



**CITY OF MONROVIA
LIBRARY BOARD
AGENDA REPORT**



DEPARTMENT: Community Services
Library Division

MEETING DATE: June 23, 2022

PREPARED BY: Amanda Carey
Librarian

AGENDA LOCATION: AR-1

TITLE: Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program Annual Report FY2021/2022

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. At the start of the 19/20 school year the van began visiting the local preschool, middle, and high schools. The van now provides books to the district's 5,500 students. It also attends community events, including MAP events, the annual Spring Egg Hunt, and other opportunities throughout Monrovia.

In October 2021 a new electric vehicle was unveiled. This vehicle was funded by a California State Library Grant. This grant enabled the purchase of a new specialized vehicle and provided funds for purchasing more books for the van collection.

The updated electric van features 1,371 books, a WiFi hotspot for quick book checkouts, and built in shelving for the collection. The vehicle makes weekly stops at each elementary school after dismissal during regularly scheduled school days, and monthly stops at the local preschool, middle schools, and high schools. At each visit, staff creates new library cards, enabling immediate access to the mobile library's collection of materials. 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 and 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.

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The van's elementary school schedule for the 2021/2022 School Year:

Monday – 1:30-3:00 p.m. at Bradoaks
 Tuesday – 2-3:00 p.m. at Wild Rose
 Wednesday – 10:15 am -12:50 p.m. at Plymouth
 Thursday –1:50-3:20 p.m. at Monroe
 Friday - 1:50-3:20 p.m. at Mayflower

Expanded service continued this school year which included 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 first 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 school activities. Circulation and usage statistics are maintained by staff, including library cards, mileage, circulation, and attendance for both school visits and community events. Throughout the 21/22 service year the Monrovia Reads Van made a total of 155 visits, including schools and community outreach. The van served 7,767 people during those visits, made 206 new library cards, and checked out 4,225 books.

Visitor and Use Statistics - Elementary Schools						
	Bradoaks	Wildrose	Plymouth	Monroe	Mayflower	Totals
Total Visits	18	23	16	27	22	106
Total Attendance	772	1085	1008	1343	538	4746
Library Cards Created	44	22	69	19	17	171
Checked Outs Items	510	617	1296	1157	302	3882

Visitor and Use Statistics - Middle School, High School and Preschool						
	CELC	MHS	Santa Fe	Clifton	Canyon Oaks	Totals
Total Visits	4	7	7	7	6	31
Total Attendance	85	116	248	128	53	630
Library Cards Created	8	0	0	4	5	17
Checked Outs Items	68	27	94	37	4	230

The numbers above represent the school year from September 2021 through the last full week of May 2022.

With Covid-19 guidelines changing, the Monrovia Reads van was able to participate in and attend more community events during the 21/22 service year. The van was able to participate in several events throughout the city during the service year.

They include:

- Camp Read-a-Lot and Camp Infinity outreach visits - July and August 2021
- Recess in the Park – August 2021
- New Electric MR Van Launch Party – October 2021
- Halloween Bash in Library Park – October 2021
- Thankful & Grateful Event in Library Park - November 2021
- Annual Holiday Parade in Old Town - December 2021
- Read Across America with Sierra Subaru – March 2022
- Spring Egg Hunt – April 2022
- MAP Neighborhood Conference – April 2022
- Monrovia Days Parade – May 2022
- Annual So All May Read Fundraiser – May 2022
- Santa Fe Middle School Open House – May 2022

A total of 2,032 visitors joined us at these events and enjoyed access to library materials for checkout and literacy focused learning activities in nontraditional settings. A total of 18 library cards were created and 113 books were checked out. These types of events help build relationships and promote library services to the larger community. Staff look forward to continuing 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, the Monrovia Reads Van team established three outcomes and five 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. Even with the gap in service years due to the Covid-19 Pandemic students remembered the van and were excited about checking out materials. 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. Access to obtaining a library card has been made easier so that more students can benefit from checking out materials.

Through community outreach visits, the van has cultivated new 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. Bringing the van back to schools allowed more students to have their first experience with the library. Many students were able to get their first ever library card while visiting the van.

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 22/23 school year*)
- Increase mobile library circulation at school sites by 10% from the previous 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. Visits to Santa Fe Middle School have allowed us to reach out to students in Southern Monrovia that have a harder time reaching the Library compared to their peers at Clifton Middle School. Over the course of this school year we made seven visits to both schools. Average attendance at Santa Fe was 35.2 attendees per visit, compared to Clifton's at 18.3 attendees per visit. In addition our visits to Plymouth Elementary continue to be very well received. Due to Covid-19 precautions this year we were not able to return for visits at Plymouth until January 2022. Despite starting visits later in the school year than the other elementary schools, Plymouth has the most books checked out this year at 1,296 and the most new library cards created at 69. Staff will continue to reach out to schools in South Monrovia and create more opportunities for these students to access library services.

During outreach visits staff provided literacy based activities for community members. Children and their families were thankful for these activities that provided access to services outside of the Library's walls. As for increasing understanding of library services and events, anecdotal evidence suggests that staff were successful in increasing awareness of library programming. Outreach events on the van are a great place to share the library with the community. The new electric van draws attention and has been a very welcome addition to the community. Additionally, staff has heard from patrons at library events over the course of the year that they have learned about programs and services from flyers or promotions at the van visits.

This year staff were able to address the goal of increasing the circulation of materials at school sites. This goal was impacted during the 19/20 school year due to 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 to previous years. 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.

Comparatively, this year during school visits, the Monrovia Reads van circulated 4,112 books and created 188 new library cards for 5,376 students and their families at 137 visits. This is a significant increase, even taking into account the slightly abbreviated 19/20 school year. This year staff focused on increasing access to library cards for students. The barriers to obtaining a library card were lowered for students using the mobile library and this positively impacted the rate of circulation for the collection. We saw an increasing demand for books throughout the service year, with at times 50% of the collection checked out and in the hands of students. The focus has become increasing the collection to meet the demands of students.

Community Feedback:

When returning to school sites for the 21/22 school year staff worked with school officials to meet the needs of students while still following Covid-19 safety procedures. This service year, due to Covid guidelines at the schools, it was not feasible to survey students. Staff have postponed community surveys until the 22/23 service year. Anecdotally, people are very engaged with the van and look forward to the opportunities it provides to engage in literacy and access to materials. Below is a sample of comments staff have received while working in the community on the Monrovia Reads Van:

- “Oh my gosh!! I love the book mobile!! What a blessing it is for our kids and community!”
– Community member on Instagram
- “We have really enjoyed this program. We look forward to continuing this program next year”
– Bradoaks Principal, Jayne Nickles
- “We are so appreciative of you!!! [...] Thank you for all you do for our Mighty Lions!”
– Monroe Principal, Amanda Noriega

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 620.5 hours for a total staffing cost of \$22,760 in FY21/22. The Monrovia Reads organization approved \$20,000 for staffing of the van for FY21/22 at their June 2022 meeting. 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 FY2021/2022.

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 FY2021/2022.***

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