



Board of Library Trustees

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

DATE: JUNE 25, 2018

FROM: RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

SUBJECT: ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM UPDATE

ISSUE:

Receive an update on the Adult Literacy Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Library Trustees receive and file an update on the Adult Literacy Program.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside Public Library offers a free literacy program to English speaking persons 18 years of age or older. The Adult Literacy program (Program) trains volunteers to provide independent learning opportunities to adults who want to improve their reading, writing and computer skills through one-on-one tutoring. The literacy program changes peoples' lives by allowing them to gain confidence to read to their children, write checks, obtain jobs, and more.

The Program is part of the larger California Library Literacy Services project, supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), administered in California by the State Librarian. The Library annually receives LSTA funds to operate the program. Annual funding varies based on a three-part formula that includes:

1. A baseline amount for each approved literacy program in the state;
2. A per capita amount per adult learner served in the previous year; and
3. A match on local funds raised and expended for adult literacy services – reflecting a commitment to a continuing state/local partnership and providing an incentive for increased local support for adult literacy.

DISCUSSION:

The Library received \$25,409 in Fiscal Year 2017-18 for the Program. For Fiscal Year 2018-19, the budget is expected to be increased, as the proposed California state budget submitted by the Governor includes an increase of \$2.5 million in ongoing General Fund money to expand the existing California Library Literacy Services Program statewide. At the behest of the California State Library, learners from across the state wrote letters to the California Legislature speaking to the benefits of the adult literacy program, including five learners from the Riverside's Program.

Much of the Program's success is due to our volunteer tutors who are largely acquired through word of mouth and through the Friends of the Library. The Program includes 58 pairs of tutors/learners and consistently has a learner waiting list. This year, over 50 goals were achieved through the Program; highlights include being second runner up in the Southern California Writer to Writer challenge, passing the GED exam, and passing the New York Nursing exam. More than 50 books were given away, and upwards of 1,600 tutor hours were logged. Three trainings for tutors were provided.

This year, the Library was able to offer more training and conference opportunities for tutors through our participation in the Inland Library System's Adult Literacy Committee, as well as offer a training workshop of our own, in partnership with the Southern California Tri-Counties Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. The Program has seen increased visibility within the City of Riverside, including a presentation at the University of California, Riverside's Osher Lecture series on May 1, 2018.

The Program hosted a tutor and learner recognition event on February 3, 2018, at the La Sierra Library. The event featured two learners, who shared their testimony about the adult literacy program. Each attendee received a certificate for their involvement with the literacy program. The City photographer took pictures of each participant with Literacy Coordinator Jenna Pontious, which were shared with the individuals once digital copies were available. Twenty participants from the literacy program attended, as well as one learner's grandson. The program also hosted two informal events, a holiday meet and greet in December of 2017, and an End of the Year party in June 2018. Both events encouraged tutors and learners to bring their families and offered an opportunity to get to know everyone better.

An additional 720 books were added to the Quick Reads literacy collection, which features high interest, low reading level titles for the adult learner. We began offering DMV practice test classes in March 2018 for adult and teen drivers.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Erin Christmas, Interim Library Director

Approved by: Lea Deesing, Assistant City Manager

Attachment: Presentation