MRA Minigrant Projects 2017-18: Project Summaries

Berkshire Reading Council – *Dr. Seuss Celebration in Berkshire County*
On-going Project
Council President / Project Applicant: Catherine Salvini

**Summary of Project:** Council members read aloud / act out various Dr. Seuss books; a visit by ‘The Cat in the Hat’, serving of Green Eggs & Ham; distribution of Dr. Seuss books to each child in attendance.

This project is designed to encourage the love of literature through read-alouds and promote reading at home through distribution of free books to family members attending.

It is anticipated that 3 to 8 local council members will be involved in the project (Date 3/3/18).

An estimated 75 - 150 children of Berkshire County, MA will benefit from this project.

**Itemized Budget:** Books for Distribution $425 Food/Paper Products $75

**Budget:** $500

**Vote:** Approved 3 – 0

Cape Cod Reading Council – *First Board Book for One Hundred Babies*
New Project
Council President: Mary Wall
Project Applicant: Brenda Mazzeo

**Summary of Project:**

The objective of this MRA Minigrant Project is to provide the first board book for newborn infants whose family qualifies for assistance from A Baby Center in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Our organization is dedicated to promoting literacy to families on Cape Cod, Martha’s Vineyard, and Nantucket - the area A Baby Center serves. Our goal is to encourage adults to read to their children at home by providing babies with their first book. It is part of our mission to reach out to our families and community to advocate for participation in literacy activities with children.

Each classic board book will cost approximately $5.00 each. $5.00 X 100 books is estimated to cost $500.00. It is estimated that one hundred families will benefit from this project, at least initially.

An estimate of six council members will be involved in selecting, ordering, delivering, and distributing the classic board books to A Baby Center in Hyannis.

**Budget:** $500

**Vote:** Approved 3-0
Central Massachusetts Reading Council - Literacy Support for and within Homeless Families

On-going Project
Council President: Lisa Rice
Project Applicant: Michele Chaffe

Summary of Project: The Village in Worcester, Ma is an apartment based family shelter program providing short term housing, employment training, housing search opportunities and other educational services for displaced families transitioning to self-sufficiency. This multi-building complex has the ability to serve up to 45 family units coming from the Greater Worcester area. Although this agency has partnered with other charitable forces, such as a local university to provide homework support or a local retailer that organizes furniture donation, our council has recognized that the literacy needs of their clients were not being addressed. Consequently, we have attempted to assume this very important mission by providing exemplary children’s books appropriate for a wide range of ages and covering a variety of genres. This second year of our commitment not only hopes to supplement that supply of books, but also provide a means for displaying, organizing, and distributing those titles.

Two members of Central Mass Reading Council will be involved in the selection, purchase, and delivery of these books to both residences (Ives House and The Village). CMRC members at large will be made aware of the opportunities to donate needed furniture or household supplies. In addition, any council member may donate books at our various workshops or meetings.

Budget: $500
Vote: Approved 3-0

Greater Boston Reading Council – Character Breakfast, Medford Family Network

On-going Project
Council President: Jean Helstrom
Project Applicant: Judith Jango-Cohen

Summary of Project: On Saturday March 24, 2018, the Greater Boston Reading Council will host a Character Breakfast at the McGlynn Elementary School in Medford, MA. The event is held in collaboration with the Medford Family Network, which will serve breakfast, advertise, and manage the sign-up list. When families arrive, they will be treated to a Curious George themed breakfast. Then they will participate in the various activities, including coloring, dot-to-dot, word puzzles, floor puzzles, face painting, and arts & crafts projects related to literacy. They will also listen to stories read aloud and engage in music & movement activities. Families may also choose to have their photo taken with Curious George. Parents will return home with a packet of literacy information and children will return home with a book of their choosing, poems, and the literacy-related projects they created. Council members will also be available to answer any literacy questions parents may have.

Approximately 6 - 8 Greater Boston Council members will participate.
This project will serve about 85 families connected with the Medford Family Network.
Approximately 250 people will benefit. About 125 participants will be children and about 125 will be accompanying adults.

Budget: $500
Vote: Approved 3-0
Massachusetts Association of College and University Reading Educators - Libros para Niños y Familias (Books for Children & Families): Promoting Family Literacy in Nicaragua

Ongoing Project
Council President: Dr. Martha Colwell
Project Applicant: Dr. Jennifer Manak

Summary of Project: Jenn Manak, Associate Professor at Bridgewater State University, will be supporting literacy education in Nicaragua through teacher professional development. As part of this larger project providing literacy professional development for public primary school teachers in five rural and two urban schools in Nicaragua, this project will promote family literacy by sharing authentic children’s literature and best practices for reading aloud with the families at these primary schools. MACURE proposes to support the Family Literacy aspect of this project by supporting the purchase of authentic children’s literature to share with the children attending these schools.

This project will involve Jenn Manak who has been a MACURE board member for over eight years. She plans to present an update regarding this family literacy project, Books for Children & Families: Promoting Family Literacy in Nicaragua, at a MACURE General Meeting.

This project will immediately benefit approximately 100 rural Nicaraguan children and their families. The family literacy handouts and other resources given to the primary schools will benefit additional children and families for years to come.

Budget: $500 (FUNDING ALREADY DISTRIBUTED in MARCH 2017 - NO NEW FUNDING)
Vote: Approved 3-0

Merrimack Valley Regional Reading Council – “Come Read with Me”, Lowell General Hospital Pediatric Unit

Ongoing Project
Council President: Kate Contini
Project Applicant: Karen Herbaugh

Summary of Project: The MVRRC Minigrant is designed to supply families who have children staying overnight in the pediatric wing of the Lowell General Hospital, books to read to their children while recovering. The books will then be taken home with the child at discharge, promoting literacy in the home.

The whole council will continue to be involved through individual member contributions at various local events throughout the year. Approximately 200 families in the Greater Merrimack Valley will benefit.

Budget: $500
Vote: Approved 3 - 0
Nobscot Reading Council – Project – *Ready to Read: United Way of Tri-Valley County*

**On-going Project**

**Council President:** Constance Ward  
**Project Applicant:** Valerie Hytholt

**Summary of Project:** Nobscot Reading Council’s minigrant project will support the Ready to Read program of the United Way of Tri-County’s efforts to promote reading by providing new books each month for children from birth to kindergarten. The United Way partners with the Framingham and Milford Housing Authorities to ensure that new books reach children who are in need of receiving support during their early years. An important goal of the Ready to Read program is to increase the number of families reading with their children as well as encouraging families to read for a longer period of time each day. The program nurtures the love of reading by providing books for children and literacy skills and confidence for parents. In addition, the Nobscot Reading Council members will read with the children and their families at the Ready to Read Family Nights special events held four times each year at the Framingham and Milford Housing Authority properties.

The number of individuals benefiting is difficult to determine for this mini-grant project. From the number of books purchased with $500 minigrant funds, the project directly supports 20 children receiving new books each month; however, when the children and their families read the books together, the number of individuals who benefit increases. In addition, the United Way of Tri-County has obtained donations of books for older readers in kindergarten through high school to give to older siblings to take home and read when they accompany their younger family members at the family night events.

**Budget:** $500  
**Vote:** Approved 3-0

Phyllis Allen Smith North Shore Reading Council – Project - *Literacy Project for The Reading and Educational Assistance for Learning (REAL) Program*

**New Initiative**

**Summary of Project:** Literacy Project for The Reading and Educational Assistance for Learning (REAL) Program. The REAL Program is a non-profit located in Lynn, MA. The REAL Program’s activities are made possible through a service-learning model designed to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for retired teachers and professionals and quality service-learning opportunities for high school and college students. Through the collaborative efforts of many individuals, The REAL Program has been making a difference in the lives of children since July 2013. The materials purchased will provide the organization with books to set up “Book Shops” or fill Little Free Libraries where children and families will have access to books to support their literacy development.

The membership of Phyllis Allen Smith North Shore Reading Council supports this endeavor by contributing books at each dinner meeting which will be given to the REAL program.

Books will be purchased through Amazon Smile Program. smile.amazon.com would allow us to not only purchase the books, but to also support the REAL Program since Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to The REAL Program.

**Budget:** $500  
**Vote:** Approved 3-0
Southeast Regional Reading Council (SERRC) – *Beginning a Lending Library for a Homeless Shelter, Taunton, MA*

New Initiative

**Council President:** Jan Standring

**Project Applicants:** SERRC Board and Minigrant Chairs

**Summary of Project:** Crates of books along with writing materials will be placed in labeled crates and distributed to the Taunton shelter. Labelling of crates is simply for guidance (Pre-School to Grade 1) (Grade 2 to 4) (Grade 5 up). Children or parents make borrow books on a daily basis. If books are not returned, so be it. When children leave the shelter, the may take a book of their choosing. It will be placed in a book bag for them. Our member donation of books in December will help to replenish books. An additional crate will have writing materials. We will check with the director periodically to evaluate how the program is working and to replace needed materials.

All members of SERRC will be involved.

At this time there are between 12 and 15 families in residence. The number fluctuates and is quite transient.

**Budget:** $500

**Vote:** Approved 3 – 0