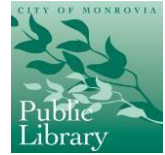




**CITY OF MONROVIA
LIBRARY BOARD
AGENDA REPORT**



DEPARTMENT: Community Services
Library Division

MEETING DATE: June 25, 2020

PREPARED BY: Linda Vera,
Youth Services Supervisor

AGENDA LOCATION: AR-1

TITLE: Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program Annual Report FY2019/2020

OBJECTIVE: To provide the Library Board with the annual report of the Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program

BACKGROUND: In March 2018, local nonprofit, Monrovia Reads partnered with the Monrovia Public Library Foundation and library staff to provide a mobile literacy van that was dedicated to serving children and families throughout the city. Since its launch, the van has been visiting the five local elementary schools after school, providing books to the district's 2,500 elementary school age children. It also attends community events, including MAP events, the annual Spring Egg Hunt, Foothill Unity Center's Back to School event, and other opportunities throughout Monrovia.

The van features 1,586 books, a WiFi hotspot, and other fun learning activities. The vehicle makes regular stops at each elementary school after dismissal for 90 minutes during regular scheduled school days. At each visit, staff process new library card applications, enabling immediate access to the library's online resources as well as the main library's larger collection. The Monrovia Reads van brings with it the resources that our children need to enhance their lives through the power of knowledge. This aligns with the Strategic Plan's goals of supporting literacy and lifelong learning for all residents, regardless of their ability to visit the main library building, as well as keeping residents informed about library services and programs.

ANALYSIS:

Services:

The Monrovia Reads van provides library services, including: materials circulation, storytimes, and other literacy-related activities for the community. This aligns with the Library's Strategic Plan, specifically the Strategic Direction of Enhanced Access, Goals 2 and 3 related to services in Southern Monrovia and expanding the mobility of the library. The van also falls under the Strategic Direction of Enhanced Partnerships, Goal 2 related to expanding the Library's partnership with the school district.

AR-1

The van's elementary school schedule for the 2019/2020 School Year:

Monday – 1:30-3:00 p.m. at Bradoaks
 Tuesday – 2-3:00 p.m. at Wild Rose
 Wednesday – 12:15-1:45 p.m. at Plymouth
 Thursday – 1:50-3:20 p.m. at Monroe
 Friday - 1:50-3:20 p.m. at Mayflower

This school year, service was expanded to include all middle and high schools in the school district as well as the Canyon Early Learning Center, the School District's preschool. These school sites were visited during the last week of every month. The schedule for these schools was as follows:

Monday- Canyon Early Learning Center
 Tuesday- Monrovia High School
 Wednesday- Santa Fe High Middle School
 Thursday- Clifton Middle School
 Friday- Canyon Oaks High School

Statistics:

Library Staff continue to work with the principals at each school to coordinate the location of the van and its schedule to ensure optimal usage without impacting afterschool activities. Circulation and usage statistics are maintained by staff, including library cards, mileage, circulation, and attendance for both school visits and community events.

Visitor and Use Statistics - Elementary Schools						
	Bradoaks	Wildrose	Plymouth	Monroe	Mayflower	Totals
Total Attendance	720	656	720	848	560	3504
Library Cards Created	9	5	5	3	0	22
Checked Outs Items	306	302	336	302	96	1342
Returned Items	105	196	79	81	45	506

Visitor and Use Statistics - Middle School, High School and Preschool						
	CELC	MHS	Santa Fe	Clifton	Canyon Oaks	Totals
Total Attendance	58	157	190	231	91	727
Library Cards Created	6	0	1	1	0	8
Checked Outs Items	59	85	47	75	4	270
Returned Items	13	1	16	5	1	36

The numbers above represent the school year from August through the first week of March. Due to the Safer at Home order, library staff were unable to provide service to the schools from the second week in March through May; the service year for schools was abbreviated by 13 weeks.

The Covid-19 also restricted the library's opportunities to participate in community events. Traditionally, spring presents a number of activities that the Monrovia Reads Van participates in, but which were cancelled this year. These include the Monrovia Area Partnership (MAP) Neighborhood Conference, Huntington Oaks Spring Event, and the City of Monrovia's Spring Egg Hunt. The van was able to participate in several events during the service year, before the pandemic.

They include:

- Annual So All May Read Fundraiser - March 2020
- Huntington Oaks Shopping Center holiday visit - December 2019
- Camp Read-a-Lot and Camp Infinity outreach visits - July 2019
- Thankful & Grateful Event in Library Park - November 2019
- Annual Holiday Parade in Old Town - December 2019
- Foothill Unity Back to School Event at Santa Anita Racetrack - August 2019

A total of 277 visitors joined us at these events and enjoyed access to library materials for checkout, learning activities, and storytimes in nontraditional settings. A total of 13 library cards were created and 19 books were checked out. Summer school students in July 2019 were also able to participate in the 2019 Summer Reading Program, with staff bringing activities and prizes to the school sites for increased access. The van also participated in the City's first annual Thankful & Grateful event in November 2019 as part of the city vehicle petting zoo. These types of events help build relationships and promote library services to the larger community. Staff look forward to returning to outreach events with the Monrovia Reads Van in the future and are working on ways to ensure the continued health and safety of staff and community members during these visits.

Outcomes & Goals:

As outlined by the Strategic Plan's Enhanced Access Goal 3, last year the Monrovia Reads Van team established 3 outcomes and 5 goals that ensure the mobile literacy program is effective in how it provides its services.

The three outcomes include:

- providing library service and literacy support to elementary age students who are unable to regularly visit the library
- reducing barriers to library services and support for all residents, including those living in Southern Monrovia, as well as other diverse communities within the City of Monrovia
- create meaningful connections with children outside the library that enable staff to demonstrate and reinforce the link between literacy and opportunity

By visiting each elementary school regularly, van staff have been able to satisfy the outcomes, providing students with books to check out and activities that support the development of their literacy and learning skills outside the library. With this being our third year with steady representation at the schools, students and parents have come to know the schedule and look forward to the weekly visits. Staff continue to refine service models to reach as many students as possible, even managing to serve those who walk directly from class to the bus by passing

out activities and program flyers as they wait in line. They also have materials ready so students can check out books while waiting in line with their teachers during the bus boarding.

Through community outreach visits, the van has maintained partnerships with local businesses that have provided visibility and library access to new audiences. The services provided by the Monrovia Reads Van staff varies based on the needs of each particular outreach. Maintaining a presence at schools, local businesses, and community events have resulted in reduced barriers to library services and support for all residents. This in turn has expanded access to library materials across the community.

What has been particularly satisfying for staff is the opportunity to serve a diverse audience while bringing mobile library services into the community. Towards the beginning of the school year at Bradoaks, a whole family signed up for library cards. The youngest was a first grader who was excited about books and couldn't wait to get her hands on some. She couldn't believe they were free to take home. This was also the mother's first introduction to our library and the entire family became some of the most loyal patrons at Bradoaks. They chose new books every week and each of the three children brought their own library card to check out every Monday.

In addition to the outcomes, five goals that align with the outcomes were established as a way to provide measurable benchmarks for the services and impact the program is having at schools and within the community.

The goals include:

- Establishing van visits with all schools in the Monrovia Unified School District (*updated*)
- Increase understanding of library services and offerings by 25% based on surveys of mobile library users (*postponed to the 20/21 school year*)
- Increase mobile library circulation at school sites by 10% from the previous school year (*impacted by the abbreviated 19/20 school year*)
- Provide informal learning opportunities through games and activities that focus on a key learning or literacy skill each month during the academic year (*complete & ongoing*)
- Create a special collection for 3rd-5th grade students that supports the school district's curriculum (*complete & ongoing*)

While staff had originally planned on ways to best to reach Kindergarten students during the 2019-2020 school year, the goal pivoted to finding ways to reach students at more campuses. This was based on community feedback, including comments that teens who live in South Monrovia have fewer opportunities to participate in programs than teens in other areas. The results of this redirection have been fruitful. Due to special events, holidays, and weather, Santa Fe Middle school had three fewer visits than Clifton over the course of the school year, but average attendance at Santa Fe was 47.5 attendees per visit, slightly higher than Clifton's at 46.2 attendees per visit.

Staff this year created an activity each month that highlighted a 21st Century Learning Skill, such as communication, creativity, or critical thinking. Students looked forward to these activities each month and engaged enthusiastically in the learning process, whether it was an open-ended craft that sparked creativity, crosswords that built vocabulary, or reading prompts that encouraged comprehension as well as communication. As for increasing understanding of library services and events, anecdotal evidence suggests that staff were successful in

increasing awareness of library programming. While the school year was abruptly ended due to Covid-19 and thus end of year surveys were not available, staff still heard from patrons at library events over the course of the year that they had learned about programs and services from flyers or promotions at the van visits.

Staff's intention to increase circulation at school sites was impacted by the closure of schools and libraries in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Without a complete school year it was not possible to accurately compare circulation rates. Despite its shortened operation year, the Monrovia Reads Van still accomplished a lot from July 2019-March 2020. It circulated 1,631 books and created 43 new library cards for 4,508 students and their families at 102 visits. The Monrovia Reads Van has become an integral part of the community and will return soon to bring library services to Monrovia's families.

Activities:

Hands-on 21st century learning skills practice is a key component of the mobile van service provided to youth, and a core objective outlined in the library's strategic plan. Making these opportunities available aligns with our strategic plan of supporting lifelong learning and creates an opportunity to form lasting bonds with the kids who participate; they see staff as people who respect them, meet them where they are developmentally, and are willing to play. For children, play is an important medium for learning and emotional development.

Some examples of activities this year include:

- *Paper Airplane Building* - Students were so engaged staff organized an impromptu competition so participants could fly their creations and see how different designs affected their speed and distance.
- *Monster Story Creation* - Students drew an original monster and then described it using descriptive words. Students were so creative making and describing their monsters and a few even wrote out backstories for their creations.
- *Author Postcards* - Students practiced their communication skills by writing a postcard to their favorite author. Students chose to write to Dav Pilkey, Mo Williams, and "that lady who wrote Smile".
- *Valentine's Day Fortune Tellers*: Students had a great time learning how to fold fortune tellers/cootie catchers for Valentine's Day. Many had never seen a fortune teller before and they loved learning how it worked and practicing their sorting and spelling skills.

Community Feedback:

Because the school year visits ended abruptly, there was no opportunity to survey attendees to gauge the value of mobile library service over a complete service period. Anecdotally, people are very engaged with the van and look forward to the opportunities it provides to engage in literacy and STEM based activities. Below is a sample of experiences staff have had while working in the community on the Monrovia Reads Van:

- "I had a lot of people really enjoy our new books. The new Raina Telgemeier books checked out right away. One of the students from Wild Rose was really excited since she was always looking for new Telgemeier books, especially *Sisters* and *Guts*. I made sure to show her right away when they arrived and she was really happy we remembered her request"

- One of our returning patrons this school year loved that we added Legos to our activity rotation. When he visits he heads right over to our activity table and gets to work. He also really enjoys all of our non-fiction books and is always asking his mom if he can grab "just one more book!" He even has his library card number memorized for fast checkouts!

Staff did pass out paper surveys to students and parents midway through the year, shortly before the Safer at Home Order was passed, but found patrons were more engaged with the collection and the activities and were reluctant to pull away to fill out a survey. Staff is considering other ways to gather feedback once we are able to reinstate service.

Staffing & Budget:

The Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program has rotating part-time and full-time staff members assigned to the van. Staff from Adult Services, Youth Services, and Circulation all actively participate in helping to bring the van into the community and to the schools. The total staff hours for the van was 851 for a total staffing cost of \$20,770.64 in FY19/20. This includes 804 hours for staffing during the school year at a cost of \$19,046.28 and 47 staffing hours and \$1,724.36 for community events and summer school sessions during the rest of the year. The Monrovia Reads organization provides \$15,000 for staffing of the van annually. The remaining staffing costs are paid for by the City.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Library Board move to receive and file AR-1 Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program Annual Report FY2019/2020.

LIBRARY BOARD ACTION REQUIRED: If the Library Board concurs the appropriate action would be a motion to: ***Receive and file AR-1 Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program Annual Report FY2019/2020.***