

# Marketing the message: Bookworm used book store receives grant

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PHOENIXVILLE — The Bookworm used book store, located at 822 Main St., was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant from Phoenixville Community Health Foundation to fund a marketing campaign geared to informing the community about all the store has to offer.

Getting the word out is a primary goal for the Bookworm, which is run by the Phoenixville Hospital Auxiliary. Recent construction at the Phoenixville Hospital left the public wondering about the status of the nonprofit bookshop.

"The final stages of construction were completed within the last year, so now it is imperative to let people know we're still open and continue to provide excellent service as we have for over 50 years," explained Auxiliary President Debbie Francis.

The Bookworm found help in their promotional efforts through a grant from Phoenixville Community Health Foundation, an organization that funds more than 80 different groups in the Phoenixville area. What made the Bookworm stand out to Louis J. Beccaria, Ph.D., the foundation's president and CEO, was the store's intrinsic — and often underestimated — connection to the community.

"It is one of our community's biggest secrets," said Beccaria. "It is an important community resource, and a vehicle for raising money for the Auxiliary, which funds local charities."

The key to letting the secret out is through marketing, and the Phoenixville firm (AMS) Alternative Marketing Solutions was chosen to carry out this task because of their energy and local influence.

"We decided to move forward with them because the foundation knew of them, and AMS had the hometown connection," said Francis. "They really seemed enthusiastic about working with us and giving us the best value."

AMS and the Bookworm representa-

tives collaborated on ideas to rekindle sales that fell off during the temporary closing due to surrounding construction. Working to achieve the biggest bang for the buck, AMS targeted signage and a logo face lift to attract new customers and remind locals that the Bookworm is once again open.

A new Frequent Buyers Program, will launch in June. In an effort to make the 50+ year old entity more relevant, Facebook and other social media will be included in the marketing plan.

This grant support is vital in the wake of an especially challenging economy for book retailers. Cash strapped consumers spending less on non-essential purchases combined with the shift to electronic readers have been factors in challenges that face the store.

"We know that shopping online and e-readers usage affect us so we try to stay competitive with prices. We raise money for our charities, but a big part of our focus is providing a wide variety of reasonably priced books. One of the key services that sets the Bookworm apart is the personal customer attention that the experienced volunteers provide," Force said. "We work hard to keep the store organized. Books are arranged by genre and pride ourselves on selling books in good to excellent condition."

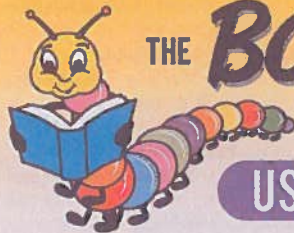
The Bookworm is able to provide such great selections because of the support of the donating public and the Phoenixville Hospital volunteers who staff the shop. Some volunteers coordinate specific sections of the store while others clean and display books. Everyone who enters the historic gem is greeted with a warm friendly welcome.

Located at 822 Main St., Phoenixville, the Bookworm Used Book Store features more than 100,000 titles housed on two organized sales floors. The store is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday noon to 4:30 p.m. and their "new" Wednesday hours from 5 to 8 p.m. Donations are by appointment.



The friendly little character that has been the iconic mascot of the "Bookworm" for decades, has gotten a well deserved face lift; thanks to a grant issued by the Phoenixville Health Foundation, to the Phx Hospital Auxiliary who cares for the used book store. Helping to unveil the BRIGHT little worm who will soon be seen all over the building and throughout the hospital grounds are: (from L to R) Polly Dolny (26-yr Volunteer), Jaye Force (Bookworm Mng'r), Deb Francis (President - Phx Hospital Auxiliary), Cheryl Kreider (COO - Phx Hospital) and Lou Beccaria (President/CEO - Phx Community Health Foundation).

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