

Kiwanis International Convention
Nashville, June 24-28

Literacy Program

:

Illiteracy Continues to be Worldwide Problem.

- Consider the following taken from www.readfaster.com, and others. The figures below apply to the problem of illiteracy in the US but there is little doubt that the percentages can be extrapolated to the populations of most countries throughout the world.
 - Approximately 50 percent of the nation's unemployed youth age 16-21 are functional illiterate, with virtually no prospects of obtaining good jobs.
 - More than three out of four of those on welfare, 85% of unwed mothers and 68% of those arrested are illiterate. About three in five of America's prison inmates are illiterate.
 - It is estimated that the cost of illiteracy to business and the taxpayer is \$20 billion per year. Imagine what it is worldwide.
 - More than 20 percent of adults read at or below a fifth-grade level - far below the level needed to earn a living wage.
 - The number of adults that are classified as functionally illiterate increases by about 2.25 million each year.
 - 44 million adults in the U.S. can't read well enough to read a simple story to a child.
 - 60 percent of America's prison inmates are illiterate and 85% of all juvenile offenders have reading problems.
 - Children who have not developed some basic literacy skills by the time they enter school are 3 - 4 times more likely to drop out in later years.
 - 21 million Americans can't read at all, 45 million are marginally illiterate and one-fifth of high school graduates can't read their diplomas.
 - To participate fully in society and the workplace in 2020, citizens will need powerful literacy abilities that until now have been achieved by only a small percentage of the population.

The Treasure Chest Literacy Program is a Powerful and Dynamic Service Project

While our efforts cannot take the place of good teaching, we can offer motivational and material support to children and their teachers.

- Literacy has a high community interest. Community leaders and parents invariably support efforts to promote literacy in their communities.
- Attracts grant money. Businesses, agencies and individuals accept applications for grants from 501 c 3 organizations.

The Plan:

Focus on serving an age segment of population that is manageable for your club and that will hold their interest, including any or all the categories listed below (Kiwanis Club of Greater Encinitas primarily serves children ages 4-10).

- Early Childhood, ages 0-3

- Pre-school, Kindergarten, ages 4 and 5
- Primary Grades, ages 6-10
- Middle Grades, ages 11-14
- High School, ages 15 and up
- Adult

Theme: Choose a metaphorical theme attractive to children ages 4-10 that will interest and motivate them to treasure book and read them. (The Kiwanis Club of Greater Encinitas, California, uses the pirate theme, which is especially appealing to boys where the most severe reading problems occur).

Program Elements (pick and choose):

- Teacher of the Month: each month sponsoring club gives a \$000 gift certificate to a Teacher of the Month from a local school (a different school each month).
- Book Mobile: A pickup or suitable vehicle is decorated with graphics reflecting the chosen theme. It is outfitted with bookshelves, loaded with appropriate books, and each month, is driven to a different school where selected (10 or more) teachers are invited to choose given number of books (10-20) to keep in their classroom libraries.
- Theme Paraphernalia:
 - Treasure Chests: Your club builds or buys treasure chests, decorates them reflecting the chosen theme (pirates in our case), fills them with books (40 or more) and gives them to classrooms and agencies that educate children. (Specs for chest construction are available from M Pike, mnpike@mac.com):
 - Lumber for chests is made from discarded wood (old fencing in our case).
 - Bookmarks
 - Membership Cards
 - Book Logs
 - Funny Money
- Characters to Match Theme: (Captain Book in our case) a member or members of your club dress in costume and goes into classrooms, assemblies, parades and other gatherings. Your club's character and the treasure chests become an icon for your program. It links all elements together and helps brand you club in positive ways (much like Ronald McDonald does for McDonalds).
 - Character's routine emphasize the importance of reading in life and attempts to motive children to become avid, successful readers.
 - Character's routine may include: reading a book to the children, songs, magic, story telling or whatever your imagination invents.
- Book Sources: Look for and discover sources for books in your country that best meet your budget and the skill and interest levels of the children you serve. In the US sources include:

- Barnes & Noble, Borders Books and other book stores; bargain books, and deals with these retailers.
- Scholastic Books. If you are a 501 c 3 organization you can establish a Literacy Partnership with Scholastic.
- Reading is Fundamental is connected with Kiwanis.
- First Book is a foundation dedicated to providing quality books at reduced prices to 501 c 3 organizations with a literacy emphasis from their Marketplace and books for the cost of shipping from their National Book Bank.
- Gently Used Books: hundreds of books will come to you from individuals, libraries and schools as your program becomes known in the community.