

BEST PRACTICES

Book Buddies Baltimore Chapter

Partners: Armistead Gardens School, Heritage Early Learning Center

Volunteers Used: 6-8 per session

Costs: The Chapter has applied for and received grants

Clients served: 150 per month

Why the Program was established:

Literacy is the way to break the cycle of poverty. In the last few years the Chapter has collected and given out over 14,000 books to children within the Baltimore organizations they support. CCS helps the children start their own libraries, reads aloud to the children, collects and hands out school supplies and backpacks in their partnering schools.

The first step was to contact school principals and ask if they needed help. CCS sent in readers, homework helpers, warm clothes, school supplies and, always, books. Whatever the organization needed, every effort was made to help them. Evaluation forms were sent out at the end of the year to ask for their feedback. The Chapter particularly felt there was value in knowing what didn't work so they could make adjustments.

Summary:

Book Buddies is one of the Chapter's most hands-on programs. They meet monthly at two Baltimore City Title One Schools and read to students in the Pre-K. They usually have two readers per classroom and read three books to a group of 15-20 students during a thirty-minute session. After reading and discussing the books, the students are invited to choose a book for their home library.

One of the monthly readings was on the topic of manners. The students were delighted to role-play and join in demonstrating good manners. For the 2015 -16 school year the Chapter is working on more thematic readings. Some of the suggested topics are seasons, friendship, dental health and fairy tales. The Chapter has been fortunate to receive two grants that will enable them to supply the students with new books related to the theme of the readings. They take great care in selecting books to read to the group. CCS has worked with a public librarian to create a list of diverse books that will interest these young learners. The teachers made many worthwhile suggestions to have the students interact more during the reading session.

The Chapter has formed a wonderful relationship with the teachers, staff and pre-K students. After the winter program at one of the schools, the families were able to choose clothing items that had been sourced by CCS. CCS was invited and attended end of the school year events and closing programs. It was so gratifying to watch these students develop during the school year.



Washington Chapter Book Bunch Program

A Program of the Christ Child Society, Washington, DC

Immediate Past President, Kathy Norton Warren, had long been concerned about Kindergarten readiness for children in poverty. In 2014 she convened a group of volunteers from the chapter who, like herself, had backgrounds in education. They set out on a year-long exploration of programming options that our chapter could undertake to address literacy at the youngest ages. What resulted was a program called Book Bunch which started in the fall of 2015. The goal of Book Bunch is to instill the love of books in young children and to help parents model the “love of books” behavior with their young children. A secondary goal is to help parents build a library of books in their homes.

Utilizing the Mary Virginia Merrick Center (a recreation center in the poorest ward of DC owned by the Archdiocese of Washington in which the Washington chapter leases much of the space) we began monthly Book Bunch sessions. The Merrick Center was a place where we had already established connections within the community and had inroads into the population of people we were trying to reach – primarily mothers with toddler aged children.

Book Bunch sessions are scheduled on one Saturday morning a month during the school year from 10 am – 11 am. Volunteers from the 14 Washington area guilds are invited to help coordinate the event. Guilds are also encouraged to conduct book drives for Book Bunch to reduce the costs associated with purchasing the book for the families to take home. Below is a sample planning a book bunch session template. For more information about Book Bunch, contact Kathleen Curtin, Executive Director CCS Washington, at kcurtin@christchilddc.org.

Book Bunch

Stories * Songs * Snacks

For Babies and Toddlers and their Loved Ones

- ✚ *Book and Author:*
- ✚ *Introductions: Name Tags, Circle on Reading Rug*
- ✚ *Story Time: Read, Touch, Talk about the book*
- ✚ *Music for Singing, Dancing, Marching and Playing*
- ✚ *Snacks and Juice*
- ✚ *Craft: Something more to talk about the book*
- ✚ *Quiet time: sit & discover another book together.*
- ✚ *Farewell Song*

All families will go home with the featured book, plus a new book for Cuddle Time. Extra copies available to give to friends and to invite them to the next Book Bunch!

Notes for Planning a Book Bunch: Set up time: 30 minutes;
Book Bunch: 60 minutes. Families will proceed through the activities below. If a large number of children attend, families can rotate through activities at stations after the initial story.

- ✚ **Choice of Book:** Board books are the best choice for babies and toddlers. The books can be ordered through the CCS office from First Book or Amazon. We hope to order 2 to 3 times the number of children so that the families can take home extra copies for friends. Some books lend themselves to other decorations that can be added though not required.

Our goal is to keep the focus on reading and the reading relationship with their parents and other important people who bring them.

- ✚ **Introduction:** Volunteers will welcome families as they arrive and give them name tags which correspond to the book chosen (eg butterflies for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**). Music can be playing in the background. Families will be invited to sit around the caterpillar rug to get ready to start. The families and volunteers will introduce themselves.

- ✚ **Story Time:** The reader will introduce the featured book, asking questions for children to think about or answer. The children will have an opportunity to feel their books and look at some of the pages that make this book unique. The reader will then read the book with much excitement! Discussion with volunteers.

- ✚ **Music:** Volunteers are encouraged to bring iPhone music that can be played on our wireless speakers. The music can correspond in some way (even distantly!) to the book and be lively enough to encourage signing, dancing, marching or playing. EG For **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**, children can crawl through a tunnel to see what it might be like to come out of a cocoon. Discussion with volunteers.

- ✚ **Snacks and Juice:** A table can be set up and decorated if possible with snacks and juice that may correspond to the book in some way, recognizing this is not always possible. EG **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** has an eating theme of fruits and cooked foods so these would be served. Pick up items only, requiring just napkins and cups to serve. Discussion with volunteers.

- ✚ **Craft:** Some very simple craft can be chosen that corresponds to the book. CCS provides toddler friendly crayons and paper. Eg Children will color butterflies for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**. Discussion with volunteers. Other ideas for crafts can be found on the First Book website. CCS will begin to research other recommended titles and create files for activities, music and discussion at each station.

- ✚ **Quiet Time:** Families can be given a second book and urged to sit and read or discuss the pictures and/or textures they see. This second book and the

featured story hour book will then be given to all participants in our logo bags.

✚ **Farewell Song:** Volunteers can say goodbye to the families and hand out the goodie bags with the books, crafts, and extra snacks. Music encouraged! Tell families to bring their friends to the next Book Bunch.

✚ **Evaluate and Clean Up!**

BEST PRACTICES

Educational Enrichment Phoenix Chapter

Partners: three Catholic elementary schools

Volunteers Used: Book Club Buddies - 16-18; Story Book Friends - 18

Costs: \$3,000 annually

Clients served: Book Club Buddies - 46 monthly; Story Book Friends - 55 monthly

Why the Program was established:

This is the only program that allows Phoenix CCS members to interact with children. Because of the interaction this is one of their most rewarding and fulfilling activities. Educational Enrichment was started as a result of *Challenging Poverty: One Child at a Time*. There are two programs under Educational Enrichment, Book Club Buddies and Story Book Friends. There are two Story Book Friends programs in two different schools and one Book Club Buddies program in another school. Both programs run only during the school year.

When introducing one of these programs into a school the first contact is with the Principal and/or Pastor. At the beginning of each year another contact is necessary to confirm there is still a time slot to spend with the children and work out other logistics. Staying in touch with the teachers and Principal is key to making this program a success.

Summary:

Story Book Friends: Reading to/with first graders and sometimes second graders. A book is read and followed by an activity related to the book. A healthy snack is provided also. Volunteers are matched with the same group of children each time, allowing them to get to know each child better.

Book Club Buddies – Involves fourth and fifth graders. Books are handed out one month and a book discussion and related activity are completed the following month. Snacks are also provided.

Activities for 2014-15 included:

- September: Introduction to the project and distributed the first book, *Farmworkers' Friend. The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Donald R. Collins. Decorated the student book bags and prepared the notebooks to be used through the year.
- October: Discussed the *Farmworkers' Friend*, decorated a photo book, and gave the children photos taken of them in September to start the book. Distributed *Lunch Money* by Andrew Clements.
- November: Discussed *Lunch Money* and decorated piggy banks. Distributed *Holes* by Louis Sachar.

- January: Discussed *Holes* and made friendship bracelets. Distributed Roald Dahl's *Revolting Recipes*.
- February: Discussed *Revolting Recipes* and had students make up a recipe. Distributed *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan.
- March: Discussed *Esperanza Rising* and decorated a flower pot to be planted with bean seeds. Distributed *Egypt Game* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder.
- April: Discussed *Egypt Game* and provided each group with the makings of a blank board game which they then devised as a game.
- May: A brief review of the years' books and then students were each assigned to make a drawing of one of the books read this year. The drawings are then mounted on a large poster board for a decoration for the school.

The books are the big expense but being able to provide each child with a new book to own each month was an important part of the project when it was originally developed. Now because of budget constraints, the children are asked to return the books. It seems to have worked out and most of the books have come back so not as many will have to be ordered next year. The ideal situation would be to be able to let the children keep their books and in so doing build a small library of their own. These children come from homes in which books are not able to be part of the families' budget.

BEST PRACTICES

Golden Gate Elementary School Naples Chapter

Partners: Golden Gate Elementary School, Naples, FL

Volunteers Used: about 12

Costs: Budget \$10 -12,000 annually; \$250,000 over 12 years

Clients served: School enrollment is over 900, housed in two buildings primary and grades 3-5

Why the Program was established:

When the Naples chapter was established in 1998, the charter members wanted to become involved with tutoring and reading in a school in an impoverished area. The first school they worked with was not very welcoming. Golden Gate has very easy to work with and their relationship has developed into a business partnership with the school.

Summary:

What started as a tutoring project blossomed into the chapter becoming a resource for children who lack many basic necessities. The students face many challenges: 94% are eligible for free lunch; 82% come from non-English speaking families; 59% have trouble with English.

In addition to tutoring and mentoring, the volunteers use the Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM) to improve skills in a pre-reading program. ELLM, is “a literacy-focused curriculum and support system designed for preschool children ages 3, 4, and 5 years old. The program is designed to enhance existing classroom curricula by specifically focusing on improving children's early literacy skills and knowledge” (<http://floridaearlylearning.com>).

The partnership established with the school also involves providing many aspects of daily operation, equipment for the students, and health and clothing needs. Each year, the principal submits a wish list and the chapter budgets about \$10 – 12,000 when money is available.

In the past, the chapter has provided:

- A garden for the primary building, in conjunction with Home Depot. The garden is part of a science project for grade 2
- Picnic tables used by teachers for working with children and parent meetings
- Reference books for the teachers
- Agenda (assignment) books for all students
- Clothing, especially school uniforms (4 volunteers do the shopping)
- Themed murals to brighten the hallways
- Library books and volunteering in the library
- A fitness track and playground equipment
- Running club uniforms

BEST PRACTICES

St. Rocco and St. Francis School Libraries Cleveland Chapter

Partners: St. Rocco and St. Francis Schools

Volunteers Used: 2 at St. Francis; 4 at St. Rocco

Costs: \$500 for each school

Clients served: nearly 200 students at each school

Why the Programs were established:

The closing of the school in which the Chapter previously operated a library created the opportunity for them to operate a library elsewhere.

At St. Rocco, the chairperson had a contact who connected them with St. Rocco and the match was made. The steps to initiate the program included meeting with school personnel, developing a working plan for the library, and recruiting volunteers.

St Francis, whose librarian of 35 years was retiring, had a very tired library, not a place students enjoyed coming. CCS was able to use shelves from one of the schools that had closed and the Chapter has taken every opportunity possible to add books to the library shelves. The chairperson works at the Scholastic Book sales event just so that she can take advantage of the free books that are available to her as a result. In the five years that the Chapter has operated this library, they have added over 3,700 books to the shelves.

Summary:

The St. Rocco School library meets on Mondays during the school year from 8:45 am to 12:00 pm. Although it began as one library to serve Kindergarten through 8th grades, because the students were housed in two different buildings, it now operates one library in each building. One library serves pre-kindergarten through 1st grade students and the other library serves 2nd through 8th grade students. Stories are read to the youngest students.

CCS is in the process of obtaining shelving for the books and will continue to work to bring more books into the library. This year, due to the generosity of one of the public suburban libraries, they were the recipient of approximately 2,000 books which were placed on the library shelves. (The daughter of one of the members is an employee of the library and was able to make this connection.) As a start-up library that is not computerized, much time and effort went into preparing the books for lending, including creating pockets with cards and methods to track the loaning process.

The Chapter tries to stock the shelves with books in which the students have an interest and it is a joy to watch their excitement when they see that new book on the shelf. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to have the opportunity to foster reading comprehension, language development, imagination, and overall school achievement by operating two libraries at St. Rocco School.

The St. Francis School library meets on Tuesdays during the school year from 9:45 am to 2:15 pm and on Wednesdays during the school year from 9:45 am to 1:15 pm. The library is operated manually – so the books must be prepared with card pockets, sign-out cards, and due date cards. Christ Child members take charge of the lending process. The members also read to the youngest members who come to the library. Library etiquette is taught and a love of reading and books is instilled.

It has been a joy to create energy in the space and see the students excited about new books. It has also been a joy to give brief descriptions of older titles, give some encouragement for reading these older titles, and watch the excitement develop. Faculty and staff have confirmed that CCS is making a difference at St. Francis School.

BEST PRACTICES

Literacy Enrichment Columbus Chapter

Partners: The Christ Child Society Child Care Center at St. Stephens Community House

Volunteers Used: about 15 per class

Costs: \$2,000; CCS provides financial help to the Center beyond the literacy program budget.

Clients served: 50

Why the Program was established:

When St. Stephens Community House started the Child Care Center, they asked CCS members to help lay the groundwork plans. CCS has absorbed the care of the Childcare Center's library and has a longstanding library day with one member reading to each class of children.

Two years ago, CCS was looking at volunteer opportunities and decided to increase hands on volunteer activities with the children at the center. They decided to add enrichment activities to the library day. The chapter was inspired by a tutoring program from a Florida chapter. A group of interested volunteers, many with experience in early childhood education, met to formulate a plan to provide enrichment activities once a month to expand on a theme. The Child Care Center director and other St. Stephens' leadership approved these ideas

Summary:

The planning group meets quarterly to plan education themes, suggest book titles and age level appropriate activities for the coming months. Activities are divided among volunteers and a newsletter is prepared to let parents know what was done with the children.

The group leader sends out reminders and volunteers are solicited from chapter weekly news updates and can sign up on SignUp Genius or just call or email the group leader. They communicate regularly with the teachers and center director to be sure they are doing what is helpful for the children and the Center.

This year they contracted with a local company called We Joy Sing to provide a music teacher once a month on library day. The children and teachers seem to enjoy the music program, so the chapter has applied for a local grant in hopes of defraying some of the costs.

Six to eight volunteers come for each enrichment day and at least six volunteers come for the music since they are in the room singing and doing motions with the children and teachers.

BEST PRACTICES

The Literacy Program Detroit Chapter

Partners: Whitmer Resource Center, Pontiac, Michigan

Volunteers: over 20 volunteers signed to help last year; 9-12 volunteer each session

Costs: The Chapter budgets \$7,000 and last year they received a \$3,000 donation from the Shannon Foundation

Clients served: 100 to 120 children each month

Why the program was established:

The Literacy Program started in 2009 after receiving a \$15,000 Grant from the Herrick Foundation. This grant allowed the CCS to start a new Literacy Program to inspire children that are faced with poverty and illiteracy. At this time, they chose to visit the Whitmer Resource Center. The program was initially called the "Mystery Reader Program" but now it is called the Literacy Program.

Summary:

Volunteers start at 10am and read to two classrooms at one time. After reading the book they have a discussion, a song (sometimes), a project and a snack. Typically, the session lasts for 45 minutes; the previous 30 minute schedule was too short. The volunteers read to 4 classrooms of 25 to 30 students. Books are ordered based on classroom size. Last year the Chapter did 5 presentations to the First Grade Class and 5 to the Second Grade Class. Around 1,100 books were ordered last year.

Some of the reading themes were:

- Dr. Seuss read the book *The Cat in the Hat*. All the volunteers dressed as Cat in the Hat and passed out red and white stovepipe hats to all the students. They played rhyming Bingo and the winner won Dr. Seuss stickers. The children counted one fish, two fish, as they ate Goldfish crackers for a snack. Each student picked their favorite Dr. Seuss book to take home.
- *In the Jungle, the Mighty Jungle*, was the song on an animal theme visit. *Excuse Me, I'm Trying to Read!* featured a young girl in Africa trying to read a book while being troubled by different animals; the reader used animal puppets during the story. They made bookmarks with animal stickers and ate Jungle Pals Fruit Snacks.
- The volunteers were dressed in Detroit Tigers apparel for the baseball theme. The book read was *Strike Three, Marley!* – a cute story about a Dad, daughter and their dog who go to a baseball game. The students took a 7th inning stretch and sang *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*. They were all players as they put on their baseball caps which they had decorated with foam stickers. They received a copy of the book to read over the summer.

BEST PRACTICES

Parmadale Head Start Pre-school Enrichment Program Cleveland Chapter

Partners: Head Start

Volunteers Used: 2

Costs: \$150

Clients served: 100 annually

Why the Program was established:

The Cleveland Chapter began a pre-school enrichment program at the Parmadale Head Start because they wanted to help meet a need. It seemed like the perfect place to have one of their programs because it was – and is – located on the same grounds as their office space. In addition, it was affiliated with Catholic Charities, an organization that has been very good to the Christ Child Society of Cleveland over the years. Steps taken to initiate the program included finding a chairperson, meeting with the Head Start personnel, developing a program, and recruiting our volunteers.

Summary:

This program meets every Tuesday during the school year from 9:30 to 11:00 and from 1:30 to 3:00. The member volunteers read to the children and discuss the stories to enhance reading and language development.

While the program has always included reading to the children, for most of its existence it also functioned as a lending library. Since the age group is three to five, however, it became very difficult to get the books back. Consequently, about two months ago, the Chapter changed the program to a story time program. Members model a love of reading and a love for books all the while engaging the children in the story that is being shared.

BEST PRACTICES

The Reading Enrichment Program at Dunbar Learning Center Stuart Chapter

Partners: Dunbar Child Care Center

Volunteers Used: 15

Costs: \$3400 dollars for 2016. \$2400 for the three year old program and \$1000 for new books for the children for Christmas and graduation and art supplies for projects with the children.

Clients served: 40-42

Why the Program was established:

The program was sparked by a new member of CCS who felt a need to go beyond the layette program and proposed volunteering at the Dunbar Center, a school where the students are at or below the poverty level. As a retired Kindergarten teacher she knew that the best way to help these children was through education. The program started by funding books for the students at Christmas, then graduation, and then, one by one, members wanted to become involved. Today the Stuart Chapter has 15 volunteers who make up two teams that go into the three and four year old classes once or twice a month.

Summary:

CCS members started to want to volunteer with the children, first with the four year old group and then with the three year old group. They started to do a special project with the children once a year. The first was Cat in the Hat, then Cinderella and then the Cow That Fell in the Canal. All of these were based on a favorite children's book with music and art activities connected to the project. Volunteers wore costumes and many members participated. The children really enjoyed these special days. Volunteers also started to attend the pre-K graduation and all the children were presented with easy reader books and a stuffed animal.

When there is a need at the Dunbar Center, CCS steps up to help. Last year CCS adopted the three year old program and Christ Child gave them \$2400 for the year for supplies for their classroom projects. When classroom computers needed repair or replacement, they helped out, and CCS donated \$500 for a new computer for the four year olds. When the three year olds needed blankets for naptime, they supplied them. At the 2015 graduation, the volunteers learned that the four year olds' class teacher was pregnant so they organized a baby shower for her. The Stuart Chapter has truly 'adopted' Dunbar Center.