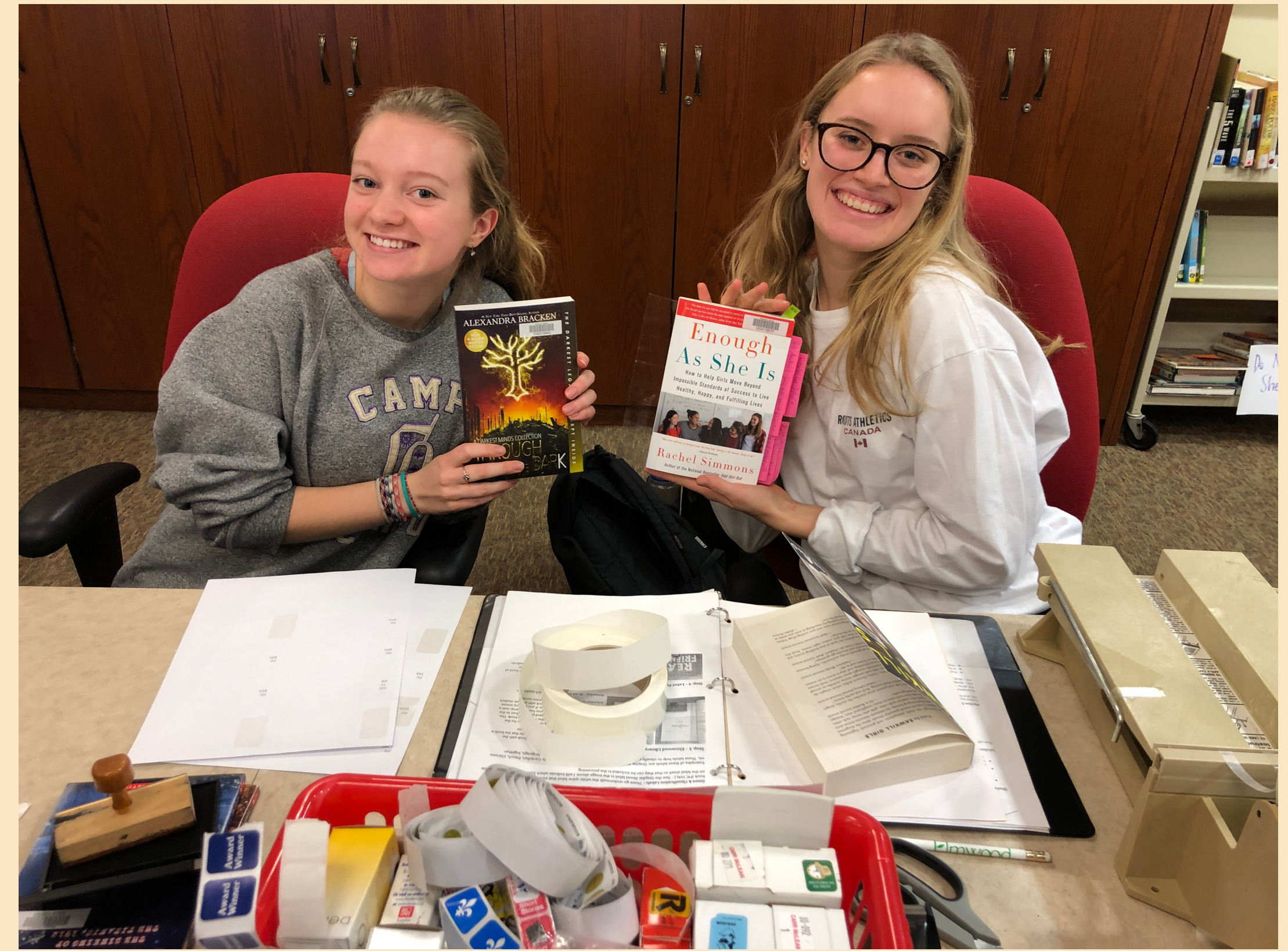


Let Them Help

ENCOURAGING STUDENT VOLUNTEERS IN THE LIBRARY

Background

In my second year as the Senior Librarian at Elmwood School, a K-12 girls' school in Ottawa, students began asking about the possibility of volunteering in the library. After discussions with the Deputy Head of the school and looking into how other schools structured their student volunteer programs, a library volunteer program was launched at Elmwood for grade 9-12 students.



Volunteer Recruitment

- Posted on our Learning Management System for library volunteers.
- Developed a *Library Volunteer Application* for interested students.
- Initial meeting was held with prospective student volunteers.
- Discussed the nature of the volunteer work and the need for attention to detail.
- Planned and scheduled training sessions for book shelving and book processing.

Volunteer Duties

- Shelving books
- Processing books & other resources
- Library and reading promotion
 - Assisting with themed displays
 - Promoting library initiatives in our weekly assembly
- Withdrawing resources from the collection
- Magazine processing
- Shelf reading

Lessons Learned & Next Steps

- Initial set-up of library volunteer system takes time, especially with annual recruitment of new volunteers.
- Training new volunteers each year is time-consuming.
- Expected level of commitment to the volunteer roles needs to be clearly communicated to students.
- Schedules, procedure documents and training can all be more streamlined.
- Find avenues for middle school students to volunteer in the library - don't turn away interested students!
- Develop robust multi-week projects for dedicated volunteers

What do you enjoy most about volunteering in the library?

"Being able to help out in the school community and learn skills that I don't already have"

"It's relaxing"

"Processing & scanning books in the library"

Do you find that volunteering has changed the way you think about reading and what books you choose to read?

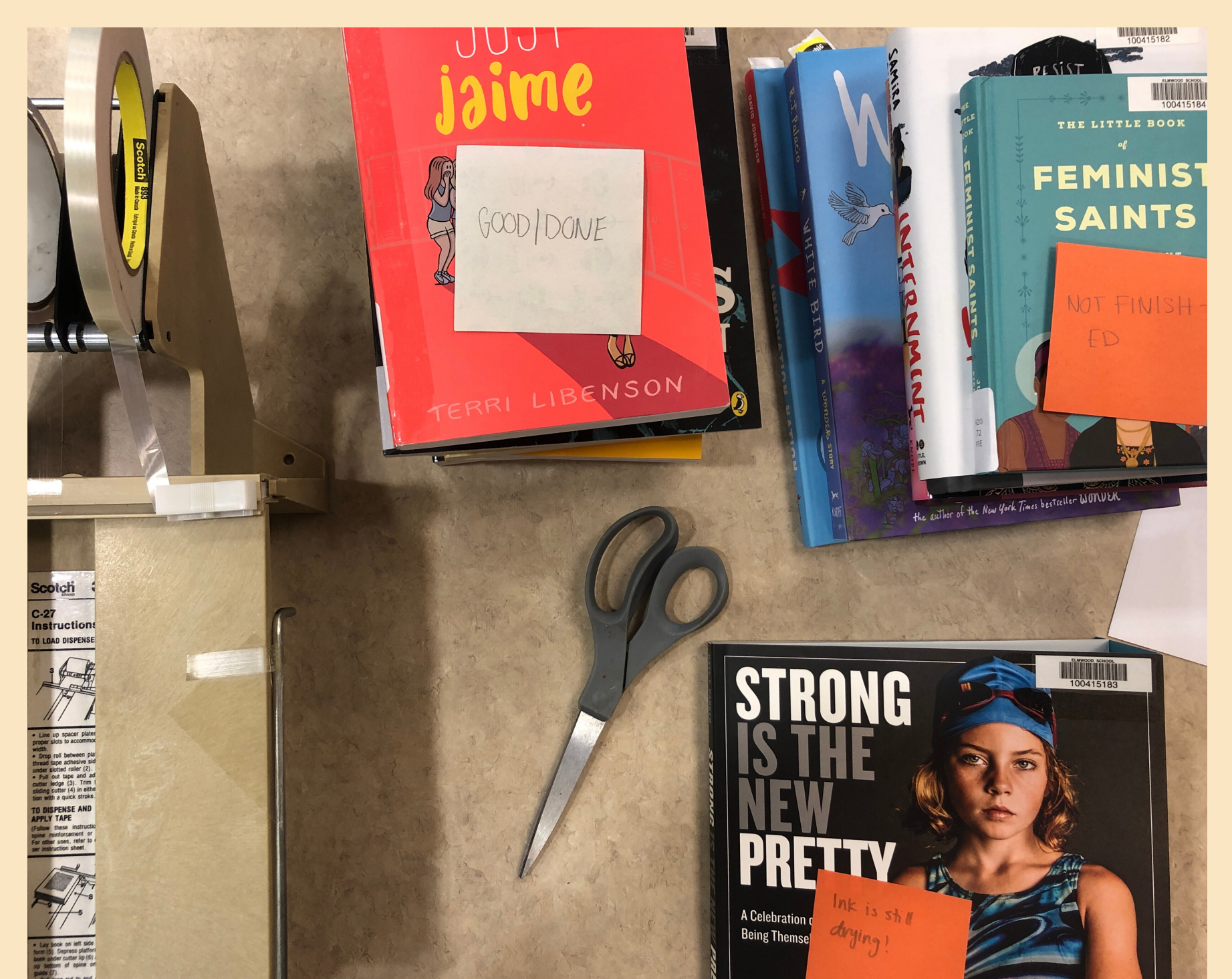
"I am more aware of different types of resources including hard copy books or online databases that the school has"

"I always find books to read when shelving"

"I have learned to appreciate how much librarians do behind the scenes. I also have so many books now on my list to read that I see as I am shelving or processing."

Benefits

Since starting the volunteer program in the library, I have anecdotally noticed that the students who volunteer in the library will check out more books, use more library resources and engage more with displays. There also appears to be increased interest in the library from students, especially when their peers explain how to find resources and show them the books they discovered while volunteering in the library.



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ELMWOOD SCHOOL

