Academic Enrichment Grant—Somebody That Looks Like Me: Book Sharing Boxes filled

with Books for a Diverse Population

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McCarthey Dressman Education Foundation----Academic Enrichment Grant Application Questions

*The online application does not open until January 15, so I filled out the questions shown in the preview.

Bsckground Information

Project Title: Somebody that looks like me: Book-Sharing Boxes filled with Books for a Diverse Population

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Narrative

1. Describe your project.

It is important for children of all backgrounds and races to be able to see themselves in the books they read. It encourages a positive self-perception, contributes how kids see the world around them, and even helps kids develop as a reader (Williams, n.d.). I would like to increase the opportunities for the diverse children of Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary School to read relatable books by putting up Book-Sharing Boxes throughout the neighborhoods of the students.

The first step would be to form a committee, which I would lead, of teachers/staff, students, and even families of Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary. This committee would discuss and determine how many Book-Sharing Boxes would be necessary and the best places (the places that would be accessible for the most number of students) to put up the Book-Sharing Boxes throughout the Elizabeth Vaughan community.

The second step would be to order pre-built Book-Sharing Boxes. I would like to get Book-Sharing Boxes with at least two shelves. The bottom shelf would have books geared for the younger children (those books being on the bottom shelf would allow those children to be able to physically reach those books) and the top shelf would be for older children. The committee would then decorate the Book-Sharing Boxes to represent the diverse student population at Elizabeth Vaughan. This decorating process would give the students and families involved a lot of ownership in the Book-Sharing Boxes, which will hopefully increase the usage of the boxes and the books inside.

The third step involves actually mounting the Book-Sharing Boxes on their posts in the pre-determined areas throughout the neighborhoods of Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary. The committee would be involved with this process as well. Taking part in placing the Book-Sharing Boxes that were decorated by the Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary community would give a sense of pride to those involved. Then, they will want to share their accomplishments with the families, friends, and neighbors which would help get the word out about the Book-Sharing Boxes.

The fourth step is to fill the Book-Sharing Boxes with books that highlight diverse story characters, authors, and publishers in order to reflect the diverse community of Elizabeth Vaughan. It is important for children to see themselves in the pages of books, to see their own culture or community being represented. Little Free Library (2022) states that "books can be a window into experiences that are different from our own. By reading diverse books, we can increase understanding, empathy, and inclusion." So, it is also important to increase the opportunities for children to learn about experiences that are different than their own experiences in order to help create more understanding, empathy, and inclusion. Moran and Morner (2017) mention several ways to communicate the services offered by a library, including "Web sites, blogs, and other social media, as well as the traditional print-on-paper, and broadcasting modes, and by presenting at community meetings" (p. 134). At times it can be a challenge for Elizabeth Vaughan's library to get word out about their services due to the lack of access by the demographics of their patrons (the students and their families). To help get word out about the library's services and events, within the distributed books, a bookmark listing the various hands-on services offered by the library and events hosted by the library would be placed in each book (Hursh, 2019). This will get the word out into the community and hopefully increase the usage of the services provided or increase the attendance of any event held by the school library. The students will help to choose books that will be included in the Book-Sharing Boxes. The committee will compile a list of books with a picture of the book and a quick synopsis to help the students of Elizabeth Vaughan choose which books they would like to see in the Book-Sharing Boxes.

The final step of my project will be ongoing. It will be necessary to continue up-keep for each Book-Sharing Box. The Book-Sharing Boxes will need to be maintained (kept clean, doors in working condition, or shelving remaining sturdy, and so on). The Book-Sharing Boxes will also need to be consistently updated with books. Book-Sharing Boxes are meant for sharing-where if you take a book, you should try to share (give) another book in its place. However, it is not always possible for Elizabeth Vaughan community members to do this. So, it will be necessary

to consistently add books to each Book-Sharing Box in order for there to be a decent (as in amount available) and diverse selection for all that utilize the boxes.

2. Please provide at least two references (models, books, or research citations) related to your project.

Langs, J. (2022, April 4). Poverty impedes children's education long before they enter the classroom-Here's how we can change that. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeseq/2022/04/04/poverty-impedes-childrens-education-long-before-they-enter-the-classroom---heres-how-we-can-change-that/?sh=154874fe204d

Jordan Langs article describes how low-income children are left behind in the education realm before they even enter the classroom. There are many barriers that exclude low-income children from achieving early developments in education. Langs writes "children from low-income households often lack access to books, sing-along toys, interactive games, and other early learning materials that support a child's healthy development." He goes on to describe ways a community can make a difference in children's lives. One of the ways is to start a Free Library (Book-Sharing Boxes). Langs states, "Starting a free library is a simple and easy way to bring the community together while increasing the availability of free literacy materials." Posting Book-Sharing Boxes throughout the Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary School community will help low-income families break down some of the barriers that prevent children from achieving early developments in education.

Anderson, E. (2022, April 18). 'She saw somebody that looked like her': Read in Color program highlights BIPOC authors, characters. *Communities that KARE*. https://www.kare11.com/article/news/local/outreach/communities-that-kare/read-in-color-little-free-library-urban-ventures/89-4602b37f-4e8f-45a3-a1a1-7e84fe17985a?utm_campaign=meetedgar&utm_medium=social&utm_source=meetedgar.com&fbclid=IwAR1iWInA2IZemWM8CiLovpBOW4P5bmDuhujZ-qi6D63vISNRfl4qdleAIpE

Eva Anderson describes a little girl named, Jayla Roberts (age 7), who wants to be a scientist. Jayla found a book called, *Ada Twist, Scientist*, from a Little Free Library (a Book-Sharing Box), which was about a young Black girl passionate about science. This book created an opportunity for Jayla, also a little Black girl, to see her dream come to life in a character like herself. Anderson shares about The Read in Color program, which "is an initiative to ensure the mini libraries are filled with books that reflect the diverse communities around them: an effort to highlight diverse authors, publishers, and story characters." Posting the Book-Sharing Boxes is not enough. It is necessary for the Book-Sharing Boxes to be filled with books that reflect Elizabeth Vaughan's community, so they can see themselves in those characters, authors, or even publishers.

3. Describe your school/organization and the students who will participate. Include pertinent student information, numbers of students in project, demographics, socioeconomic characteristics etc.

Welcome to the Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary School library! This school library is located inside Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary School (Vaughan), home of the Wildcats, in Woodbridge, VA. Vaughan Elementary School serves 573 students in grades Prekindergarten-5. According to the Public School Review website, the minority enrollment at Vaughan is 95% of the student body (majority Hispanic), which is higher than the Virginia state average of 54% (majority Black and Hispanic). ElementarySchools.org (2022) state, "the percentage of Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary students on free and reduced lunch assistance (**71.2%**) is **significantly higher** than the state average of **44.7%**. This may indicate that the area has a **higher level of poverty** than the state average." All Elizabeth Vaughan students, families, and surrounding community will participate and benefit from this project.

4. Describe how your project meets these criteria: *Is original, pioneering or innovative *Connects to the culture of your community *Will enrich academically the lives of participants *Demonstrates local support

My project is innovative for the Elizabeth Vaughan community. Posting many Book-Sharing Boxes throughout the Elizabeth Vaughan community will allow community members to access diverse books. The bookmark included in each book will alert community members of the services or events at the school library.

This project connects to the culture of Elizabeth Vaughan's community by making books available more often (the Book-Sharing Boxes are open 24/7) and by bringing community members more relatable books (books that let Elizabeth Vaughan's diverse population see themselves in the characters, authors, or publishers) or to increase understanding, empathy, or inclusion. The students will help to choose books that will be included in the Book-Sharing Boxes. The committee will compile a list of books with a picture of the book and a quick synopsis to help the students of Elizabeth Vaughan choose which books they would like to see in the Book-Sharing Boxes. This process will help to connect to the culture of the community.

Making relatable books available to Elizabeth Vaughan's community will enrich everyone by allowing the diverse population to see themselves in the characters, authors, and publishers and to increase understanding, empathy, or inclusion.

The local support is demonstrated through the committee that will be formed at the beginning of the project. The committee will be comprised of teachers/staff, students, and families of Elizabeth Vaughan Elementary. The committee members will be a part of each step in the project which will give the community ownership throughout the whole process.

5. Describe what will be produced from this project that can be disseminated. (Examples: student products such as journals, DVD, power point, etc.

The Book-Sharing Boxes will be decorated and posted throughout the community by members of the committee, which includes students. The students will be involved in each step of the project. The Book-Sharing Boxes will be disseminated throughout the community by the students (and the rest of the committee) after they get decorated by the students (and committee members). The project will help build community and give ownership to the community as well.

The bookmarks with the services and events of Elizabeth Vaughan's school library will also be placed in the books by the students (and other committee members). The students will help to choose books that will be included in the Book-Sharing Boxes. The committee will compile a list of books with a picture of the book and a quick synopsis to help the students of Elizabeth Vaughan choose which books they would like to see in the Book-Sharing Boxes.

6. Describe your plan to implement the project, including timelines and specific projects.

Step 1: Form a committee----allow a month to get the word out to the Elizabeth Vaughan school community about the committee forming and for people to sign up (grant money is dispersed August 15, so mid to late September)

   Step 2: Order pre-built Book-Sharing Boxes with two shelves and decorate the boxes----this can vary depending on the availability of the pre-built two-shelf Book-Sharing Boxes and shipping; decorating will be planned on a Saturday which will allow for more committee or community members to be available (it will be necessary to brainstorm decorating ideas and make a plan to use on decorating day---it will help decorating day go more smoothly). Order Book-Sharing Boxes

   Step 3: Mount the Book-Sharing Boxes throughout the neighborhood----this will be planned on a Saturday as well to allow for more committee or community members to be available to help mount the Book-Sharing Boxes.

   Step 4: Compile a list of diverse books that will be used to fill the Book-Sharing Boxes and order the books; once books arrive stuff them with the bookmarks which list the services and events of Elizabeth Vaughan's school library. Deliver the books to the Book-Sharing Boxes----compiling the list of books will take place during school hours and a list of options will also be sent home to allow families an opportunity to be involved in the book choices; after all input is given, the books chosen will be ordered (this can vary depending on availability of the book titles and shipping).

   Step 5: Maintain the Book-Sharing Boxes and continuously add new books----this will go on for at least the remainder of grant year 1 and for all of grant year 2.

7. Budget: Complete the BUDGET FORM. Indicate if you are applying for 1-2 years. Describe in the box below any additional information you may want to supply regarding the budget.

Year 1: I am requesting $7,150 for the 1ˢᵗ grant year (not allowed to exceed $10,000 a year)

What will the money be used for?	How are these expenses related to your program?	When will the money be spent?	Amount of money needed
Refreshments for committee meetings	Giving thanks to committee members	Whenever there are committee meetings	$500 for the year (depending on how many committee members)

Book-Sharing Boxes (with 2 shelves)	Book-Sharing Boxes are needed to store diverse books throughout the community	Toward the beginning of the first grant year (mid to late September after committee has been created and met about how many Book-Sharing Boxes will be needed (maybe 5)	$2,250 for at least 5 Book-Sharing Boxes (at about $450 for each 2-shelf Book-Sharing Box)
Decorating materials (paint, paint brushes, stickers, other)	Needed to decorate Book-Sharing Boxes	Once the Book-Sharing Boxes are received----order mid to late October	$500 for paint and other decorating materials
Books	Needed for diverse books	Late November to early December, after students and community have made book choices	$3,500 for various diverse books
Cardstock paper and ink to print Bookmarks	Paper to print bookmarks that will be placed in each book	Late November to early December to give time to print bookmarks	$150 for cardstock paper and ink

Year 2: I am requesting $4,650 for the 2nd grant year (not allowed to exceed $10,000 a year)

What will the money be used for?	How are these expenses related to your program?	When will the money be spent?	Amount of money needed
Refreshments for committee meetings	Giving thanks to committee members	Whenever there are committee meetings	$500 for the year (depending on how many committee members)
Maintenance for Book-Sharing Boxes	Needed for maintenance for Book-Sharing Boxes	Throughout the 2nd grant year	$500 for any necessary maintenance
More books	Needed for more diverse books	Mid to late September, after students and community have made books choices	$3,500 for various diverse books
More paper and ink to print Bookmarks	Paper to print bookmarks that will be placed in each book	Late September	$150 for cardstock paper and ink

8. How will you evaluate this project? Describe the indicators of effectiveness you will use, such as numbers of students involved, new skills participants will acquire, audiences impacted by the student work, benefit to the community, benefit to students, etc.

I will evaluate this project by the usage of the Book-Sharing Boxes, participation in the book choice surveys (by students and community members), usage of Elizabeth Vaughan's school library services (which are listed on the bookmarks), attendance in events hosted by Elizabeth Vaughan's school library (which are listed on the bookmarks), and the amount of participation by committee members. While maintaining the Book-Sharing Boxes, I will be able to see if books are being shared (by noticing different titles from what was originally put in the boxes or from less books within the boxes). I will be able to determine how much the students and community are involved with choosing relatable books by seeing how many surveys come back. The bookmarks that will be placed in each book will list Elizabeth Vaughan's services and events. I will be able to see an increase in service usage and event attendance if community members are utilizing the Book-Sharing Boxes. Another indicator that will help me evaluate the success of the project will be the involvement of the committee members. If the members that join the committee stay dedicated to the committee throughout the 1st grant year, that will show commitment and want by the community for the Book-Sharing Boxes. The amount of returning committee members for the 2nd grant year will also indicate that the community values the Book-Sharing Boxes.

Appendix

Eligibility for a **McCarthey Dressman Education Foundation** grant:

https://mccartheydressman.org/academic-enrichment-grants/

Academic Enrichment Grant Application Questions (Preview):

file:///C:/Users/const/Desktop/academic-enrichment-grant-application-questions-rev-2022.pdf

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