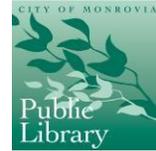




**CITY OF MONROVIA  
LIBRARY BOARD  
AGENDA REPORT**



**DEPARTMENT:** Community Services, Library Division

**MEETING DATE:** June 27, 2019

**PREPARED BY:** Linda Vera,  
Youth Services Supervisor

**AGENDA LOCATION:** AR-1

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**TITLE:** Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program Annual Report FY2018/2019

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide the Library Board with the annual report of the Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program

**BACKGROUND:** In March 2018, local nonprofit, Monrovia Reads partnered with the Monrovia Public Library Foundation and Library Staff to provide a mobile literacy van that was dedicated to serving children and families throughout the City. Since its launch, the van has been visiting the five local elementary schools after school, providing books to the district's 2,500 elementary school age children. It also attends community events, including Monrovia Area Partnership (MAP) events, the annual Spring Egg Hunt, Foothill Unity Center's Back to School event, and other opportunities throughout Monrovia.

The van features 1,586 books, a WiFi hotspot, and other fun learning activities. The vehicle makes regular stops at each elementary school after dismissal for 90 minutes during regular scheduled school days. At each visit, staff process new library card applications, enabling immediate access to the library's online resources as well as the main library's larger collection. The Monrovia Reads Van brings with it the resources that our children need to enhance their lives through the power of knowledge. This aligns with the Library's Strategic Plan's goals of supporting literacy and lifelong learning for all residents, regardless of their ability to visit the main library building, as well as keeping residents informed about library services and programs.

**ANALYSIS:** The Monrovia Reads Van made a total of 161 visits to 5,477 students and community members in FY2018/2019. The van visited schools, local businesses, City events, and community organizations throughout Monrovia. In its first full year in service, the van has enhanced the library's image, expanded library services across Monrovia, and created new opportunities for outreach and partnerships within the community.

Services:

The Monrovia Reads Van provides library services, including: materials circulation, storytimes, and other literacy-related activities to the community. This aligns with the Library's Strategic Plan, specifically the Strategic Direction of Enhanced Access, Goals 2 and 3 related to services in Southern Monrovia and expanding the mobility of the library. The program also falls under the Strategic Direction of Enhanced Partnerships, Goal 2 related to expanding the Library's partnership with the school district and other local organizations.

**AR-1**

The Schedule for the 2018/2019 School Year:

Monday – 1:30-3:00 pm at Bradoaks  
 Tuesday – 2:00-3:00 pm at Wild Rose  
 Wednesday – 12:15-1:45 pm at Plymouth  
 Thursday – 1:50-3:20 pm at Monroe  
 Friday - 1:50-3:20 pm at Mayflower

Statistics:

Library Staff continues to work with the principals at each school to coordinate the location of the van and its schedule to ensure optimal usage without impacting afterschool activities. Circulation and usage statistics are maintained by Staff, including library cards, mileage, circulation, and attendance for both school visits and community events.

Number of School Visits											
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Totals
Bradoaks	2	2	5	2	4	1	1	3	4	3	27
Wild Rose	2	3	5	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	33
Plymouth	2	3	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	3	28
Monroe	2	3	5	2	4	2	4	2	3	2	29
Mayflower	2	3	4	3	2	4	4	2	3	3	30
	10	14	22	14	16	13	16	12	16	14	147

Visitor and Use Statistics by School 2018-2019						
	Bradoaks	Wild Rose	Plymouth	Monroe	Mayflower	Totals
Total Attendance	724	785	1164	804	866	4343
Library Cards Created	43	26	31	16	7	123
Checked Outs Items	385	420	602	440	326	2173
Returned Items	293	378	421	211	209	1512

The Monrovia Reads Van made 147 visits and served 4,343 students and caregivers at local schools. Lower grades are generally dismissed twenty minutes before the upper grades, which gives staff an opportunity to focus on the needs of the students by reading level. The van is popular with students and parents at dismissal as well as afterschool program participants. The van has a very loyal following among these kids, and staff have partnered with program leaders to provide special storytimes to these students.

This year, the van was invited to Wild Rose’s Founders Day in February. Staff met with 150 students, teachers, and caregivers at the event. It proved to be a wonderful opportunity to reach new patrons and highlight all that the van had to offer. The Founders Day visit also led to a special collaboration between the school, the Monrovia Reads Board, and the library. Two classes won the Van Fan Challenge, with a visit for the winning second grade class to the library to celebrate. Forty students were treated to a story and scavenger hunt by Library Staff, and enjoyed snacks provided by Monrovia Reads. Due to increment weather, the other winning class had the library come to them for a special visit later on in the month.

The Monrovia Reads Van also participated in 14 community events this year. Visits to locations such as the Huntington Oaks Center and the Wing Walker Brewery have been a way to reach current and future library users in unexpected ways. A total of 1,134 people were reached at these community events. They enjoyed access to library materials for checkout, learning activities, and storytimes in nontraditional settings. These outreaches also provide staff with an opportunity to inform participants about upcoming programs and events, learn about the kinds of items they would like, and engage minds young and old in lifelong learning.

Community Outreach		
Date	Event/Location	Attendance
July 7	Huntington Oaks Center	30
July 11	Wild Rose Summer School Celebration	40
July 12	Plymouth Summer School BBQ	120
Aug 4	Huntington Oaks Center	50
Aug 7	Foothill Unity Center's Back to School	120
Nov 17	MAP Block Party	60
Dec 1	Huntington Oaks Center	20
Feb 22	Wild Rose Founder's Day	150
Mar 7	So All May Read Fundraiser	200
Apr 6	MAP Neighborhood Conference	79
Apr 10	Wing Walker Brewery	15
May 18	Monrovia Days Parade	175
Jun 1	Huntington Oaks Center	250
Jun 22	MAP Block Party	<i>not available</i>
TOTAL		1134

Library Staff is currently reviewing ways to broaden and strengthen the library's presence in Southern Monrovia. They are visiting potential sites and reaching out to community partners that could host programs or outreach visits with the van.

Outcomes & Goals:

As outlined by the Strategic Plan's Enhanced Access Goal 3, this year the Monrovia Reads Van team established 3 outcomes and 5 goals that ensure the mobile literacy program is effective in how it provides its services.

The three outcomes include:

- Providing library service and literacy support to elementary age students who are unable to regularly visit the library
- Reducing barriers to library services and support for all residents, including those living in Southern Monrovia, as well as other diverse communities within the City of Monrovia
- Create meaningful connections with children outside the library that enable staff to demonstrate and reinforce the link between literacy and opportunity

By visiting each elementary school regularly, van staff have been able to satisfy the outcomes, providing students with books to check out and activities that support the development of their literacy and learning skills outside the library. It has been a year of learning for both students and van staff. The students and parents have come to know the schedule and look forward to the weekly visits. Staff learned how to provide service to as many students as possible, even managing to serve those who are walk directly from class to the bus by passing out activities and program flyers as they wait in line. They also have materials ready so that students can check out books while maintaining the lines their custodians have carefully arranged them during the bus boarding.

Through visits to the Huntington Oaks Shopping Center and Wing Walker Brewery, the van has successfully established partnerships with local businesses that have provided visibility and library access to new audiences. In addition to these visits and others within the City, the van was present at the Foothill Unity Center's *Back to School* Event and several MAP community events, including their annual neighborhood conference. The services provided by the Monrovia Reads Van staff varies based on the needs of each particular outreach. Maintaining a presence at schools, local businesses, and community events have resulted in reduced barriers to library services and support for all residents.

What has been particularly satisfying for staff is the opportunity to serve a diverse audience while bringing mobile library services into the community. One of the bus drivers at Plymouth regularly requests and checks out materials from the library while waiting for children to be dismissed. She has built a relationship with staff, who have been able to provide her not only library materials, but information on all the library has to offer. Having the ability to serve both large groups of energetic students and individual adults in times of calm is a strength of staff that supplements and reinforces the good work done within the library.

In addition to the outcomes, five goals that align with the outcomes were established as a way to provide measurable benchmarks for the services and impact the program is having at schools and within the community.

The goals include:

- Strengthen reading skills from an early age by ensuring at least 75% of registered MUSD kindergarten students have a library card by the end of the school year
- Increase understanding of library services and offerings by 25% based on surveys of mobile library users
- Increase mobile library circulation at school sites by 10% from the previous school year
- Provide informal learning opportunities through games and activities that focus on a key learning or literacy skill each month during the academic year
- Create a special collection for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students that supports the school district's curriculum

While this is only the first full year of the program, several of the goals are already well on the way to being met. Staff create an activity each month that highlights a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skill, such as communication, creativity, or critical thinking. Students look forward to these activities each month and engage enthusiastically in the learning process, whether it is an open-ended craft that sparks creativity, crosswords that build vocabulary, or reading prompts that encourage comprehension as well as communication. As for increasing understanding of library services and events, anecdotal evidence suggests that staff have been successful in increasing awareness of library programming. Informal polling and conversations with attendees at the library's two largest events this past year, the Yule Ball and the Summer Reading Kickoff, revealed that a significant number of participants learned of the program through the flyers passed out during van visits.

# AR-1

Staff have created a special collection for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade students that includes books on curriculum topics like missions, biographies, and animals. They also responded to feedback from teachers and parents by including more Chinese language materials for Plymouth's dual immersion program. Students and parents responded to the new materials by consistently checking out Chinese language materials and providing the van with its highest school site attendance numbers with 1,164 visits, 25% more than the second highest school, Mayflower, with 866 visits.

For the coming school year, staff are already working with kindergarten teachers and school administration to include library card applications in welcome packets and classrooms to help meet the goal of 75% library registration rates among kindergarten students by the end of the 19/20 academic year. During the 18/19 school year, staff created a total of 123 library cards across all elementary grade levels. They believe focusing on kindergarten will ensure that students start their elementary years on the right path, with access to all the library has to offer.

### Activities:

Hands-on 21st century learning skills practice is a key component of the mobile van service provided to youth, and a core objective outlined in the Library's Strategic Plan. Making these opportunities available aligns with the Library's Strategic Plan of supporting lifelong learning and creates an opportunity to form lasting bonds with the kids who participate; they see staff as people who respect them, meet them where they are developmentally, and are willing to play. For children, play is an important medium for learning and emotional development.

Some examples of activities this year include:

- Open-ended "Make a Monster" craft with materials whose purpose was undesignated to strengthen strengthening creativity
- Prompts like "How would you respond to this text?" that encouraged participants to be thoughtful in their communication and consider the perspective of other parties, a valuable skill when analyzing the motives of characters in a story or working as part of a team on school assignments
- Crosswords and word searches that foster problem solving and vocabulary acquisition

### Community Feedback:

Overwhelmingly, participants love the Monrovia Reads Van program. Staff receive comments via informal polling and conversations as well as with comment cards.

In response to *What do you like best about the Monrovia Reads Van?* Comments included:

- "Friendly and knowledgeable staff. New books in rotation. Books nicely organized. Consistency of being at Mayflower weekly"
- "Love the selection. So happy to have Chinese books. The ladies are wonderful and help kids make choices"
- One child respondent jumped to the very purpose of the van, stating "It is in school. That you don't need to go to the library to get the books."

Staff also asked *What can we do better next school year?* Which also provided some wonderful feedback as to the positive impact the program is having on the community. Most comments stated that the program was perfect as is. Some students asked for particular books or series while parents requested parenting books, all of which will be folded into the collection for next year.

Staffing & Budget:

The Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program has rotating part-time and full-time staff members assigned to the van. Staff from Adult Services, Youth Services, and Circulation all actively participate in helping to bring the van into the community and to the schools. The total staff hours for the van was 1,217 for a total staffing cost of \$29,635.32 in FY18/19. This includes 1,146 hours for staffing during the school year at a cost of \$25,889.88 and 129 staffing hours and \$3,745.44 for community events and summer school sessions during the rest of the year. The Monrovia Reads organization provides \$15,000 for staffing of the van annually. The remaining staffing costs are paid for by the City. While library book budget funds are used to augment the van collection, additional support came from the Friends of the Monrovia Public Library, with \$2,000 provided in January 2019. Popular series as well as additional Spanish and Chinese language materials were purchased in response to feedback from teachers, parents, and students.

Overall, staff are thrilled with the success of the program and look forward to further enhancing services and outreach opportunities with the Monrovia Reads Van in the coming year.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the Library Board move to receive and file AR-1 Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program Annual Report FY2018/2019.

**LIBRARY BOARD ACTION REQUIRED:** If the Library Board concurs the appropriate action would be a motion to: ***Receive and file AR-1 Monrovia Reads Mobile Literacy Program Annual Report FY2018/2019.***

**AR-1**