

2011
Best Practices in Early Learning, School-age & Young Adult Services
Award

Programs for children between the ages of birth and 6 years of age

Art Attack- Reading Public Library

From Da Vinci to Warhol, Migrant Head Start children that visit the Reading Public Library know their artists, thanks to Art Attack, where children read about famous artists and their masterpieces, then replicate the techniques in a hands-on art experience.

Storybooks featuring iconic artists were read by librarians with bright examples of the artists' for to show and discuss. The 40 Migrant Head Start children looked closely at the paintings and identified shapes, counted objects, and named colors in the masterpieces.

Children created a piece of art inspired by the artist and his technique. Through this hands-on art experience, children learned by interacting with the art form and were active participants in the text they read.

The library partnered with their local Goggleworks art studio, and a watercolor artist donated his time to teach a family workshop. A mini gallery was hung at the library for family and friends to view.

Reading Public Library
Frank Kasproicz, Director
fwkaspr@reading.lib.pa.us
610 655-6365

Programs that serve “at-risk” or underserved children under the age of 6, their families, or caregivers

Kensington Library Read Across America celebrates Dr. Seuss' Birthday-
Kensington Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia

Kensington's Dr. Seuss program reaches children, educators and families “where they are.” Partnering with Ken Crest (school for intellectual disabilities and Autism), Norris Square Children Center, Pan American Charter School, and the Philadelphia School District, librarian Robin Muldor opens the celebration dress as The Cat in the Hat character. The program's childlike appeal, filled with merriment, entices children, educators and families with the use of fun filled literacy activities (books, music and finger play) and is always cognizant of meeting inclusive and regular education standards.

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Children are also treated to “Little Connie,” a costumed bear interactive performance of storytelling and music, which works to increase character building and self esteem in children ages 3-6.

The success of Kensington’s first annual, Read Across America celebration of Dr. Seuss’ birthday created a buzz invoking other school literacy coordinators to schedule visits by Kensington children’s librarian. The Kensington Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia prides itself on successfully tweaking and modifying programs to meet the needs of their “at-risk” community.

Free Library of Philadelphia
Siobhan A. Reardon, Director
Reardons@freelibrary.org ; MuldorR@freelibrary.org
215 685-9996

Family programming services, such as Family Literacy, Family Place, Intergenerational programs, and special one-time programs (for a primary audience of children under the age of 6, their families or caregivers).

Grandma, Grandpa and Me: Family Place Workshop- Marple Public Library

More and more grandparents are raising their grandchildren. Andrea Mandel, Head of Children’s Services designed a program to meet the needs of this specific population by offering grandparents the opportunity to get support, information, refresh their parenting skills and meet other grandparents raising their grandchildren through a specially targeted Family Place series of programs.

Often grandparents do not expect to parent again, or they have not parented for a long time. This program reinforces the importance of education and the role that the public library plays in helping adults prepare children for school. The Family Place Workshop format allows infants and toddlers to actively construct knowledge through play while providing experts in child development, speech, nutrition and movement to answer questions and alleviate fears or frustrations of the grandparents.

One might conclude that the success of this program was measured by a total of 126 grandparents and 136 grandchildren participating during a course of 3 series sessions. However, the real success is the surprising supportive relationships formed between the

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grandparents who attended resulting in lasting benefits to both the children and the adults.

Marple Public Library
Deborah Parsons, Director
madirector@delcolibraries.org
610 356-1610

Programs that showcase community collaborations including offsite library services to child care and Head Start Centers, and outreach to organizations including school districts, hospitals, housing authorities, businesses, doctors, etc. (for a primary audience of children under the age of 6, their families or caregivers).

Rumble in the Jungle: a Bully-Free Puppet Adventure-Shaler North Hills Library

Bullying is a problem that impacts children at school, in their neighborhood and sometimes even at home. Two Shaler librarians, Karen Hathaway and Ingrid Kalchthaler have written and created an anti-bullying puppet show in order to address the issue of bullying behavior in children at an early age. Their puppet show features stick insects, dung beetles and a tarantula who visit children at Head Start centers, preschools, day care centers and early elementary schools.

The show, Rumble in the Jungle, has been performed for more than 600 children and the success can be seen in how the kids have put the lessons to use in their everyday lives. Not only do the teachers see their kids use the social skills they have learned from the show but it also gives the teachers a tool to use in their classrooms. This program is a great example of how libraries are key in providing our youngest citizens with health and social literacies.

Shaler North Hills Library
Sharon McRae, Director
mcras@einetwork.net
412 486-0211

Programs for children between the ages of 7 and 12 years of age.

Lego Club-Radnor Memorial Library

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Imagine 40 school age children, many of them boys, at your library on a Sunday afternoon digging through tubs of Legos and building a variety of designs based on a theme each month. This is the scene at the Radnor Memorial Library when they hold their wildly popular & successful Lego Club.

Each month the group meets to create designs out of Legos based on a theme. The kids are greeted with a display of book and they view a slide show presenting examples of Lego designs based on the theme. The kids have created everything from Planes & Trains to Star Wars, dragons & dinosaurs. All of the themes are appealing to boys and get them into the library which is one of the main goals of the program and it works!

Not only is Lego Club replicable, but after Abbe Klebanoff's article in School Library Journal appeared, plus a subsequently presented poster session at a past PaLA conference, many libraries around PA now run similar successful Lego Clubs.

Radnor Memorial Library
Kathy Mulroy, Director
director@radnorlibrary.org
610 687-1124

Programs for Young Adults between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age

Volunteer Readers' Theater Troupe-Upper St. Clair Township Library

Looking for a way to get teens involved in the library and to offer a more creative way for them to volunteer in the community, Colleen Miles & Sheri Huffman came up with the idea of the Readers' Theater Troupe. The Teen Library Volunteers in grades 5-10 met each week for six weeks to practice reading aloud and improve their public speaking skills and then they took their performances on the road to Friendship Village and Sunrise Assisted Living. A total of 45 troupe members not only presented "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Tempest", but they also created the scenery, designed costumes and got to perform for seniors at retirement homes. This program gave the teens a creative way to fulfill their school's community service requirement and bring entertainment to the senior citizens in the community- all the while exposing everyone to great literature.

Upper St. Clair Township Library
Helen Palascak, Director

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palascakh@einetwork.net
412 835-5540

David J. Roberts EXCEL Library Service Award

The EXCEL Library Service Award stands for Excellence in childhood Early Learning and represents the best of the Best Practices in library early learning. The honor includes a monetary gift of \$1,000.

Initiated three years ago, this award- the David J. Roberts EXCEL Library Service Award- given to the one program that surprised intrigued or inspired us most. Dave Roberts was the former director of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library and former President of the Pennsylvania Library Association.

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Library Association, the David J. Roberts EXCEL Library Service Award is presented to Reading Public Library for its Art Attack Program.

Allowing for opportunities for preschooler to express concerns about school, family life and economic situations may appear to be a daunting task but by using art as the vehicle Migrant head Start children were given a safe and creative outlet to explore their feelings. Art Attack not only meets academic standards but allows children to express their emotional needs.

The program was an opportunity to explore abstract concepts by asking children questions like, "what color makes you happy?" What do you think the person in this artwork is thinking?" Which painting did you like best?"

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Frank Kasproicz, Director
fwkaspr@reading.lib.pa.us
610 655-6365