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## **Grant Proposal**

### **The Helen Kate Furness Free Library: Becoming a Family Place Library**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Helen Kate Furness Free Library proposes to join the Family Place Libraries™ network and become a Family Place Library. A Family Place Library redesigns the library environment to be a welcoming place for children that offers a nonjudgmental, integrated and interdisciplinary approach to lifelong learning, connects caregivers with the resources, programs and services offered at the library as well as at other local family service agencies, reinforces the importance of parents assuming the role of their children's first and best teacher and reaches out to new and nontraditional library users. This innovative program will enable the Helen Kate Furness Free Library to become an important center in the community that provides access to much-needed resources such as information on early childhood, parent education and enriching materials and activities that nurture a child's development during the critical first years of life. In order to become a Family Place Library, the Helen Kate Furness Free Library seeks \$10,000 in funding.

## SETTING

### The Community

Located in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, the Helen Kate Furness Free Library (HKF) is considered to be one of the treasures of Nether Providence Township. The library's history and development are closely tied to this small community lying just 15 miles southwest of Philadelphia in Delaware County, PA. Nether Providence Township is rich in history and woodlands and there are presently over 13,000 residents living in this 4.6 square mile area, which is surrounded by public parks, walking trails, attractive neighborhoods, excellent schools and an array of nearby social, cultural and athletic activities (Nether Providence, 2010).

The library was founded in 1902 by a group of Nether Providence citizens and it has been member owned and supported for 110 years. Originally named in honor of one of the founders—the renowned Shakespearean scholar, Horace Howard Furness—the library was housed in a room of the newly constructed Wallingford Elementary School. Dr. Furness died in 1912 and he bequeathed \$5,000 to the library on the condition that its name be changed to honor his wife, who was also a Shakespearean scholar. In 1913, the son of Dr. and Mrs. Furness conveyed to the library an acre of land on which a stone building was constructed in 1916 and this is the foundation of the present building. Over the years, Nether Providence citizens have initiated several capital campaigns in order to raise money for additions to the building.

### Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Helen Kate Furness Free Library reflects its commitment to the community and its goal to be seen as the neighborhood information hub:

*“The Helen Kate Furness Free Library is community-focused and community supported. We strive to provide easy access to a rich variety of reading-related material, services and technology. We encourage professional, educational, social and personal enrichment that promotes a lifelong appreciation for reading and learning.”*

### Collection and Facilities

With a 2011 circulation of 64,367 items, the three levels of the HKF Library house 24,314 books for adults, 20,286 young adult and children titles, 2,454 reference materials, 310 videos and DVDs, 299 audio books, 481 compact discs/software and numerous periodicals and newspapers. The main floor of the library building has five public internet stations for research and study, two reading rooms and contains the adult and young adult fiction collections. The entire second-floor is dedicated to non-fiction materials and has a large meeting room utilized by community organizations such as the Wallingford Swim Club, the League of Women Voters, Boy Scouts and the Nether Providence Historical Society. The basement level is where all the children/juvenile items and reading room are located as well as a “Paperback Bookstore,” which sells gently used books for a one dollar donation.

### Programs

The HKF Library offers many programs and events that engage the community in educational and social activities. The Book Discussion Group, now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, meets once a month and provides patrons the opportunity to read, enjoy and converse about books on various themes with a range of members from the community. Health related programs also attract a

large adult audience as well as summer reading clubs for adults, young adults and children.

During the school year, the library provides storytime hours for infants through elementary age children. In the summer, social events—such as movie screenings and craft projects—are offered at the library for children and teenagers.

### Patrons

While the library's primary focus is to serve the Nether Providence Township's residents, HKF is a public library and its resources are freely accessible to anyone who visits the facility. The library is a member of the Delaware County Library System and participates in the Access PA program, which enables all Pennsylvania residents with a valid PA library card to borrow any of HKF's circulating materials. HKF is also actively involved in building relationships with the four elementary schools in the district—Nether Providence Elementary, Wallingford Elementary School, St. John Chrysostom School and The School in Rose Valley—and invites classes to visit the library in order to participate in literacy activities.

### Staff

Sandi Nailor has been the Director of the HKF Library since graduating from Villanova University with a Masters in Library Science and she has held this position for over twenty-five years. Ms. Nailor is assisted by two other full-time employees in managing the library: Mary Ingham Otto is the Technical Assistant and Lori Friedgen-Veitch is the Children's Librarian. There are also two part-time Reference Librarians—Martha Trzepacz and Lenore Breslin—who work at the library in the evenings. There is a dedicated group of over 70 volunteers who staff

the circulation desks and shelve the books. The Board of Directors is comprised of 22 members, representing various sections of the community.

### **STATEMENT OF NEED**

*“Children with rich vocabularies who have been read to, sung to, played with, and most importantly, talked to are set up for success when they go to school.”* (Prendergast, 2011, p. 21).

Family literacy is defined as “an educational method based on a common belief that improvement in literacy skills and overall academic performance will result from continuing education of children and their parents through planned child-parent interactions” (Chance, 2010, p. 8) and the key component of its philosophy is that parents are the primary teachers for their children as well as fully engaged partners in the education of their children. The concept of family literacy has gained many proponents in the education field over the past twenty years and child-development research has shown that parental beliefs and attitudes regarding literacy and reading influence children's literacy development (Watson, 2004). Long-term research studies have also determined that academic success for junior and senior high school students depends on success in preschool and the early school years, while “academic success in preschool and elementary years relies on very young students ‘knowing... about print and its functions in the world’ ” (Watson, 2004, p. 24).

But where are caregivers—especially first-time, young, poor or non-native English speaking parents—supposed to acquire these early literacy teaching skills and developmentally appropriate educational materials in order to ensure that their children enter school ready and able to learn? Caregivers need an easily accessible center that can provide information on child-

rearing and also enriching resources and activities to nurture their children's language and literacy development during the critical first years of life. Public libraries are uniquely situated in a community to offer innovative programming that promotes all of these services since they contain materials that are free, accessible to all and employ professionals with expertise in all aspects of information literacy. They also maintain the ideal environment—supportive and nonjudgmental—where parents can meet other caregivers, exchange ideas, observe how their children learn and participate in interactive literacy activities with their children.

According to the 2010 Census, of the 13,706 residents living in Nether Providence Township 5.5% of the population was under 5 years old and 34.4% of the population had households with children under 18 years old living at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). This data indicates that Nether Providence Township is a suburban community where children are a large part of the population and there is a significant number that are pre-school age or younger. This is a community that will greatly benefit from an information center that can provide special programming that focuses on both the parent and child and which gives children access to educational, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate resources. This information center will also ultimately support and encourage parents to be involved in their children's earliest learning experiences.

### **PROPOSED PROGRAM**

In order to offer the above types of family-centered services, the Helen Kate Furness Free Library proposes to join the Family Place Libraries™ network—which currently includes over 300 sites in 23 states—and become a Family Place Library. Family Place Libraries™ provide a

developmental framework and comprehensive model for family-centered library service and its mission is to

*“increase the capacity of libraries throughout the nation to recognize and realize their full potential as community hubs for healthy child and family development, parent and community involvement and lifelong learning beginning at birth.”*

(Family Place Libraries™, 2011)

Being a Family Place Library means that HKF will redesign its environment in order to provide a welcoming and appropriate place for children—beginning soon after birth—to learn and establish itself as an important center in the community for early childhood information, parent education and family support. Furthermore, every Family Place Library offers:

- A five-week parent/child workshop that involves toddlers and their caregivers; features local professionals who serve as resources for parents; emphasizes the role of parents as the first teachers of their children; facilitates early intervention; and teaches strategies for healthy child development and early literacy;
- A specially designed space for young children and their parents;
- Collections of books, toys, music and multimedia materials for babies, toddlers, parents and service providers;
- Collaborative work with community agencies that serve families and young children to connect parents to local resources;
- Developmentally appropriate programming for young children and their parents;
- Outreach to new and underserved populations;

- Librarians specially trained in family support, child development, parent education and best practices. (Family Place Libraries™, 2011)

### Program Goals

The goal of becoming a Family Place Library is to make the Helen Kate Furness Free Library a significant destination for parents and children in the Nether Providence Township community. By creating a dynamic and exciting learning environment where families can engage in meaningful early literacy experiences, HKF can more actively foster a lifelong love of reading and learning as well as establish the importance of the library in both the lives of children and adults. As a result of incorporating this innovative program into the services of HKF, parents will be better informed of library and community resources, caregivers will feel less isolated and be able to form relationships with one another, children with delays and special needs can be identified early and connected with intervention services and caregivers will become more confident in their roles as first teachers and consequently spend more time reading, playing, talking and singing with their children both in and out of the library.

### Proposed Implementation Schedule

It will take a year to completely implement the Family Place services at the HKF Library. Firstly, the library's staff must attend the required three-day Family Place Training Institute held twice a year at the Middle County Public Library—which is the national model for Family Place Libraries—in Centereach, NY. At this event, HKF staff will be taught how to implement the program and will also be given catalogues and brochures from which to choose a variety of developmentally appropriate books, toys, music and other multimedia materials for children as well as parent education resources. It is projected that it could take several months for the HKF

Library to receive all of the items ordered. Meanwhile, the library staff's time will be spent contacting local family service agencies to take part in the parent/child workshops and also preparing the content and activities of the workshops. These five-week workshop sessions will take place twice a year and, ideally, it will be arranged that there will be one five-week session held in the spring which meets once a week for an hour and another session in the fall. A month before each session, HKF staff will publicize this special programming and the library's new sub-title of being "A Family Place Library" in flyers displayed at the library's circulation desks, in local newspapers, on the library's website and at community pre-schools and daycares. Sign-up sheets for the sessions will be placed at the Children's Circulation Desk located downstairs in the HKF building.

### Evaluation

HKF anticipates an enthusiastic response from the Nether Providence Township community when the Family Place Library services have been fully implemented at the library. The specially designed room designated to hold the parent/child workshops can accommodate between 15-20 families and it is projected that the maximum number of families will sign-up to participate in each five-week session. At the start of each session, caregivers will be asked to fill out a survey that gauges their initial feelings about the program and what they hope both they and their children will gain from these workshop activities. Another survey will be handed out to caregivers at the end of the five-week session asking questions such as what their children's favorite toy/book/song or activity had been, had the children been comfortable in and enjoyed the environment, which featured family service agency, resources provided and topics covered had been the most useful and if there were any other subjects that they would have liked to discuss during the workshops. These surveys will enable the HKF staff to learn what aspects of

the program have been most successful as well as in what ways the services can be improved. It is also anticipated that—outside of the workshops—there will be a general increase in caregivers bringing their children to the library in order to read and play together and taking advantage of the numerous child-development resources. Additionally, National Family Place staff will conduct an on-site evaluation visit within two years of the HKF Library joining the network.

### **PROPOSED BUDGET**

The fee for an individual library to become a Family Place Library is \$10,000. This includes: tuition for the required three-day Family Place Training Institute—which prepares participants to implement the program locally—Technical Assistance and Site Support for three years, an on-site visit from National Family Place staff and access to developmentally appropriate materials for children and parent education resources.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is important that a community has access to an information center that can provide a variety of resources dealing with early childhood, parent education as well as developmentally appropriate educational materials that nurture a child's ability to enter school prepared and ready to learn. Public libraries are uniquely situated in a community to offer free and easily accessible family-centered services and provide a nonjudgmental, supportive atmosphere where children and parents can participate in interactive literacy activities with one another. By providing a fun and enriching environment where families can engage in meaningful early literacy experiences, the Helen Kate Furness Free Library can more actively foster a lifelong love of reading and learning in children and also establish the importance of the library in both the lives of children and parents.

## **Appendix**

- A. Annual Report of the Helen Kate Furness Free Library
- B. Resumes of HKF staff
- C. Letters of support
- D. Supplementary information on the Family Place Libraries™ network

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Grant Proposal Writing is Exciting, Imaginative Work So, you want to write a grant proposal? This is exciting! This means that you have valuable research to do or a particular nonprofit to build or a community resource you're passionate about developing. You have a distinct vision for how something could be improved or advanced, and you're ready to ask for funding or other support to help this vision become a reality. Professor Kate Vieira UW-Madison C&I. As you reach toward this unrealized vision by developing a grant proposal, you should think about successful grant writing as an act of imagination. The rise in families hiring governesses will exacerbate fears about growing inequalities experienced by disadvantaged children. While a governess has become a fashionable luxury for ultra-high net worth families in recent years, Carrie-ann Pryke, founder and director of Duke & Duchess, which has offices in London and Moscow, said there had been increased demand from working parents with means who need help with home schooling. "This year we've had more families coming to us who are using us to fulfil a need rather than as a luxury." As well as governesses, she said there had been increasing interest in governors "the modern male equivalent. Pryke said her company had seen a 38% increase in demand for candidates to fill education roles with families. Anne Helen Petersen: There are two major factors. The first is conceiving of children as mini-adults"trying to cultivate behaviors, postures, and skills that are associated with adults, like being able to carry on conversations with adults or advocating for themselves when they feel something is unfair. I think we often admire that sort of precociousness without understanding what's lost when you cultivate that in a child. The other component is thinking of childhood as a means to an end, and that end is getting into a good college. So instead of viewing childhood as simply childhood, parents Library grant "nonfiction materials. The Manchester Township Elementary School is the newest school in the Manchester School District. It was opened in January of 1993, and at that time an entire new library collection was purchased for the very large, dedicated library space. When the school opened, the schedule allowed each class to visit the library on a rotating basis, approximately once a week. A decade or so later, media time was switched to a preparatory period for teachers, ensuring that each classroom would have a weekly visit to the library, along with borrowing privileges for each From Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository. Jump to navigation Jump to search. Summary[edit]. DescriptionHelen Kate Furness Free Library Wallingford PA.jpg. English: Helen Kate Furness Free Library in Wallingford, Pennsylvania. Date. 16 July 2015, 13:09:05.