

Maine Reads Community Literacy Project  
 Planning Grant Final Report  
 Prince Memorial Library, Cumberland

Response to questions on report form

<u>1. Panel Member</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Title</u>
Regina Burrell	Head Start Program	Teacher
Sarah Davis	Community Education	Director
Jan Hamilton	Prince Memorial Library	Youth Services Librarian
Kathie Harper	Prince Memorial Library, Board	Children's Literacy Consultant
Tania Hathaway	Home School Families	Home School - Teacher
Karen Kirk	Mabel Wilson School	Librarian
Bill Landis	Community Recreation	Director
Allan Schmid	Books Etc.	Bookstore Owner
Christine Slader	Cumberland Community Nursery School	Teacher
Holly Thibodeau	Cum/NY Family Network	Representative and Educator
Kellie Volta	Mabel Wilson School	Literacy Teacher

2. Meetings

- Focus Group – 9 panel members attended
- Public Forum -11 people attended, only 3 of which were not panel members
- Project Meeting – 5 panel members attended

3. The five underserved populations in the community

- Children in families where parents have poor literacy skills
- Families too busy to read to children
- Parents who need assistance selecting materials
- Children in families who do not qualify got Head Start and those who may soon lose Head Start if it closes in Cumberland
- Families and organizations that need exposure to materials on tolerance and diversity

4. What literacy programs/activities are currently taking place in the community?

- Story programs, author visits, summer reading program and special events at the library.
- Author visits at Mabel Wilson School
- Raising Readers – provides books to children when they visit the Doctor
- Events in Portland that serve children in our community: Reading Rainbow theater performances at Merrill Auditorium, Fiddleheads, Children's Theater of Maine and the Cultural Exchange.
- Media activities such as the Reading Rainbow contest
- Literacy conferences for educators and librarians: "In Celebration of Children's Literature" Conference held each July at USM in Gorham; "Reading Round-Up" held at the Civic Center every April; Babies and Books
- "Blueberries and Moose" Event held by the Junior League each May in Portland
- Nationwide events celebrated in MIW School: Read Across America Day, TV Turn Off Week
- Cultural studies and reading buddies in the schools
- Cream of the Crop Collection: list of excellent books for birth to young adult readers. This traveling collection comes from a book review group at PPL
- State wide literacy programs like Maine Reads and Head Start

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Cumberland/N.Yarmouth Family Network provides support and activities to 143 families  
Home school families who share educational opportunities  
Nursery Schools and day care providers who support literacy skills  
Author signings and visits to book stores

5. Most important contribution PML makes to the community relating to Maine Read goals.  
Children from the several facilities and classrooms come to the library. Both the Cumberland Community Nursery School and Head Start come to Prince Memorial Library once a month for story programs. Children who might not otherwise get the the library are exposed to both the facility and collection. Mabel Wilson classes and some day care providers also come to the library for tours and story programs. The Youth Services Librarian goes to Mabel Wilson occasionally and visits a day care facility.
6. What overlaps exist?  
We did not concentrate on overlaps and did not identify any.
7. Potential community partners and projects to reach under-served
  - We all can partner with each other; library, schools, pre-school programs, bookstore, home school families, town recreation and community education depts., and the Cum/N.Y. Family Network
  - Publish book list (Cream of the Crop) and become a clearing house for events
  - Organize author and illustrator visits – Holly and Allen
  - Continue to identify needs – public meeting and personal conversations
  - Survey the public to establish illiteracy in adult population
  - Target the family network group as an audience – 143 families involved
  - Promote tolerance and diversity
  - Reach audience not being read to - program event or take away materials
  - Create a resource list of events, programs and places– this has been started
  - Do a program focusing on how to read to children
  - Provide resources to day care providers – use “Born to Read”
  - Program on critical conversations using children’s literature
  - “Otherness,” 2-3 hour long program on diversity which Holly can lead
  - Bookmobile or book give away/recycling program/book exchange for families
  - Read-A-Loud program to children
  - Cooking activities with preschoolers & up
  - Invite local area authors/illustrators to help children write short stories
  - Grandparent reading buddies
  - Contest: write/illustrate a short story (ask local businesses to donate prizes and gift certificates)
  - Create a play/drama using a classic children’s story – after-school project

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8. What literacy projects are could fill the gaps in service within the community?

During the last session we discussed several ways to fill the gap.

- Put literacy awareness announcements on the local cable station
- Train adults how to use picture books with children and ways to extend the story
- Have a kick-off event where childhood literacy is the theme
- Create kits/boxes/bags of materials that would be available for families, babysitters, councilors or day care providers to check out from the library
- Ask Allen to get a deep discount on books for the traveling collections
- Ask LL Bean to donate bags for our traveling collection
- Make, or locate on the web, a brochure that educates adults about the need and benefits of reading to children
- Promote reading as a leisure activity at summer recreation programs
- Connect with Born to Read
- Provide some instruction for families who need help making selections
- Offering diversity and tolerance training to schools and day care centers, using children's literature
- Put community members on the local cable channel to do literacy public announcements and maybe even story programs
- Ask local TV public figures to do a short segment promoting literacy
- Tie this project to the Summer Reading Program by having a panel member present during the SRP Kick-Off event on June 21<sup>st</sup>
- Encourage panel members to take trainings offered in the Portland area that Promote literacy and acceptance of diversity

9. What is our plan of action, how will we address literacy needs?

We plan to blend many of the above mentioned items into a workable plan.

Our emphasis will be on education and diversity, this will be addressed in the implementation grant application to follow this week.

10. What we have learned and how the project helped Maine Reads to reach the goal to strengthen families and lifelong learning.

As a group we learned that although people are serious about this issue they lack the time to commit to attending a public forum. There was a great deal of interest in our planning project, I received a lot of phone calls and had people approach me while in the library. However the public forum was way under attended. We feel positive that we will make more of an impact if we visit the facilities, workplaces and schools to spread our message. That is why we will concentrate on going into classes and established programs and why we see the need for public announcements via TV. The residents of Cumberland and NY are mostly literate and committed family members who want to support the education process of the children in the community. Time is our largest challenge.

Maine Reads may share these responses and post them on the Maine Reads website.

Submitted by  
Jan Hamilton Youth Services Librarian