

## Joseph Thomas Bryant Memorial Scholarship

He walks to the pencil sharpener to sharpen an already pointed pencil. On the way back to his seat he picks up some paper on the floor and wanders across the classroom to the wastebasket. Then, he makes his way to the bathroom and stays in there for 10 minutes. If he works it right, another day's reading time will have been artfully avoided.

For the past 5 years as a paraprofessional in the Grand Blanc School District, I have worked with special needs children who read at three to four levels behind their peers. Textbooks, math problems, and MEAP questions are all beyond their ability. Spelling is an insurmountable hurdle. These students also suffer from poor self-esteem and defeatist attitudes just because the English language is so puzzling to them. My desire is to give them the key to the puzzle. EBLI training will help me do that.

I believe that literacy can open doors to these students. Their confidence will be raised and they will become contributors in the classroom instead of avoiders. The energy these kids put into dodging reading and writing will be put into class work and discussion. How do I know this? I know because when I read material to these same students they can come up with astonishing contributions. When I write as they dictate, they create fantastic stories from their imaginations. EBLI training will allow me to unlock both the reader and writer in these special needs children.

EBLI is an efficient program that enables individuals to manage the English language. I want my special education students to have that sense of mastery. Their thoughts and ideas will be unleashed with the ability to read and write fluently. My hope is that I will be selected as the recipient of the Joseph Thomas Bryant Memorial Scholarship so that I can pass on the wonderful gift to my students and unlock the door to literacy.

Janet Woolard