Adult Literacy One-to-One

Sonoma County Public Libraries

Adults

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Dec 23, 2016

$5,000+

$$$
Byline

Alisa Adams, Adult Literacy Services Coordinator, Sonoma County (Calif.) Public Libraries

Since 1986, Sonoma County Library's Adult Literacy's One-to-One program has matched adult learners with a volunteer literacy tutor in their community. The program provides assessment, training and facilities that enable the pair to meet and work toward the learner's chosen literacy goals on a weekly basis at the library location of their choice.

Advanced Planning

In 1986, the Sonoma County Library applied to California Library Literacy Services (CLLS) to provide adult literacy services and receive funding for that purpose. Our application was accepted and our library adult literacy program began. Goals and outcomes for the one-to-one program are guided by CLLS and emphasize an adult learner-centered program. This means the adult learner identifies what they want or need to accomplish with improved literacy skills, and our program follows their lead. We seek to match each learner with a trained tutor and the materials necessary to achieve literacy goals that have the most meaningful impact on that individual's life.

Common adult learner goals and outcomes include: reading a book with family/children; improving job and interview skills; writing, sending and receiving email; improving financial literacy skills; reading health information/medicine labels; voting; volunteering; and searching the internet. (Read about one of our adult learner success stories.)

We provide our volunteer tutor training sessions quarterly and conduct student assessments as needed. The matching of tutor-learner pairs takes place after each quarterly training session. Monthly, we collect the hours that tutors and learners have spent working together at their local library. Twice a year, we update the progress the learner has made and record any new goals they have set for themselves. Annually, we report our outcomes and statistics to CLLS and share this information with as many stakeholders as possible.

A student coordinator, a tutor coordinator and a literacy services coordinator spend many hours planning and preparing to support both learners and tutors in getting assessed, trained and up and running, working together at least two hours a week at their local library for a requested minimum commitment of six months.

Ongoing support, recognition and encouragement efforts are provided to learners and tutors via student recognition certificates, volunteer appreciation efforts and ongoing/enhanced training workshops for tutors. In addition, our program provides free access to an up-to-date literacy materials collection of texts, learning tools and laptops for learner and tutor use.

Marketing

To recruit for both adult learners and volunteer tutors, we use fliers in every library branch. When possible, we use banners on the outside of our buildings. We reach out to other service providers when we have fewer adult learners requesting services, and we use VolunteerMatch and our library website to recruit for tutors and learners.

We recently celebrated the 30th anniversary of our Library Adult Literacy Program, and our local newspaper wrote about the program.

Budgeting

Main costs are centered on key personnel members, which include a tutor coordinator, a student coordinator and a literacy services coordinator. Other budget needs: a well-maintained literacy materials collection of books, workbooks, learning tools, composition books, goal-related materials and laptops for student use.

Day-of-event Activity

This is an ongoing program and series of related events, as described in Advanced Planning above.

Unexpected challenges include the need for improving library branch facilities in order to provide private collaborative spaces where tutors and learners can work together without interrupting other library patrons, as well as keeping the branch doors open late enough to work well for adult learners seeking evening tutoring sessions.

Program Execution

Approximately 154 adult learners have received one-to-one literacy tutoring services at one of Sonoma County Library's branches during 2015-16. Approximately 139 active volunteer tutors provided that instruction.

These one-to-one pairs meet for a minimum of two hours of literacy instruction at their local library and focus on the learner's chosen goals. We ask that both learners and tutors commit to working together for a minimum of six months, but many enjoy the experience so much that they continue working together beyond that initial commitment.

Tutors are required to attend both an orientation and a six-hour training session, which are offered quarterly and conducted by the tutor coordinator.

Adult learners are required to attend a student assessment appointment conducted by the student coordinator and must be able to verbally schedule their own appointments without third-party involvement as a prerequisite to receiving services.

Advice

Library adult literacy is learner-centered education – focused on the learner's identified literacy goals. Each adult learner is unique and their needs and motivations are respected using this approach. It is important to keep a learner-centered approach and train and support your volunteer tutors to do the same by checking in with adult learners and making sure they feel what they are learning is relevant and helpful to what they need and want to accomplish in their lives. Keep the learners in mind and provide the necessary places, training, materials and encouragement, and wonderful things will happen at your library and in your community.

Make sure both adult learners and volunteer tutors know they can come to a staff member in your program with any concerns or requests at any time, and then follow up. Have clear expectations, contracts and confidentiality procedures outlined for all.

Be a good listener and take time to acknowledge and share in your adult learners' accomplishments. Take every opportunity to share and communicate success stories within your program as well as your larger library organization. Promote adult learners who welcome being acknowledged.

Finally, ask for help when needed so you can keep supporting the amazing adult learners, their tutors and their families, who are building literacy skills and

connecting at their library in such a meaningful manner.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
let_me_begin.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

More Programs

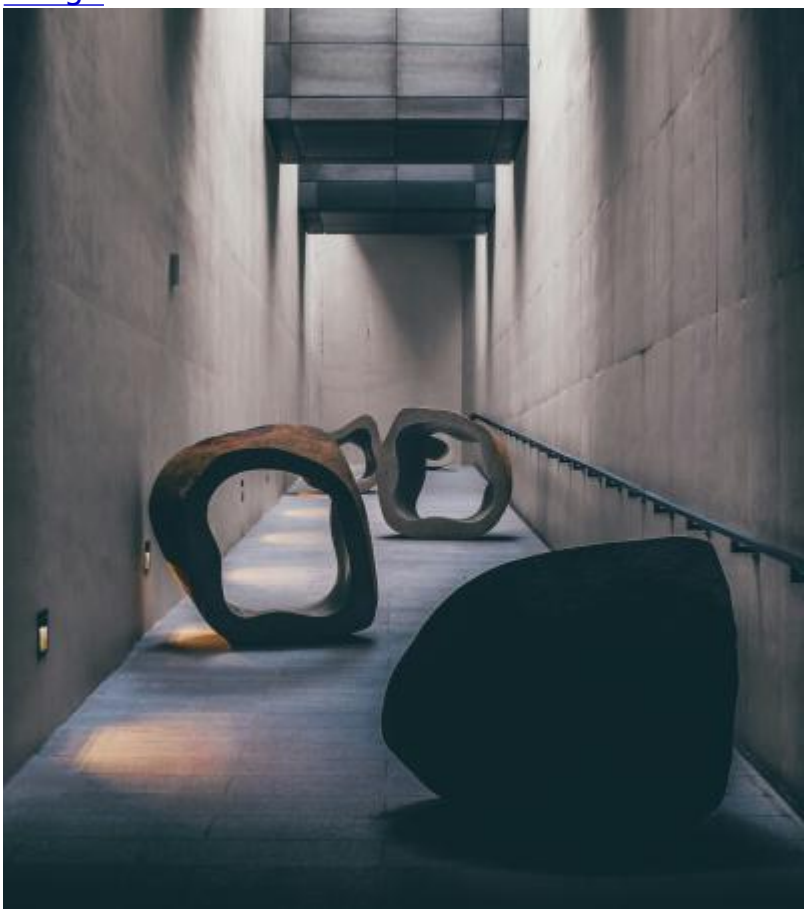
Jan 5, 2011
Adults (21 and up)+ |
Image



Partnering to Serve Immigrants and ESL Learners

Audiences:

Audience
Adults (21 and up)
Children (9 and under)
Intergenerational
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Jul 15, 2016
+ |
Image



Immigrants Thrive with Library Support

Audiences:

Jun 10, 2015

Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | □□

Image



Sunday Morning Computer Help for Seniors

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Intergenerational