



GRANT NARRATIVE

About Our Organization

The _____ Public Library has served the citizens of our community since ____ by supplying materials and services that serve the cultural, social, and community needs of a diverse population by providing access to informational, educational, and recreational resources. [*Additional mission statement as needed.*] The Friends of the _____ Public Library is a non-profit 501(c)3 fundraising organization that has been serving this library since ____ by offering financial, material and volunteer support. [*This language if Friends applying.*]

Proposal Summary

We are seeking funding in the amount of \$_____ for the addition of a Peek-A-Book system for the Children's Department of the _____ Public Library. With the possibilities this tool provides, we can enhance and encourage a growing familiarity with our Library's services, a direct connection to the books in its collection, and also offer the gift of learning to our younger patrons in an informal, active, fun, yet effective environment.

Program Description

The Peek-A-Book system consists of a laminated kiosk holding a computer with a touchscreen interface and shelves to highlight 6 books at one time. The primary interactive content consists of animated book previews which correlate to the titles displayed. Designed to entice the children with a piece of the story without giving too much away, the ultimate objective is for them to reach for the book in order to learn how the story ends.

The content is designed to capture children's attention, engage them with interaction, excite them about reading, and ultimately inspire them to pick up a book. It offers a friendly and fun comfort zone for children who might otherwise be intimidated by or distracted from actually picking up a book to read. Most importantly, it gives children (and their caregivers) a place to start when they come into our library and want to know how to pick a book.

The screen content and books displayed can be tailored to meet the needs of our community and can be changed at any time. By using books the library already owns, or using new Peek-A-Book titles added to their collections, our children's librarians will be able to provide content that is specific and useful to our patrons.

Statement of Need

Reading a book requires a degree of active attention and engagement, a progressive skill that depends on years of education and practice. Many of our young patrons need some assistance in developing their reading skills to the level considered proficient and need a place to get started. It is critical we reach these readers early and in creative and meaningful ways and the Peek-A-Book system offers us just that: a valuable resource that can be utilized in a number of ways to directly increase hands-on experience with books.

The Peek-A-Book system may also be helpful in reaching certain segments of our community who might need extra assistance or care. For example, children who don't have the opportunity to attend pre-school (for whatever reasons) can still participate in the Peek-A-Book experience and acquire valuable pre-school alphabet, phonics and reading skills. For children who are dispossessed or homeless, changing schools often or kept away from structured learning environments, Peek-A-Book offers an opportunity to learn in a safe, stable environment for free.

With the ability to change and update materials on the system, the staff can highlight various books and programs, changing content as needed, keeping things new and fresh, thereby encouraging children and their parents to visit our Library again and again to see what is new in the Peek-A-Book and on our shelves.

For all our young patrons, Peek-A-Book can offer an opportunity to increase their literacy skills beyond the reach of school-based instruction, free from performance or peer pressure issues.

As the system will be permanently displayed in the Children's Department, it will be continuously available to all our patrons and free of charge.

Measurements of Success

By monitoring usage statistics for the Peek-A-Book kiosk we can assess the number of times the kiosk is used. Libraries who have installed a Peek-A-Book system have shown usage statistics of over 10,000 views annually for a population similar to ours. Other libraries that have installed the Peek-A-Book kiosk report children spending an average of ten to fifteen minutes interacting with the material during a visit. Many libraries have reported that children will make a special trip to the library just to visit the Peek-A-Book kiosk. Therefore we anticipate that if our Peek-A-Books generate similar usage statistics, this will directly correlate to a significant increase in the traffic visiting our Children's Department.

Using circulation statistics available on all titles, we can assess and compare circulation of Peek-A-Book titles with those from the general collection. This information can be used not only to monitor the effectiveness of the kiosk, but also as a guide to which books serve the needs of our young readers. Other libraries have tracked their circulation numbers and have seen an increase from an average of 4 circulations per year for a regular title up to an average of 12 or 13 for a Peek-A-Book title on display. Even the lesser circulated Peek-A-Book titles increase their average circulation by over 80%.

By utilizing the kiosk statistics and circulation information, our Children's staff will be able to monitor the effectiveness of Peek-A-Book. This will offer us a unique window into what our readers' patterns and desires are, and will assist the staff in establishing what our young readers like and need. This information will also direct them when adjusting the content of the kiosk to choose what is most relevant to our youngest reading community. By better knowing what material is of interest to our readers, the staff will be able to keep it updated and fresh, maintaining interest in our libraries and our books and creating a future generation of reading public.

Conclusion

With the addition of a Peek-A-Book system to the Children's Department at the _____ Public Library, we will continue our commitment to providing services for children that enrich, encourage, educate and strengthen their connection to books, thereby creating a culture of literacy. A child who can read is a child who can think. Thinkers and readers play a more active and involved role in their communities, participating in civic and cultural life, such as volunteerism, philanthropy and political engagement – all necessary elements for a productive and democratic society such as ours.