

Karl Junginger Memorial Library

Hispanic Community Outreach

The goal of our project was to seek intentional interaction through educational, language, and cultural exchanges that will encourage Hispanic members of the community to more fully use the library and all it has to offer.

Our library already works with Jefferson County Literacy Council to offer an English as a Second Language class here at the library. However, we noticed that those who participated in class rarely if ever used the library and its resources. We felt if we could invite our whole community with a focus on reaching our Hispanic population to a "Welcome to the Library Event" we could provide information on how the library works.

In our community we have a large Migrant population that come from Mexico and the surrounding Texas area that speak only Spanish to work at a local business, McKay Nursery. Through previous interactions with this demographic we realized that many did not understand how libraries work here in the United States. Many did not return materials when they left for another job or back to their home. In 2018 alone we lost around \$1,200 dollars' worth of Videos from these migrant workers taking the items with them when they left.

In order to make sure that the Hispanic population attended our "Welcome to the Library" event we recruited someone who was bi-lingual and could translate what we wanted to promote. We found the bilingual speakers by reaching out to our library system, local public school and WiLS. We were able to hire a couple different people to translate throughout our project.

Our first step was to reach out to McKay Nursery and get invited to speak with their new migrant employees for the Spring Season. We now will be able to do this on a yearly basis which is terrific. With our person who was bilingual we went two times to speak with the new McKay migrant workers. In 15 to 20 minutes we were able to explain what our library offers, the basics of how our library works and give them a free bag with some goodies and translated information about our library and our Welcome Event.

With the grant money we purchased milk crates to go into the dorms and housing for the McKay workers to return library materials before they leave to another job or back home. So far this year, 2019, we do not have any lost materials, although the migrant season is not done yet.

Advertising for the Welcome event we reached out to Ayala's Market in town, McKay Nursery, our local Schools, and local businesses. We attended the ESL class that is held here at our library through JCLC with a translator and spoke with these students about what our library offers, asked what we could provide for them and invited them and to tell others about our "Welcome Event".

Around 150 to 200 people attended this event. A bus from McKay Nursery brought over at least 50 of their workers who did not have a vehicle or way to get to the library. We hired Ayala's Market, Mexican Grocery Store, located in downtown Waterloo to come to the event and cook tacos for everyone. Cake was also purchased for the celebration. We hired a translator to give tours of the library and explain library procedures.

With some of the WiLS funds we have been able to add the items that were requested and other items to our Spanish Adult, YA, and children's book and video collections.

This project has impacted our Hispanic population in our community by providing them with a welcoming place they may not have felt comfortable in before. I have seen an increase in Hispanic families come to story times and use the library. Advice that I would give to other libraries would be to make sure you take the time to reach out to those in our community who may not understand that the library is there for them. Find a way to reach those who may not feel welcome at the library and explain why the library is there for them.

Library Welcome May 2, 2019 article in Courier

http://www.hngnews.com/waterloo_marshall/news/local/image_92e2a6c6-138d-521e-8330-f5ba88ad9505.html