

Maine Reads Community Literacy Project Planning Grant Final Report

- 1) *Names of members/groups on the Advisory Panel and affiliations and titles:*

The Advisory Panel consisted of Steve Norman, Director of Belfast Free Library, Peter Bighope, Chairperson for Literacy Volunteers of Waldo County; Sara Cline, Elementary School Teacher for Winterport Public Schools; and Anthony Kimble, Volunteer from MBNA America. Angela Crawford, Board Member from Waldo CAP needed to go to South Carolina the week of the first 2 meetings due to a family death. Kim Huisman, Sociology Professor from Umaine had a schedule conflict.
- 2) *Did you hold the following meetings and what were the approximate number of attendees:*

Meeting 1 Focus Group was held at the Belfast Free Library (as were the other two meetings) and consisted of the Advisory Panel and Facilitator Jeff Lane, Educator from MBNA America. Meeting 2 was the Public Forum with 2 attendees. Meeting 3 Project(s) Meeting was attended by the Advisory Panel.
- 3) *What did you discover were the top 5 underserved populations in your community? (Please list them in descending order)*

The top 5 underserved population segments were a) Adults w/ level 1 or 2 reading skills including reluctant adults embarrassed to seek help in changing work environments; b) Children lacking family support due to broken homes, being in group homes, or having behavioral challenges; c) English as second language adults; d) Seniors, especially regarding computer skills; e) Children on summer break losing the previous year's knowledge.
- 4) *What literacy programs/activities are currently taking place in your community?*

Literacy Volunteers, including English as second language and Computer tutoring, Public Library book discussion/reading groups including the Children Story Hour at Belfast Free Library and Maine Authors Reading group at Monroe Library. Also Summer Reading Programs at libraries. The Hutchinson Center has Senior College.
- 5) *What is the most important contribution your organization makes to your community and how does it work towards the Vision Goal and/or Objectives of the Maine Reads Community Literacy Project?*

The most important contributions from our groups are Free public access to the community for books, computers and multiple other events as well as offering free tutoring to assist with progressing educationally/vocationally. We'll evolve towards the vision and objectives of the Maine Reads Community Literacy Project by encouraging a "non-traditional" partnership between the Public Libraries and WCLV this summer with a Special Event tied into the Collaborative Summer Library Program's Dragons, Dreams and Daring Deeds theme during a story hour. Also we'll "devise an event or program designed to create excitement while packing an underlying educational agenda" utilizing mobile Disc-Jockey audio/video equipment to deliver an accelerated learning program module to students at one of the Public Schools for a year-end review, plus a program for the public to be held at the libraries to highlight proven studying techniques in general to be applied to any classes the Students have in lieu of trying teach any course over reformatted. Lastly we'll put together a computer literacy educational module targeted for the Senior Population.

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- 6) *What overlaps in services or groups served did you discover if any?*
When the Facilitator asked about the overlaps in services or groups the room fell to its most silent time of the day. It seems the overlaps are a result of involved families taking part of opportunities (Library Reading times, YMCA family days, extra-curricular school activities) provided at large. We also questioned as to if there actually exists rivalries between local groups trying to serve identical or overlapping population segments.

- 7) *Please describe potential community partners and projects to reach the under-served.*

The potential community partners are the libraries in Belfast, Searsport, Stockton Springs and Monroe. As mentioned we'll look to hold 1 Special Event tied into the Collaborative Summer Library Program. We'll look to partner with either the Libraries again and/or the Hutchinson Center to assist Seniors looking to get online. Another potential partner we'll look to assist is the Waldo County Early Childhood and Headstart to offer the D.J. system to present fun, exciting education based on what they want to teach. They can provide the content and we'll deliver it with bells and whistles.

- 8) *What literacy projects do you think are needed to fill the gaps in service in your community?*

The best insight was provided during the Project Meeting when Mr. Kimble suggested we get away from thinking about redelivering course material for an individual class reformatted to accelerated learning principles and instead teach the accelerated learning techniques so students can apply them to any and all of their classes. These classes will be available through the above mentioned libraries. (We still reserve the right to target a specific class for specific students if requested by a school or teacher. We still intend to run a pilot class before the end of this school year specific to course material incorporating the story-book program WCLV runs during Parent-Child day at the YMCA when we insert pictures of the kids into the body of a fairytale. Instead of a fairy tale the kids photos will be inserted into pages we create during the class time with the paragraphs being written about the specific class subject.) We'll also set up a computer literacy module(s) targeted to Seniors so they can get online and get their email. Finally we have to try to position a program for adult learners at literacy levels 1 & 2 that will persuade them to join without reservations. We expect this to be the toughest segment to reach because this group will be surviving already and may be content with their current comfort level and not have enough time or reasons to want to show up as well as being spread out rurally and may not have the time to commute..

- 9) *What is your plan of action? How do you plan to address your communities literacy needs?*

Plan of action is for Ms. Cline to be liaison to the Smith School in Winterport so we can offer the above-mentioned pilot course. Based on the results and the receptivity of the Public School Educators we'll be able to gauge whether to proceed in the same way or to worry less about specific content and more about overall study methods. Also Frances Walker, Director for WCLV has been looking for computer tutors based on heavy demand. We'll look to set the

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Computer Educational modules up by June to offer to Seniors in small groups instead of one-on-ones to help overcome the difficulty of finding more tutor volunteers.

10) *Describe what you learned and how the project helped Maine Reads to reach its goal to strengthen families and support lifelong learning?*

We learned that the need exists to attempt to educate in ways non-traditional because not all people, whether young or old, learn by old-fashioned rote methods. We also had the point reiterated that by helping the very young (3-8) have positive early educational/literacy experiences we can help prevent them from falling into the rut that leads to adult literacy levels 1 & 2. We learned that people participation is fickle and the best way to draw the public to their local libraries will be to bring the educational tour show to where they are first and let them experience the fun and satisfaction so they will be lured into the libraries for more lessons and follow-up. And finally we learned that the program(s) we initiate through Maine Reads have to be more macro and less micro, in other words teach them to fish instead of bringing the fish and feeding them.