Australian Library and Information Association

LIBRARY STARS 2010
CASE STUDIES

September 2010

Congratulations to all the winners and highly commended finalists in our 2010 ALIA Library Stars competition. Read their stories to discover about the new, exciting and inspirational programs that are taking place in Australian public libraries.

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Category: Children and early literacy

WINNER

City of Greater Dandenong Libraries, Victoria

Early literacy outreach program

The City of Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse municipality in Australia with nearly 60% of residents speaking languages other than English at home and many having limited fluency in English. The library outreach program has adopted an early childhood literacy focus, going out to visit groups of young families and ethnic groups in the community who have not previously used the library service. It supports parents or carers from refugee or low literacy backgrounds, building their confidence and encouraging them to read regularly with their children in an effort to improve literacy and school readiness levels.

Regular visits are made to playgroups, kindergartens, schools, community centres and local health services, family day care providers, and disability support and residential groups. Library outreach staff deliver age appropriate bilingual materials, stories and songs, promoting the enjoyment of story, rhyme and rhythm, and delivering services that support early childhood initiatives and literacy programs. Baby Bounce and story telling sessions are provided to a range of multicultural parenting groups.

Community response has been overwhelming, with over 5,000 participants in 2008 and a 60% increase in loans for Let's Read materials from 2007/2008 to 2008/2009. In 2009 the outreach program was awarded a Victorian Premier's Multicultural Award for Excellence.

http://www.greaterdandenong.com/

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation, Victoria

Read Like a Demon

The library has entered into a partnership with the Melbourne Football Club to deliver a literacy program to selected grade 4 and 5 students from 10 primary schools in the City of Casey. The Read Like a Demon literacy program offers students who are struggling with reading an opportunity to participate in reading and creative writing workshops with Melbourne Football Club players and a number of best selling children's authors. The program encourages them to read more and develop their literacy skills.

Deakin University will also take the Read Like a Demon program to Lajamanu in the Northern Territory, linking Indigenous players such as Liam Jurrah to local schools using both English and the Warlpiri language.

In conjunction with the program, the library launched a new blog – Read like a Demon. Children are able to submit their own reviews, leave comments, find other reading recommendations, submit photos and keep up to date with the program.

Hardie Grant Egmont Publishers have supported the program by providing free books to Read Like a Demon participants.

The program aims to link positive literacy values with sporting role models that will provide the children with confidence and inspire them to develop a love of reading.

http://www.cclc.vic.gov.au/
http://readlikeademon.blogspot.com/

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Salisbury Library Service, South Australia

ABC 30&3

Salisbury, located in the northern suburbs of Adelaide, has a population with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and an increasing number of new migrants. A 2008 Smith Family study found that low language skills and lack of school readiness occur in homes where children are read to on fewer than three days a week and there are less than 30 children's books in the home. The ABC 30&3 program encourages families to read together at least three times a week and to have a supply of books in the home. The program has been developed to improve school readiness in children by supporting and up-skilling parents who have poor literacy skills and may otherwise be unable to assist with their children's emerging literacy skills.

ABC 30&3 is a family literacy program targeting families where reading does not occur in the family home. They are run over a five week period, in parent centres or environments where the target families are already meeting. A library staff member facilitates the sessions and works with the parents and children to demonstrate effective ways to share books with children regardless of the reading ability of the parents. The importance of reading to children and providing books in the home is reinforced. A range of books and other resources are given to families to take home each week. A visit to the local library is organised to encourage future reading and introduce the families to the value of public library services.

The program has been funded by the City of Salisbury and further supported financially and through the provision of centres to run the programs by groups such as the Salvation Army, Lutheran Community Care and the Wyatt Benevolent Institution Inc.

http://www.salisburylibrary.sa.gov.au

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Victoria Park Library, Western Australia

Loc@l library membership drive

Loc@l (Local year One Children @ your Library) drive was introduced to reverse the trend of dwindling library membership and usage by primary school children. The program aims to develop lifelong reading habits among young students by working with local schools.

A storytime session is held for each Year 1 class, where Lochie, the Loc@l mascot is introduced. Lochie lives at the library and brings his favourite things from the library to show them. Books, games, CDs, DVDs, puppets and magazines are then used to showcase the collection. It is explained that although Lochie loves living at the library he gets a little bored and this prompts children to promise to visit him. A Loc@l welcome pack, designed for Year 1 students who sign up as members is then displayed. After each introductory session, library membership forms are distributed by the classroom teacher. A Loc@l afternoon celebration is then held at the library for all children who have registered as members where the Loc@l welcome packs containing membership cards are distributed.

The major point of difference between this and other similar projects is the way in which local schools are involved: the expectation that the program will take place; and the distribution of letters to parents, encouraging their return. Parents respond well to the simplified library enrollment process. As a result of the program, the relationship between the library and local schools has been strengthened.

Results from this program speak for themselves. Out of the 10 local primary schools in the town, seven schools have been regularly involved; approximately 45% of Year 1 students in the town are library members; and as part of the process, other family members also register for the first time.

http://www.vicpark.ws/library_online/index.cfm

Category: Digital Citizenship

WINNER

ACT Library and Information Service, the Northern Territory Library and the State Libraries of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia

MyLanguage

Seven state and territory libraries partnered to create MyLanguage, an internet portal enabling access to information in more than 60 languages, with over six-million links to search engines, web directories, government websites, digital library projects and news. The website supports libraries in providing information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) that is not possible via print collections alone.

MyLanguage evolved as a response to three ideas:

- The information society is dependent on fostering access to, and publication of, multilingual and multicultural information;

- Development and enhancement of multilingual and multicultural internet and electronic services is crucial to libraries as gateways to resources; and

- Digital inclusion requires access to technology and the internet in order to develop access to information resources for new and emergent communities.

A new vision and objectives are being developed for MyLanguage that will see information technology used to enable libraries to empower CALD communities to achieve greater social inclusion and maintain and enrich cultural and linguistic identity. The project will be more responsive to community needs, foster the growth of community content, and support the social inclusion agenda of governments, especially with new technologies and Web 2.0 opportunities.

http://www.mylanguage.gov.au/

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Mid-Western Regional Council Library, NSW

Broadband for Seniors

As part of its broadband for seniors plan Making Ends Meet - Plan for Older Australians, People with Disabilities and Carers, the Federal Government has committed $5 million each year over three years. The needs of older Australians wishing to be trained in the use of computers and the internet is being met by the creation of 2,000 seniors' internet kiosks, provided to organisations that support seniors. The plan provides one-off support worth up to $10,000 per kiosk for desktop computers, broadband internet service, training and/or regular internet workshops.

The aim of the project is to provide older Australians with access to computers and the internet via free internet kiosks; support seniors to gain confidence and build skills in using new technology; address the issue of older Australians feeling isolated and 'left behind' in a technological age; and build community participation and social inclusion amongst older Australians.

The Mudgee District University of the Third Age (U3A) and the Mid-Western Regional Council Library made a successful joint application for a grant under the plan, and a kiosk was installed in the library. The project was launched in January 2010 with five volunteer U3A tutors available for six hours a day from Monday to Thursday. Learning materials are provided by Adult Learning Australia and bookings and tutors are coordinated by the library. Course completion certificates are presented at the end of each term with a morning tea that brings learners and tutors together socially. Press coverage acts as a stimulating reminder to the community. Course participants appreciate the familiar and safe library environment, the convenient location, the freedom to choose days and times, and above all the relaxed personal attention. To date: the number of learners equals 68; the number of completed certificates awarded is 36, and the number of learning hours delivered, 321.

http://library.midwestern.nsw.gov.au

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Rockingham Regional Campus Community Library

Computer Buddies

An innovative teacher from Tranby College approached the library to see if her computing students could work with members of the public to help them make better use of computers. The project commenced in 2009, with students attending the library on a weekly basis for three quarters of an hour. The Tranby teachers accompany the students who remain under their supervision, ensuring there are no problems with the students or the public!

Community members have one-on-one help from a student to deal with their computing need. It might be how to set up an email account, how to save files or how to search the internet. The students have recently branched out into helping the public to use their mobile phones. This service is completely free for the public, with the library covering any costs associated with the sessions. A sponsor is currently being sought from local businesses to help support the project and make it a sustainable program.

It is a win-win situation because the students can use their knowledge and enjoy helping the community, members of the public have someone to answer their specific problems, and library staff no longer need to spend as much time helping patrons who don't have the skills or knowledge to use the computers in the library.

http://www.rocklibrary.murdoch.edu.au

Category: Social Inclusion

WINNER

Logan City Council Libraries, Queensland

The 171 Club

Logan City is the most diverse community in Queensland with 50,000 of its 250,000 residents from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The 171 Club, named after the number of ethnic groups in Logan, demonstrates a partnership between the library and Assisting Collaborative Community Employment Support Services (ACCESS) and brings together different ethnic groups. The objectives of the club are to celebrate cultural differences, to support and encourage social cohesion between different ethnic communities in Logan, and to promote respect, fairness and a sense of belonging.

Each month, at the Beenleigh Library a different country is explored, including the culture, food and people. Nine different cultures from Africa, the Pacific, Europe and Asia have been celebrated and genuine interest has been generated, with between 60 and 120 people attending each event. As a result of the program's success, the 171 Club will be extended to other Logan libraries.

http://www.loganlibraries.org/

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Central Highlands Regional Library Corporation, Victoria

Building Skills for Life

The Clemente Australia program offers a free tertiary level education program and support services to marginalised and disadvantaged people. By doing so, it aims to break the cycle of poverty, inequality and social injustice.

The Ballarat Clemente program was established with seven partners including the Australian Catholic University (ACU), the University of Ballarat, the Smith Family and the Central Highlands Regional Library Corporation. The Ballarat library is the first public library in Australia to partner with a Clemente program and the first to be located in a regional centre. The humanities courses are taught by staff from the ACU and the University of Ballarat, and nine students have completed the two units of study offered to date.

Lectures are held in the library, where a training room, internet access and IT support and equipment such as data projectors, computers and white boards are provided. The library offers classes to the students to support their studies such as familiarisation with the library, the catalogue, online databases, internet searching, essay writing and study skills.

The library assists students to feel connected to the wider community, provides access to learning and leads to increased confidence and self-esteem.

In addition to the formal Clemente program, a relationship has developed with the Smith Family, leading to the provision of basic computer classes for other disadvantaged community members. These have been well attended, with a waiting list of over 100 people. The classes offer much needed computer skills, and an opportunity for social interaction.

http://www.chrlc.vic.gov.au/

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Seville Grove Public Library, Western Australia

World of Words Multicultural Club

Armadale is a low socio-economic area, with high unemployment and limited resources for adult education. A social English conversation group was formed with a view to enhancing employment opportunities for migrants by improving their competency in spoken English. The group could also play a part in the integration process, helping to promote social cohesion. In addition the group aimed to provide a recreational outlet.

Assisted by a volunteer coordinator, group members practice their English conversation skills while sharing experiences from their countries of origin, and reading local newspapers. Familiar topics give members confidence to improve their language skills, while developing a support network of new friends. As their skills and confidence grow, group members become involved in the library and the local community.

Outcomes of the group's operations include an increase in library membership and use of the library's community language resources, and group members' enhanced self-confidence, integration into the local community and improved communication skills. Prior to joining World of Words, many members were isolated and dependent upon a number of agencies for assistance. They are now more independent, and part of a supportive network. Some have successfully found work as a direct result of the program. Group achievements include an art display, a collaborative project with the library's creative writing group, and a "First Click" grant enabling the library to offer IT training to group members. More recently, members hosted the city's Harmony Day celebrations.

The library provides a unique service that is not part of core business, and is not available elsewhere. The fact that World of Words is still operating, celebrating its tenth anniversary in September 2010, is testimony to its amazing success.

http://www.armadale.wa.gov.au

Category: Health & Aging

WINNER

The Hills Shire Library Service, New South Wales

Festival of Active Living

Council's Positive Ageing Strategy 2008-2010 indicates that 8.8% of the Shire population is currently aged 65+ and predicts this will grow annually by 0.38%. Two actions contained in the strategy were to "continue support for innovative senior focused activities" and "support continuing education and training opportunities". As a result, a partnership was formed between the library and community development teams to plan and implement the Festival of Active Living.

The three-day Festival included hobbies, health and wellbeing and lifestyle options and talks by gardening guru Sandra Ross, meditation expert Kevin Hume, media personality Ita Buttrose and author Mary Moody. Stalls were provided by community groups such as artists, knitters, yoga instructors and chiropractors. The Rock n Soul Choir brought the library down and really showed just how loud and vibrant libraries can be. Objectives of the festival were: to change perceptions about libraries and increase awareness and usage; open opportunities for seniors to remain active and enhance their quality of life; to help build a vibrant, healthy and active community; and to provide avenues for seniors to connect and be part of their community.

The Festival of Active Living was very successful, with significant opportunities for attendees to enhance their lives with new skills and connect with other community members. The large number of attendees indicates the objectives to increase usage and awareness were met at the same time as helping to build a vibrant, healthy and active community. .

http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/library

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Burnside Library, South Australia

The 5 P's of Public Libraries – Progressive Promotion, Partnerships and Popular Programs

The face of our community is changing as the baby boomers move into retirement. The Burnside library has recognised and responded to the challenge that this presents. A range of programs have been introduced to entice baby boomers into the library, where they can use their leisure time in a productive, creative and meaningful way.

The services have been categorised into three streams:

- Progressive Promotion; using technology such as Vodcasts and Podcasts, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter to promote library services.

- Partnerships; linking with a wide range of groups to provide programs of interest to baby boomers. One example of a partnership is the library working with the State Theatre Company to promote selected plays under the umbrella of the Scene It? program. Partnerships with local book stores to host author visits and the Book of The Year presentation have also been included in the partnerships program.

- Popular Programs; Many services of interest to baby boomers are offered, including a range of computer classes, social classes such as art and craft and languages and reader advisory and general entertainment programs.

http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au