MRA Minigrant Projects 2015-16: Project Summaries

Berkshire Reading Council – Dr. Seuss Night
On-going Project

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 4 to 8 local council members will be involved in the project. An estimated 50 - 100 children of Berkshire County, MA will benefit from this project.

Budget: $500

Cape Cod Reading Council – Read to Me Again and Again!
Ongoing Project

Summary of project: The Council will purchase 42 copies of Read to Me, and 22 copies of My First Reading Log, by Martha Zschock in June. Three or more members of the Council will then coordinate the distribution and delivery of 22 Read to Me books and 22 of My First Reading Log to the Early Intervention program at Cape Cod Child Development in Hyannis. At least two members will coordinate distribution and delivery of 20 copies of Read to Me to the Head Start program in Onset. The team of eight Council members will develop a brochure of easy and free literacy activities appropriate for early childhood that can be shared with either of the centers. The Council members hope to explore ways to purchase My First Reading Log for the Onset site. All books and logs will be in the hands of the targeted families by the end of September or early October.

Cape Cod Child Development is the largest provider of high quality childcare, early education and intervention, pre-school with family services and support on Cape Cod, the Islands and Wareham. Enrollment is open and continuous in order to help families and children at home and at the respective centers. There are between 30-50 students at the Onset Center, as well as more who receive support at home. Between Early Intervention and Head Start, three hundred forty families stand to benefit from this project.

Eight members of CCCILA will participate.

Budget: $500
Central Massachusetts Reading Council - Helping Children in Need
New Project

Summary of Project: This project will give the gift of good children’s books to Sherry’s House and Horizons for Homeless Children in Worcester, MA. Sherry’s House is dedicated to providing love and support for families with childhood cancer. Their home away from home approach has been successful since 1985. Horizons for Homeless Children in Worcester is an organization that supports families with young children who have no place to live. It offers play spaces for the children and literary experiences in addition to room and board for the families. Twelve members of the CMRC Board will be involved with these two projects plus members through contributions of books at the CMRC dinner meeting in May.

The families and their children who need to use the services of Sherry’s House and the Horizons facility will be served by these projects. **Budget: $500**

Greater Boston Reading Council – *Character Breakfast*
On-going Project

Summary of Project: On Saturday May 14, 2016, 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 receive a Curious George themed breakfast. Then they will participate in the various activities, including coloring, dot-to-dot, word puzzles, 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 receive a book of their choosing as well as poems and literacy-related activities. Council members will also be available to answer any literacy questions parents may have.

Approximately ten Greater Boston Council members will participate.

Approximately 240 people will benefit. About 100 participants will be children and about 140 will be accompanying adults. (Limit set by space constraints.) **Budget: $500**
Massachusetts Association of College and University Reading Educators - Libros para Niños y Familias (Books for Children & Families): Promoting Family Literacy in Nicaragua
New Initiative

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 seven years. She plans to present this family literacy project, Books for Children & Families: Promoting Family Literacy in Nicaragua, at a MACURE General Meeting in 2016-2017.

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**

**Merrimack Valley Regional Reading Council – “Come Read with Me”**
Ongoing Project

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 100 families in the Greater Merrimack Valley will benefit. **Budget: $500**
Nobscot Reading Council – Project – Ready to Read
New Initiative

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 Housing Authority to ensure that new books reach children who are most in need. An important goal of the Ready to Read program is to increase the number of families reading with their children as well as reading for a longer period of time each day. The program nurtures the love of reading by providing the books for children and literacy skills and confidence for parents. In addition, the Nobscot Reading Council will read with the children and their families at Ready to Read special events as well as at its monthly meetings. At least 20 council members will be involved with the Ready to Read Program and will read at program events.

The project will support more than 16 children receiving new books each month. When the children and their families read the books together, the number of individuals who benefit increases and is difficult to estimate by the size of each family. **Budget: $500**

Southeast Regional Reading Council (SERRC) – A “Novel” Approach to Thematic Instruction
Ongoing Project

Summary of Project: This project encourages parents/caregivers to read 1000 books to their children prior to them entering kindergarten. This program will be conducted through Early Head Start in Fall River and supported and enhanced by the Southeast Regional Reading Council. A collection of multi-lingual books (Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish and English) will be purchased.

More than 50 children entering the Early Head Start program at birth or prior to birth will benefit from this project. While SERRC’s aim is to provide and encourage reading from birth, there will most likely be other children in the home that may benefit, as well.

All members of SERRC will be involved. A book collection will be taken at SERRC’s December meeting to add to what the mini-grant can provide. **Budget: $500**