



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the 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: Chesterfield County

Program Title: Library Partnership Project for Detained Youth

Program Category: Health and Human Services

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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Title: County Administrator

Signature: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

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Date: 2023.06.27 12:43:29 -04'00'



Library Partnership Project for Detained Youth VACo Application 2023

Executive Summary

In spring 2021, the Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Home (CJDH) reestablished a partnership with Chesterfield County Public Library (CCPL) to provide CJDH residents with positive and fun activities focused on reading, literacy, and learning. At the first book discussion program hosted by the library, 100% of CJDH residents participated, generating a demand for additional school-break programs throughout 2022 as well as the revitalization of the CJDH library. Residents were exposed to a model public library within the secured CJDH facility where they could learn the library is a trusted, safe and desirable life-long learning resource they can confidently use on their own. Many residents shared their new desire to read and visit their public library for books and to apply for jobs. This strong partnership established a new program and opportunity to meet detained youth where they are and support recreational reading and personalized book discussion programs fostering new communication, interpersonal, and technical skills for future employment, relationships, and education as a contributing member of their community.

Challenge

During a time of uncertainty and disengagement mid-COVID in 2021, Marilyn Brown, Director of Juvenile Justice Services and the Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Home (CJDH), reached out to Chesterfield County Public Library (CCPL) seeking any kind of engagement possible during the one month the CJDH residents are out of school in July. CCPL staff jumped to create a brand new and personalized book discussion group during their one month of “enrichment programming” during the summer. The joint goal was to counteract or overcome

the heightened concern of what Ms. Brown described, according to demographic data, that “detained youth are further disadvantaged by a disproportional high level of illiteracy, lack of educational attainment and engagement, insufficient vocational skills, a history of trauma, and a high rate of mental illness and emotional instability.” CCPL provided CJDH residents with positive and fun activities focused on reading, literacy and learning during the 2021 summer break as the CJDH’s educational and community-oriented partner. This partnership project also established the need to update the CJDH library with desirable, quality books that are easily accessible and available to read.

Description of the Program

The CJDH is a 90-bed custody facility, part of Chesterfield County’s Department of Juvenile Justice Services, providing a safe, secure and supportive environment for court-involved youth. CJDH’s goal is to promote individual growth through education and empowerment. CJDH’s aim is to keep young offenders connected to their communities while holding them accountable and providing services based on the Risk-Need-Responsivity model.

The library’s mission is to enhance the lives of customers by providing tools for a lifetime of learning. CCPL deliver’s world-class library services that inform and inspire customers and foster a vibrant and thriving community. CJDH invited CCPL to offer one summer school break activity. Since then, CCPL and CJDH have partnered to initiate regular school break programs and to start revitalizing their pre-existing library. This partnership has grown over the past year and a half and has gained a positive reputation amongst detained youth and administrators.

The partnership project relies on the fact that detention is often one of the only opportunities youth have the time, inclination, or motivation to read, as everyday life distractions and access to technology are removed. With a relevant and useful library collection, a revived library environment and an all-welcoming book discussion program the partnership project meets the youth where they are. A culturally relevant collection provides residents with

opportunities for mental escape as well as personally and socially relevant materials that are appropriate to residents' ages and levels of competency. By supporting recreational reading, the project aimed to reduce recidivism for post-adjudicated youth as well as increase safety and educational engagement for all.

The partnership project's two objectives are to promote a love of reading and to showcase the public library as a trusted, safe and desirable life-long learning tool.

Objective 1 – Promote a Love of Reading:

All CJDH residents were engaged in a group-based book discussion program to promote a love of literature and experience peer collaboration in a positive, nurturing, learning environment.

Residents were brought together to learn about and discuss topics that matter to them, whether they read the book or not, with facilitation from CCPL librarians. Presenters used a consistent personalized curriculum developed by a curriculum team – a group of 3-6 CCPL librarians. The standard curriculum facilitates the same one-hour program across the six CJDH units with 3-8 participants total. Each program was offered during school breaks between summer 2021, winter 2022, spring 2023, and the upcoming summer 2023: two sessions during winter and spring breaks, and one session a week during the four-week summer break with a celebration during the fifth session.

Two primary strategies were implemented to build trust and a rapport between the residents and librarians. First, to allow residents ownership and control over the topics, the book was always voted on from a pre-selected list of titles and summaries. The second strategy included an icebreaker played by residents, CJDH staff and library presenters, as well as competitive points game and a craft or creative activity followed by a snack for active participants and an extra snack for game winners. This structure provides safety and reliability

for residents participating in the programs more than once. During the summer programs a gift card is available to win (based on participation) by one resident in each of the six units.

Success was measured by how many residents read or had a new desire to read the selected books, noticeable and positive changes in interpersonal skills, teamwork between residents and the number of conversations about specific books, book series, or authors.

Objective 2 – Showcase the Public Library:

CCPL and CJDH replicated a positive, hands-on library experience as described and influenced by the American Library Association's guide for Services and Responsibilities of Libraries section on Service to Detention Facilities and Jails (link in supplemental materials). This allows residents to learn new skills, increase their confidence and help shape their view of the public library as a safe and trusted community resource.

Revitalizing the CJDH library and Promoting the Public Library:

Damaged books were removed from the CJDH Library collection. Remaining books were cataloged by a CCPL librarian. These books were entered into a special CJDH library catalog and processed with the same location, barcode, spine label call numbers and genre stickers used in the public library collection. Books were arranged on the shelves in the same order and fashion as books in CCPL locations as a means to learn how to use their local library on their own.

Helpful posters were created and displayed as quick references when using the CJDH library. They give information using the Dewey Decimal System to help residents find nonfiction materials, different genres like science fiction, and the differences between fiction and nonfiction or biography and autobiography.

CCPL librarians curate a quarterly list of teen books that are popular, relevant and appropriate in reading levels and content to keep the collection relevant and desirable.

A CCPL library card was created for the CJDH principal for residents to borrow books from CCPL's collection, as well as checking out and reading books from the CJDH library. A weekly delivery system was also established for the exchange of borrowed books and maintenance of CJDH library books by CCPL librarians.

When residents leave CJDH they are given an active CCPL library card ready for immediate use. These cards do not have a connection to the CJDH to maintain the highest level of privacy for former residents.

Success is measured by how many books residents could find on their own using the CJDH library and how many requests residents made to visit the CJDH library.

Financing

There were four school-break book discussion programs, one each in summer 2021, spring 2022, summer 2022, and winter 2022. The cost per program was \$200/program (totaling \$800), which included the purchase of books for residents to keep and multiple boxes of incentive snacks. To encourage ongoing participation and some healthy competition, one resident from each of the six units, with either the highest points earned from activities or for participation at the end of the two summer programs (2021 and 2022), received a \$25 Amazon gift card, for a total of \$300 in gift cards.

In summer 2021, CCPL librarians prepared four different titles for residents to vote on for the upcoming book discussion. In addition to the 50 copies of the selected book, "Holes" by Luis Sachar, five copies of each other title not selected were purchased. The total cost of these books was \$337.05.

The focus for the two-day spring 2022 book discussion program was about learning genres, so a total of 50 copies of the following titles were borrowed from CCPL, at no cost.

- "Ugly" by Robert Hoge (autobiography)
- "Chains: Seeds of America" by Laurie Halse Anderson (historical fiction)

- “The Eye of Minds” by James Dashner (science fiction)
- “Jackaby” by William Ritter (mystery/suspense)
- “The Outsiders” by S.E. Hinton (realistic fiction)

The cost of 35 copies for Stephen King’s “The Body” was \$214.55 for the summer 2022 program. Winter 2022 program’s books cost \$359.60 for 40 copies of “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” by C.S. Lewis.

Summary of costs:

- Book Total = \$911.20
- Snack Total = \$800
- Gift Card Total = \$300

Total costs of the CJDH and CCPL Partnership project for four book discussion programs over 12 days was \$2,011.20.

Results

The success of overwhelming participation and engagement by 100% of the residents during the first book discussion program in summer 2021 generated an immediate demand for additional school-break programs and revitalization of the CJDH library.

Long-term residents directly influenced those that may be there one day and gone the next. According to CJDH Assistant Director Willie May, “when the new kid looks over and sees another tough guy with tattoos up and down their arm reading a book, the new kid sits closer to the book, then places his hand on the book, until he picks it up to read like the other guys in his unit. Even if they hate reading or have difficulty reading, they want to read now. The library is also promoted by ‘the other guys’ and CJDH staff as cool.”

Every resident that experienced a previous book discussion program always enthusiastically volunteered to read the next book and answer book-specific questions. First

time participants that did not read the book for day one of the program, always returned on day two reading the book, or having just finished overnight. All residents took great pride in reading and participating. One resident was grinning from ear-to-ear holding his new book, "Holes" by Luis Sachar, near his chest when he shared with presenters how he never read before arriving at CJDH. He arrived uninterested on day one, and on day two he wanted to answer every question. The greatest changes and improvements were in verbal and nonverbal attitudes, even for the most resistant residents. One young man was originally closed off with his arms crossed, head tilted down and hair covering his face. Each day, as he felt more comfortable and safer, he adjusted his demeanor. On the last day he was sitting up, hair away from his face, and always attentive and engaged with his hands holding the event props. When a presenter acknowledged his positive change, he puffed up his chest and proudly replied, "Thank you, I've been working really hard."

Everyone wanted a turn to share about their favorite book, current read, or ask questions about another book before time was up. Although originally unplanned, this "readers advisory" conversation naturally developed into the staple conclusion of the book discussions, every visit. The frequency and locations of these readers advisory conversations has been expanding. They are no longer isolated to English class or the CJDH library between residents and adults. They are also occurring in the common areas of the units, and at mealtime between residents. Youth that may have once had an altercation outside the CJDH have learned to communicate about their shared experiences of reading and to talk through their difference of opinions about the books they read.

It is observed by CJDH staff how readers advisory conversations have triggered more frequent requests to visit the library or for a new book. While using the CJDH library, residents are asking more questions and using the library catalog to search for desired subjects, titles, or authors. Their ability to find a specific book on the shelves is improving now the CJDH library models a public library.

The intersection of two Chesterfield County departments created a unique partnership between a juvenile detention home and public library. Through this partnership, court-involved youth, ranging from 11 to 18 years old, are now offered tools for a lifetime of learning in a safe, secure, and supportive environment that promotes individual growth through education and empowerment.

Overview

In spring 2021, the Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Home (CJDH) reestablished a partnership with Chesterfield County Public Library (CCPL) to provide CJDH residents with positive and fun activities focused on reading, literacy, and learning. Residents were exposed to a model public library within the secured CJDH facility where they could learn the library is a trusted, safe and desirable life-long learning resource they can confidently use on their own. Many residents shared their new desire to read and visit their public library for books and to apply for jobs. This strong partnership established a new program and opportunity to meet detained youth where they are and support recreational reading and personalized book discussion programs fostering new communication, interpersonal, and technical skills for future employment, relationships, and education as a contributing member of their community.

The project's two objectives are to promote a love of reading and to showcase the public library as a trusted, safe and desirable life-long learning tool. The reading goal was met through facilitating a group book discussion program designed to promote a love of literature and experience peer collaboration in a positive, nurturing, learning environment. To showcase the public library model, the CJDH library was weeded of old and damaged books, organized like a public library, made user friendly with fresh directional posters, curating a quarterly list of popular, relevant and appropriate books to keep the collection relevant and desirable, and creating library cards for all participants that could be used at both the CCPL library and the CJDH library.

Supplemental Materials

American Library Association. 2006. Services and Responsibilities for Libraries - **Service to Detention Facilities and Jails**. *ALA*. Retrieved on Tuesday, January 31, 2023 from <http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociationhidden/governingdocs/policymanual/services.htm>