Ramsey County Library
Request for Library Board Action

Meeting Date	Action Requested	Presented By
June 21, 2017	Information and Discussion	Jill Boldenow, Library Director

SUBJECT:
Skills for Life

BACKGROUND:
One of the Library's programming lines, "Skills for Life," helps patrons to build skills that support economic prosperity and well-being. Carrie Watts built up this programming line, developing community partnerships to deliver programs that meet critical needs. Over time, we have distributed this work among multiple coordinators. The full roster of "Skills for Life" coordinators and their programming areas includes:

Carrie Watts: Financial and legal assistance
Pete Hedberg: Social services and health access
Therese Sonnek: Environment and sustainability
Charles Mosner: Jobs and small business
Carol Jackson: Dementia programming, Community Health Awareness Team, and conversation circles

Today we hear reports from two Life Skills coordinators: Pete Hedberg and Therese Sonnek.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:
For information and discussion.

Health Care and Social Work in the Library Setting

A Report on Two Life Skills Programs

Submitted to the Ramsey County Library Board

Wednesday, June 21, 2017 by Peter Hedberg (Maplewood Circulation Supervisor)

1. Health Access has been a library partner for going on 5 years. Their staff come in during peak times of open enrollment i.e. the late fall through early January and provide MNSure navigation services to the library public free of charge. In short, they help the uninsured and underinsured with signing up for improved medical coverage. I was asked to manage this partnership and program by Carrie Watts about a year and a half ago. After open enrollment period is over each year, Health Access stays on at both the Roseville and Maplewood sites but they typically reduce their hours from full to part time to reflect the seasonal fluctuations in business. Even so, last year they remained quite busy during their post peak months. As you might suspect, the uncertain status of impending state and federal legislation regarding health care has had very real effects on our Health Access partners.

   During 2015 Health Access staffed 221 sessions between Maplewood and Roseville and had 888 attendees. During 2016, they hosted 180 sessions at the same two sites and worked with 936 visitors. In addition, just thru May of the present year they have served an additional 606 individuals.

2. The Community Resource Advocate program started out in the fall of 2015 as a pilot project at Maplewood. The idea was a way to link an array of family services and community outreach resources to the public library setting. The start-up included working with the director of the Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative. Her networking and organizing skill quickly led to a couple of well attended planning sessions in the area and before long we had a host of partners willing to help staff a program room at the Maplewood library on Tuesday afternoons from 1:30-3pm. From its inception, the program was attended by anywhere from 2 to 10 individuals every week and it has led to numerous instances of concrete and life changing assistance for folks in need of help. The answer to our question about how much unseen need there was in our midst is sobering in retrospect: there was - and there remains - plenty of need in the first ring suburban library setting. A partial list of the types of issues that our advocates help visitors with ranges from homelessness, unemployment, and mental health, to childcare, transportation, food assistance, and more.

   Partners in the program have included People Incorporated, Keystone Community Services, Salvation Army, Tubman Center, School District 622, Ramsey County Child and Teen Checkups, and Resource, Inc.

   The success of the program has resulted in an expansion to the Roseville site as well. Hours there are every Wednesday from 1:30-3:00. The Roseville program has just reached its first anniversary. After a somewhat less consistent turn out there in the beginning months, the sessions have in recent months grown increasingly busy. From January thru May of the current year Maplewood had 129 visitors to its once a week program. During the same time, Roseville had 68 visitors.

   I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have with regard to this program.

Life Skills – Environment **Report to the Library Board June 2017** **Therese Sonnek**

Starting in January 2017 the Life Skills programming was broken up into smaller pieces. I took over the programming related to environmental and sustainability issues, as RCL-White Bear Lake's Seed Library is being seen as one program to fill those goals.

The Seed Library

The Seed Library provides vegetable, flower, and native plant seeds that are GMO-free. People check out seed packets and return seeds at the end of the growing season. We have completed one full year and are in the beginning of the second year. We had many donated seeds, and volunteers packed them into small packets.

Seed packets added in 2017 through May: 1,590

Seed packets borrowed in 2017 through May: 712

There is no longer a limit in the number of packets that one person can check out.

Two seed-starting classes were taught by the founder of the Seed Library in May at WB and RV and had good attendence. Two more classes are scheduled for September at WB and SV about collecting seeds from plants for next season.

Fix-it Clinics

Ramsey County Environmental Health organizes the events and brings in many talented volunteers who fix electronics, small appliances, clothing and other gadgets in order to make them usable again and keep them out of the landfills. Six events for throughout 2017 are booked.

The three clinics at WB, SV and RV so far in 2017 had:

Number of people helped: 159

Number of items fixed: 201 – Two were mine!

Number of pounds kept from landfills: 1,449

Local cable created a short video of the program: https://youtu.be/8YYDsJRWtBc

Feedback from surveys has been fantastic.

Coming in July and August: "SPOILER ALERT! Is that food safe to eat?" A new Food Safety and food stretching program taught by Dr. Joellen Feirtag, Food Safety Specialist, University of Minnesota. Attendees will learn about "Best by" dates and what they all mean. Much food is thrown out that is perfectly fine to eat.

Future program ideas: Composting; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle ideas; Leave No Trace philosophy while outdoors.