free to commuters at the South Nor-

walk Train Station and also the East Norwalk Train Station.

The book program is a partnership between the Norwalk Public Library and Norwalk Parking Authority.

"When the Library approached us, we were delighted," said Julius Hayward, Parking Authority chairman. "This book program is part of the Parking Authority's efforts to repurpose parking facilities by collaborating with the community, much like our public art initiatives with the Norwalk Arts Commission at the SoNo train station and the Maritime Garage Gallery."

Every Monday and Friday, the Norwalk Public Library will restock the shelves. The public is free to take a book to read with-



Hour photo/Erik Trautmann

Norwalk Public Library Circulation Systems Manager, Sharon Daniel, and Executive Director, Christine Bradley, keep new bookshelves stocked with about 50 books in the lobby of the westbound side of the SoNo Railroad Station Thursday. The free books were made possible through a partnership between the Library and the Norwalk Parking Authority.

See TRAIN Page A5

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2015 • A5

Train station books

From Page A1

out a library card. The arrangement is similar to a program, which the library has had for the past four years with the Department of Recreation and Parks. That program provides free books at Calf Pasture Beach during the summer.

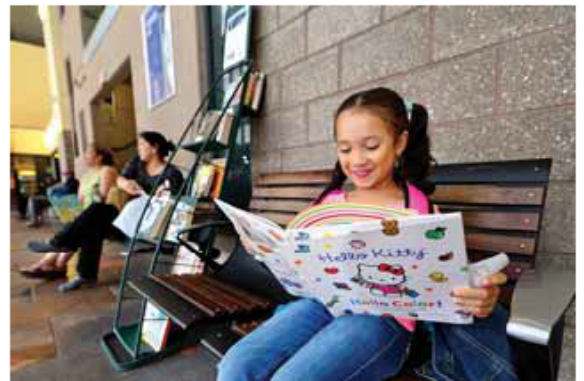
Daniel said the books are either donations from library patrons or advance copies provided at no cost by publishers.

Norwalk Public Library Director Christine Bradley said the only cost of the program is the labor involved in restocking the

bookshelves. And while the books are free to take and keep, some of them end up coming back. But if you plan to return a book, return it to the library rather than the train station.

"We'd like to have them come back to the library instead of (the train stations), because Sharon goes through them all and makes sure that we're only putting out stuff that's in decent condition," Bradley said.

Stanley Siegel, Norwalk Public Library chairman, described the program as a win-win for all involved.



Hour photo/Erik Trautmann

Six-year-old Beyonce Vasquez reads a book from the new bookshelf in the lobby of the westbound side of the SoNo Railroad Station Thursday.

"The Library wants to give back to our community and in so doing promote literacy," Siegel said. "We're hoping commuters

who take the books will perhaps read to a child while on the train, or just ride the rails of imagination with a book!"