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“Bitten by the Reading Bug”

By OUR STAFF REPORTER
DEHRADUN, 17 Nov: The

third and the final day of Valley of Words Literary Festival, held at Madhuban Hotel, witnessed a very lively discussion between Ratna Mannucha, a children's writer and Founder Principal of Little Flower School, Matthew Raggett, the Headmaster of The Doon School, and Colonel Vivek Sharma, Commandant, RIMC.

They discussed a very relevant topic in the present time - how to encourage young children to develop the habit of reading. Young parents are often at their wits' end trying to get their young ones to develop a liking for books. The panel discussion highlighted the point that the parents have maximum impact on the child and they need to lead by example. The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read and to show them that



reading is a pleasurable activity. Parents need to bring up children who love to learn and the way to do this is to encourage children to be calm, curious and conscious.

Reading stills the idle chatter in one's head and tightens the bond between the reader and the listener, in this case the parents and the child. Children are made readers

on the laps of their parents. Reading to children even before they can understand, teaches them to associate books with love and affection.

They also discussed that one should make sure that it is the printed version one reads to one's child and not text from the screen. Young children love repetition and mimicry and sticker books have a great role to play in encouraging children to read by filling in the blanks and helping them increase their vocabulary.

They also discussed the importance of graphic novels and their comeback in the literary scene as some people might tend to get bored with the printed word but pictures set fire to their imagination and these graphic novels are even being read by adults as well.

The discussion ended with a suggestion to people that they should read often because it is nice to talk about something other than the weather and politics. The mind is not a cage, it's a garden and requires cultivating.