



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Montgomery County

Program Title: Caturday

Program Category: Regional Collaboration

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Jennifer T. Harris

Title: Public Information Director

Department: Public Information

Telephone: 540-381-6887 Website: www.montva.com

Email: harrisjt@montgomerycountyva.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: F. Craig Meadows

Title: County Administrator

Signature: *F. Craig Meadows*

Caturday
Montgomery County, VA
VACo Achievement Awards Program Category: Regional Collaboration

Executive Summary

The Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library (MFRL) endeavored to strengthen its partnerships with other governmental agencies while also serving its mission of strengthening the community by providing individuals with access to information, experiences, and ideas in fun and creative ways. Staff members discovered a model in other libraries where children were paired with shelter animals and allowed to read and to interact with the animals. This program has multiple benefits including socializing the shelter animals to make them more appealing for potential adopters and providing children with a safe, nonjudgmental audience with whom to practice their reading skills. For MFRL, it provided an opportunity to work closely with the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center (ACAC) and reinforce that partnership.

This collaboration resulted in Caturday, a program whereby cats from the ACAC were brought to the Christiansburg Branch of the MFRL and paired with children each month. The children were then able to interact with the homeless cats and read to them, allowing both



entities to realize a mutually beneficial goal. To date, 167 of children have participated in the program. Overall, Caturday has been a successful high impact, low-cost method of serving both our human and animal populations.

Goal

The goal of the Caturday program for the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library was to strengthen interdepartmental relationships and to serve the community with access to information, experiences, and ideas in a fun and creative way. In Montgomery County, as in many places, the library system strives to bolster literacy at all stages. Finding innovative ways to support literacy can be a challenge, especially in shy or reluctant juvenile readers. In addition, providing another opportunity for the homeless cats at the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center to interact with the community greatly increases the cats chances of being adopted as well as increases the communities' awareness of the facility. The Caturday program was a great solution to the community education, interaction, and awareness issues each entity faced.

Overview

The Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library (MFRL) endeavored to strengthen its partnerships with other governmental agencies while also serving its mission of strengthening the community by providing individuals with access to information, experiences, and ideas in a relevant, fun and creative way. Through Caturday, a program whereby cats from the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center (ACAC) were brought to the Christiansburg Branch of the MFRL so children could be paired with them, interact with them, and read to them, the mutually beneficial goal was accomplished.



Caturday was implemented in December of 2017 at the Christiansburg Branch of MFRL. The Volunteer and Education Coordinator of the ACAC, had partnered with the library before, and welcomed the opportunity to bring adoptable shelter cats to the library for the new monthly

program, along with all the supplies necessary. Library staff selected age appropriate books and arranged the preregistration for the program. As the purpose was to allow children to have one on one time with the cats, it was necessary to make a schedule to allow for adequate time.

There were multiple issues that needed a solution in this situation. In Montgomery County, as in many places, the library system strives to bolster literacy at all stages and finding creative ways to support literacy can be a challenge, especially in shy or reluctant juvenile readers. The ACAC is a new facility, which opened in April of 2017 and only then began accepting cats. Providing an opportunity to bring the animals out into the community greatly increases their chances of being adopted and increases the communities' awareness of the facility. Caturday, proved to be an excellent and creative solution to the community education, interaction, and awareness issues each entity faces.

The Caturday program has multiple benefits including socializing the animals to make them more appealing for potential adopters and providing children with a safe, nonjudgmental audience with whom to practice their reading



skills. In addition, the program provided a purrfect opportunity for the MFRL to work closely with the ACAC and reinforce that partnership.

Budget

This event was held on library grounds during normal operating hours, on the fourth Saturday of the month for one hour. Minimal staffing was required, with one representative from the ACAC bringing the cats and one representative from MFRL arranging the event and coordinating families. No additional funds were necessary for the program.

Results



Caturday has been a resounding success at the Christiansburg Branch of the MRFL. Each day of the program has been completely filled with eager children readers and their families and homeless cats eager for interaction since its inception. In fact, the program has been so successful at the Christiansburg Branch of the MRFL that it has been duplicated at the

Meadowbrook Branch to equal success. Each month, new cats are brought by the ACAC as the cats from the previous event have usually been adopted in the interim. The mere presence of the animals in the library has engaged patrons of all levels, creating a buzz and more preregistrations for the following Caturday. To date, 167 of children have participated in the program. Overall, Caturday has been a successful high impact, low-cost method of serving both our human and animal populations.