Legacy Story Project

Bienville Parish Library

Intergenerational

Legacy Story Project

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Free

Byline

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For participants, the project offers something deeply personal: the opportunity to ensure that their family history will be remembered. For the library, the project serves a broader mission. By collecting these stories now, the Legacy Stories Project is helping build a community archive that reflects the diverse experiences of the people who have called Bienville Parish home.

Advanced Planning

The Legacy Stories Project began with a simple but powerful realization: while official records preserve dates and events, they often fail to capture the lived experiences of the people who shape a community. In anticipation of Black History

Month, February interviews focused on the narratives of long-time African American residents, ensuring their voices are preserved as a vital part of the parish's history. A key challenge has been encouraging elderly residents to participate. Many are hesitant to share their experiences, often believing their stories are not significant. By capturing these personal accounts, the Legacy Stories Project is working to preserve a richer, more complete history of the community for future generations.

Marketing

We promoted the project through presentations to the Ladies Literary Club, a group of long-time residents with deep ties to the parish/county. Many members and their families have played significant roles in the community's history.

Success has been measured less by immediate participation and more by engagement and word-of-mouth. The group has shown strong interest, frequently discussing the project and encouraging one another to participate, effectively expanding outreach through personal connections.

Budgeting

There was little to no cost associated with this project. Existing staff created all brochures, consent forms, and promotional materials, and audio equipment had already been purchased for other programs. Even without professional equipment, a smartphone or laptop with recording capabilities is sufficient for conducting interviews, making this a highly cost-effective and easily replicable program.

Day-of-event Activity

Setup for each session is minimal and designed to be welcoming and accessible. A quiet space, basic audio recording equipment, and a staff member to manage recording are all that's needed. Additional staff may assist with scheduling or scanning materials as needed. The focus is on creating a comfortable environment where individuals can share authentic memories rather than polished presentations.

No significant challenges were encountered, as the flexible, low-tech setup allows sessions to adapt easily to participant needs.

Program Execution

Residents participate in the Legacy Stories Project by scheduling a recording session at the Main Library in Arcadia or one of the parish's four branches. Sessions typically last 30 to 90 minutes, and participants may bring photographs or documents to enhance their stories. A list of optional questions is provided in advance to help guide the conversation, but interviews remain informal, more like a relaxed conversation than a structured interview.

Participation has been steady, with attendees reporting positive experiences and expressing interest in returning for additional sessions. Feedback indicates that participants value both the opportunity to share their stories and the welcoming, low-pressure environment. The program has successfully met its goal of capturing meaningful personal histories while building community engagement.

Advice

By capturing these voices today helps ensure that the lived experiences of the people of your town remain part of the historical record tomorrow, a lasting tribute to the past and a meaningful gift to future generations.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
generic flyer 2026.pdf
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questions to ask for legacy project.pdf
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