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Also see www.beaconsociety.com

Deadline is June 1 for Stauber literacy funding

COLUMBIA, MD. – Anyone who turns to Sherlock Holmes to guide young people toward good literature is wise and fortunate. The magic of the great detective and his mysterious world often can turn young minds into passionate readers.

A bonus now is offered to creative individuals or groups - an extra financial boost from The Beacon Society, a not-for-profit affiliate of the Baker Street Irregulars, the New York City-based group of mystery enthusiasts founded in 1934.

The Beacon Society has set a June 1 deadline for teachers, librarians, Sherlockian literary societies, and others to apply for its pilot funding project, called the Jan Stauber Grant.

The grant provides up to \$250 to fund the development of a project that will introduce young people to the stories about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional detective.

The grant honors the late Jan Stauber, a native of Verona, N.J., who for 10 years was noted for visiting classes of middle school students in the guise of Sherlock Holmes to encourage them to discover the joys of reading. Stauber, a teacher, substance-abuse counselor and computer programmer who died in 2005, was the first winner of the society's Beacon Award.

The grant intends to promote similar creative work by giving financial help to public and private school teachers, organizations, libraries, counselors and others who develop literacy projects and other educational experiences encouraging young people to read, primarily by introducing them to the stories about Sherlock Holmes.

An application form, guidelines and other details about the Stauber grant may be obtained at the society's Web site, www.beaconsociety.com. Completed applications are to be returned to The Beacon Society, c/o Andrew L. Solberg, 5612 Thicket Lane, Columbia, MD 21044.

The society's recently updated Web site also offers:

- * Ideas for using Sherlock Holmes as a teaching aid in classrooms and libraries.
- * Examples of projects that successfully introduce young people to Holmes.
- * Help for Holmes societies who want to get involved with teaching in their communities.
- * Information about the world of Sherlock Holmes for students and teachers of all kinds.

The Beacon Society acts as a link to affiliates - called "scions" - of the Baker Street Irregulars and to those working with youth, providing teachers and others in a nonacademic setting with resources to bring Sherlock Holmes to life for young people.

Since 2004, the society's annual Beacon Awards have been given to persons or organizations whose work has been outstanding in encouraging young people to read the Sherlock Holmes stories.