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A new chapter for Douglassville used bookstore

Gently Used Books makes a move to larger quarters, in part, because of the owner's policy to accept book trades even if she can't sell them in the store.

By David A. Kostival
Reading Eagle correspondent

Douglassville, PA - When most people think about a used bookstore, they probably think about a dark and dusty place filled with outdated books. But if you visit the newly re-opened Gently Used Books in Douglassville Shopping Center, be prepared to see something unexpected.

The store is clean, well-lit, cheerfully decorated and has bright orange shelves displaying thousands of well-organized books — more than 40,000 books to be precise.

Ramona J. DeWalt, 59, opened her business in 2005 in a space of 1,000 square feet at another location in Douglassville. Earlier this year, she moved to a new location in Douglassville Shopping Center, where her selling space was tripled.

DeWalt's business and inventory grew rapidly in her two years of being a book seller, in part, because she has a trade-in policy.

She accepts donations of any used books, even if she can't sell them in her store. The customers receive credits for the books they bring in which they can use for half the value of a purchase.

Click on picture to enlarge.



Reading Eagle: Ryan McFadden

Gently Used Books and owner Ramona DeWalt in her store in Douglassville Shopping Center.

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Gently Used Books

Address: Douglassville Shopping Center, Douglassville

Phone: 610-385-0766

Owner: Ramona J. DeWalt

Employees: 4 part time

Opened: June 1, 2005

Moved: Oct. 16

Size: 3,000 square feet

Web site:
www.gentlyusedbookspa.com

Hours: 9 a.m. until 7 p.m., Mondays through Fridays; 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., Saturdays; closed Sundays

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"I really enjoy selling the used books because I love to see people get excited that they can afford a book they would like to read," DeWalt said. "I chose the name Gently Used Books for a reason. I don't accept books with broken spines. I only use the ones in as new a condition as I can possibly get. Customers have the perception that these books are new."

DeWalt's business also specializes in children's books.

"In my travels, I visited many used bookstores and discovered either they didn't have children's books or they had really old ones," she said. "Many of those stores focus on collectibles. I don't do collectible or rare books, but I seem to have found a niche in children's books."

"I love to see kids get excited about reading. I want to foster a love of reading by making children's books affordable. I learned to love books as a child and so I wanted to become a resource for teachers who have to buy books for their classroom library out of their own pockets."

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Hardcovers range in price from about \$3 to \$5 and paperbacks are half the cover price.

DeWalt said she will not carry computer books because they become obsolete and she will not carry books dealing with the occult or ones which are of a mature-adult nature.

Whenever DeWalt receives books she cannot use on her shelves, she donates them to libraries, churches, Goodwill Industries and institutions such as prisons.

A few of them she also passes onto her husband who has an eBay store called

Gently Used Books Plus.

The Rev. Ken DeWalt, Ramona's husband, is pastor of Hope Church, Douglassville.

Before opening her own store, Ramona DeWalt spent 13 years full time, managing the children's departments at Border's Books in Lancaster and Wyomissing.

"This is not the largest bookstore you will ever visit, but we will do all that we can to help you have the best reading experiences possible," she said.

•Contact correspondent David A. Kostival at 610-371-5049 or business@readingeagle.com.



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