MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

We Read! Summer Program
Case Overview

Springfield is a city of 112,000 residents in the Northeast region of the United States, with 5,500 children in public elementary schools. Community leaders became concerned about raising reading levels among children after several years of standardized reading scores showed students at levels about average for the state, but a significant disparity between high-achieving students and those "at risk" (including students eligible for school lunch programs and a growing number of students who are non-native speakers of English). Concerned community leaders brought together representatives of the Board of Education and the Springfield Public Library system to develop a plan for reading improvement.

One identified problem was the lack of stimulation to read during the summer months when students were out of school. A pilot summer reading program was proposed to encourage the habit of reading in young people. Two public libraries would schedule events for children and their parents to encourage use of libraries, to increase voluntary reading and to promote the library as a fun place to go. Although the goal was to raise reading levels among elementary school children, it seemed problematic for a summer reading program to claim to be the cause, even if reading scores increased. Therefore, the program focused on more immediate and measurable goals: helping to develop a habit of reading, encouraging young people to see the library as a fun place to go to choose their own reading and increasing voluntary reading time.

The Kaiser Family Foundation's latest report on children and media, Generation M (available at http://www.kff.org), indicates that elementary-school young people read for pleasure between 40 and 45 minutes a day, taking into account books, magazines, and newspapers. A realistic but ambitious goal was to increase average reading time to one hour per day, at least for those who read independently (without the help of a parent or helper).

Profiles of Stakeholders

These are fictional statements typifying attitudes and illustrating needs, not actual direct quotations.

Director, Springfield Public Library

"We're happy to offer We Read! since the activities help us better achieve our mission of serving the community—increasing circulation of holdings, serving more people, and welcoming more people to the library through programming.
Helping to develop a habit of reading in youngsters not only helps them, but builds support for us as they grow up into taxpayers. Early literacy development, as the Public Library Association recommends in their "Every Child a Reader" initiative, provides long-term improvement in literacy. And this program will draw in parents as partners, too. A win-win-win situation."

2nd Grade Teacher

"On the last day of class, I see the children's eagerness for vacation, but I worry about those youngsters who have just started to 'get into' reading. Will video games or television beat out their budding reading skills? Will they lose it all over the summer? Will they even get a library card and go to the library?"

Board of Education Elected Member

"Our students fare about average in reading skills at the elementary school level. But what parent doesn't want to live in Lake Woebegone where the children are all above average? And the scores start slipping as kids go into middle school. If We Read! can really help kids want to read on their own and get them in the habit of choosing their own books, I think that would do more to improve reading levels in the long run than anything else we could do."

Parent of Student in Kindergarten

"I got a late start in reading and I want my child to be a happy reader. I check all the books I take out for my child to see that they're decent and moral, but what else should I be looking for? I'm hoping this summer program will help me be a better guide. And that the programs are held at times I'm not at work."

Logic Model Worksheet

I.	Situation: program partners and stakeholders
What is the program's **name**?	**Springfield Library Summer Reading Program: We Read!** This project provides a structured program for students K-6 to attend the public library during the summer and develop a habit of reading. There will be theme-reading related activities, family events, reading coaches and outreach to children and families.
What **partners** are involved?	None
Who are the program's **stakeholders**? (Be sure to include yourself, your target audience, partners, funders and any other stakeholders.)	What does each **stakeholder** want to know?
Springfield Public Library	Who was served in the program? What difference did this program make? How many students were involved?
Springfield Parents	How much time is involved? How much supervision should I provide to be sure my child is reading? Will this change my child's opinion of reading and the library?
Springfield Children	How long will this program take? Will I have fun? Is this better than camp? Will my friends think I'm a geek?
Springfield Public School	Will this program help children keep their reading skills?
II. Program planning: connecting needs, solutions, and results	
Who are the **audiences**?	K-6 grade students
What are the **needs** of the audience?	Many children lose reading skills over the summer. Library use is correlated with academic success and reading skills. Many children do not use the library regularly, especially in summer, when many other leisure activities are available.

What are some **audience considerations?**	K-6 boys may be less enthusiastic readers. There are many competing summer activities in Springfield. Many non-library users think the library is "boring." Not all families know the library is available and free.
What **solution** fulfills the needs?	The Springfield Public Library will offer a summer reading program that will provide structured reading and themed activities.
What will be the **desired results?**	•Children who have not been library users will become library users. •Children will begin to develop a habit of reading. •Children will be able to choose books that match their interests and reading abilities.

II. Logic model summary: program purpose statement

We **do** what?	The Springfield Public Library will provide a structured program of themed reading-related activities, family events, reading coaches, and outreach to children and families.
For **whom**?	Springfield children (K-6)and their families
For what **outcome**/benefit(s)?	Children will: • Develop a habit of reading • Know how to choose books that match their interests • Perceive that the library is a fun place to go • Become regular library users

III. Program elements

Inputs	Outputs (or counts)
Library Staff	2 library staff
Books related to themed program	# of books added/organized for the theme
Reading related programs	12 programs
Collaterals (reader awards)	

Volunteer reading coaches	3 reading coaches
Activities	**Outputs (or counts)**
Recruit and train volunteer coaches and K-6 readers for story hours	24 volunteer read-aloud story hours
Plan and organize activities and events (story hours, readers' club meetings, family reading events, scheduling, logistics, refreshments, staffing, peer-to-peer reader advisory, K-6 library feedback)	12 themed reading-related events
Order Summer Reading Kits and recommended titles Process books	# of books added
Design library Web page for summer reading, readers' Web survey and reader diary	
Design and construct summer reading display	
Involve local merchants (donate reader rewards, publicize summer reading)	# of reader prize sponsors
Promote program (posters and flyers at elementary school, community center, shopping center, local merchants, intramural sports locales, boys and girls club; library website)	
Publicize Web-based survey and K-6 library feedback	
Evaluate (track reader self-reported reading, Web survey)	
Services	**Outputs (or counts)**
K-6 student projects (poster workshop, peer-to-peer reader advisories, K-6 library feedback, K-6 summer volunteers reading aloud program)	300 K-6 participants 1800 books read 50 new K-6 library users
Reader coaching (how to choose books, books you might like, how to use peer-to-peer recommendation system, help with reading)	# of coaching sessions

V. Outcomes

Outcome 1: *Children develop a habit of reading.*

Indicator(s)	Applied to	Data Source	Data Interval	Target
The number and percent of children who read at least an hour per day for fun	All K-6 registered Independent readers* in Springfield summer reading program (*does not include children who read with the help of others)	Self reports (tracked reading) Web-based survey and reader diary	Tracked 6 months following the end of the Summer Reading program	50%

Outcome 2: *Children become regular library users.*

Indicator(s)	Applied to	Data Source	Data Interval	Target
The number and percent of children who voluntarily borrow at least 1 book every 2 weeks following the Summer Reading Program	All K-6 children registered in Springfield summer reading program	Self reports (tracked reading) Web-based survey and reader diary	Tracked 6 months following the end of the Summer Reading program	60%

Outcome 3: *Children learn to choose books that meet their interests.*				
Indicator(s)	**Applied to**	**Data Source**	**Data Interval**	**Target**
The number and percent of children who can list 3 credible age appropriate characteristics of books they like	All K-6 children in Springfield registered for summer reading program	Web-based K-6 survey	Last 2 weeks of program	60%
Outcome 4: *Children think the library is a fun place to go.*				
Indicator(s)	**Applied to**	**Data Source**	**Data Interval**	**Target**
The number and percent of children who rank the public library as one of the top 3 things in the top 10 things children have fun doing in Springfield	All K-6 children in Springfield registered for summer reading program	Web-based K-6 survey	Last 2 weeks of program	90%