

MASON COUNTY M. BEVEN ECKERT PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN



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Department of Library and Information Sciences



Mason County Library Community Outreach Plan

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Mason County Library Community Outreach Plan

Outreach Plan

Introduction

Mason County is located in Central Texas, just south of the geographic center of the state and just over ninety-five miles northwest of Austin. The western part of the county lies on the edge of the Edwards Plateau and is characterized by generally flat terrain surfaced by shallow, stony clays and loams. The eastern part of the county, in the Llano basin, is characterized by rolling to steep terrain surfaced by deeper sandy clay loams. The area is rich with natural resources derived from stone and granite formations underlying these areas and includes quarried stone, crushed rock, gravel, sand and lime. The county's abundant wildlife, particularly deer, wild turkey, dove, and quail, has made it a popular hunting and fishing area. The Llano River, which flows west to east through the center of the county, drains the majority of Mason County. Other rivers include the James River, which enters the Llano from the south, and the San Saba River, which crosses the extreme northwestern corner of the county. There are also a number of spring-fed creeks. The western edge of the county overlies the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau) aquifer, and portions of the county overlie the Hickory Sandstone and Ellenburger-San Saba aquifers.

For most of its history Mason has been primarily a ranching community. Because of the great interest in agriculture, the 4-H Club and other agricultural organizations have been a major concern of both town and county. In 1907 the Mason Business Men's Club was organized; it became the Mason Chamber of Commerce on June 1, 1925. The Maverick Club, which became the Junior Chamber of Commerce in December 1935, organized the Mason County Fair Association, which manages the fair park, established in 1938 and located southeast of town on the San Antonio highway. The annual Mason County Fair and Rodeo draws tourists from all over the state. Mason also attracts many hunters, fishermen, and campers in season. Tourist attractions include the Sequist home, built in the late 1880s by E. M. Reynolds and opened to the public in January 1975; the Mason Bat Caves; and the Fort Mason Museum, which consists of the old officers' quarters restored by the Mason County Historical Society and dedicated in July 1976. The Old Grammar School was renamed the Historical Building and has since housed the county library, a museum, and county offices. The historic Gamel Spring nearby was being used to feed the town swimming pool.

Historical, Current, and Future Roles for the Library

Historically, the library has been the place for lifelong learning, free information access, a meeting place, and provider of educational and recreational materials, information assistance, local history, formal education support, provider of current topics and titles, public computer access, place for early childhood literacy and a pre-school door to learning. Currently, the library fulfills those roles plus being a place for adult learning, a gateway to information, a support for business, and a place to get help with career and workforce development. In the future the library would like to provide Spanish and bi-lingual books, GED tutoring, an early literacy station for children, and teen programs.

Existing Programs

The library has a number of existing programs it offers to library patrons: weekly Story Time for pre-school aged children, annual summer reading program for children and teens, a lecture series, exam proctoring, digitized local newspapers, summer movies for kids,

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and inter-library loan.

Identified Needs

One identified challenge for the area is an underserved minority population. Approximately 21% of the population in Mason County and 33.5% of the population in the city of Mason is Hispanic.

Identified needs of the library are: a lack of Spanish language materials and Spanish-speaking staff; no ESL or GED services and low participation in programs.

Identified Assets

Community assets include a public swimming pool, tennis courts, exotic animal ranches, vineyards, topaz fields, an airport, public parks, historic Ft. Mason, the Mason County Museum on the Square, and the County Museum in the Historical Building, bat cave, walking trails, and campgrounds.

The library's enthusiastic and professional staff is one of its most important assets. They are able to manage detailed project often funded by grants and exhibit good budgeting skills. The staff is committed to early literacy, willing to collaborate with community partners to expand or improve customer service, and display an appreciation for diversity. The library is fortunate to enjoy support from the Richard and Beven Eckert Trust. The library houses Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller* memorabilia, an asset that attracts tourists.

The Mason County Library would like to thank the county judge and commissioners, the mayor and city commissioners, the library board, Friends of the Library, the Mason Study Club and the Richard and Beven Eckert Trust for their ongoing support. The library would like to thank the businesses and volunteers who make the library a successful and vital asset for the community. The library is grateful that the Robert and Ruby Priddy Charitable Trust is funding the University of North Texas (UNT) PEARL project. We thank the Trust and UNT for choosing our library to participate in the PEARL project. The library's participation in the PEARL project will assist the library in developing outreach programs for children and adults and will help us in writing grants for this and future outreach programs. Director Patti Grote would like to thank the staff of the library for their understanding and support while she worked on developing this outreach program.

Community Profile Narrative

Mason County has a rich history of cultural and social diversity. The county was settled from the south by German immigrants, from the north and east by English, Irish and Americans, from the west by the Mexicans. The cultural influences of all those groups are still present today, making Mason a culturally and socially diverse community. Mason County is dubbed the "Gem of the Hill Country" and visitors can still find blue topaz here. The town square with its beautiful historical buildings forms the centerpiece of the community. Ft. Mason is a reminder of the county's military history. Robert E. Lee was once stationed here. Of great pride to the community is that it is the hometown of Fred Gipson, author of the famous novel *Old Yeller*. A bronze statue, *Travis and Old Yeller*, standing in front of the library immortalizes Gipson and his most recognized work. The library foyer houses a collection of Gipson memorabilia.

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Main Geographic Features

Community Features

Assets and Challenges

Mason experiences a humid subtropical climate with hot summers and a generally mild winter. The largest gem quality topaz ever found in North America came from Mason. The town is located on Comanche Creek southwest of Mason Mountain on the Edwards Plateau and is part of the Llano Uplift. The Llano River flows through Mason noted for the beautiful scenery, a bat cave, and abundant wildflowers.

Due to the close proximity to Fredericksburg, the inability to compete with the tourism of Fredericksburg is a challenge. The two- hour travel time to the closest major cities, Austin and San Antonio also presents a challenge.

Library Features

Assets and Challenges

The main geographic asset of the library is its location. It is located near the Museum on the Square, the Mason County Museum in the Historical Building, the courthouse, historical jail, the Odeon Theater, the post office, and schools. The main challenges for the library are that it is not on a well-marked street, and people complain it is hard to find. Local people do not come to see the Gipson display or the historic building.

Community Demographics

The 2010 Census shows the population of Mason County as 4,012, with a city population of 2,114. 5% of Mason County residents are under 5 years of age; 22.4% are over 65. Approximately 21.5% are Hispanic or Latino; 22.5% have a native language other than English. 82% of the population graduated from high school, with 28.5% having a bachelor's degree. The median household income is \$36,965; 16.5% are below the poverty level.

Library Profile Narrative

The M. Beven Eckert Memorial Library, which now houses a collection of over 15,000 items, began in 1936 as the Mason Study Club. Twelve forward-thinking women got together to exchange books and improve their minds, and by 1938 they had opened a public library in a small room of the Odeon Theater on the square. Their tiny library thrived, and after outgrowing several subsequent locations, the library was moved into its present home in 1991.

The current building stands as a symbol of the love Mason citizens have for literacy and for their community. This modest community raised \$335,000 to fund the construction. A wood marquetry, comprised of over 500 separate pieces of wood, was created by local artists Spider Johnson and Lora Hunt and graces the north alcove of the library. The mural depicts the history and character of Mason County. The beveled glass panel entry doors are unique, and a beautiful fireplace and hand-embroidered array of local wildflowers adorn the Stribling Room, which serves as a community meeting place. The building also houses the local historical and genealogical archives in the Sesquicentennial Room, and the foyer cases exhibit Fred Gipson memorabilia. Garland Weeks' life-size bronze monument, which immortalizes Gipson's best-known work, *Old Yeller*, proudly stands at the front of the library and attracts many visitors each year.

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The library's print collections include Texana, German/Texas materials, large-print books, children's, junior, and young adult collections of both fiction and non-fiction and periodicals. Library services include an online catalog, TexShare databases and fifteen public access computers. The digital library offers audio books, eBooks, music, and the library provides a Nook and Kindle for patron check-out. The library also offers printing, copying, and FAX services, inter-library loan, DVDs, genealogy/archives with Mason County and family histories. Other services include: Summer Reading Club; pre-school Story Time and a Brown Bag luncheon speaker series.

The library partners with several different organizations and agencies in town: First State Bank, Commercial Bank, Mason National Bank, *Mason County News*, Pedernales Electric Co-op, Mason County ISD, a local radio station, Mason Study Club, Friends of the Library and the Richard and Beven Eckert Trust.

Most Important Library Statistics

Two full-time staff and 4 regular volunteers serve a population of 3,965. The library has 1,757 library cardholders with 28,923 library visits each year. In 2010 the library had a collection of 15,210 titles with circulation of 13,562. Programming attendance for 2010 was 732. The library provided 1,143 reference transactions and 229 interlibrary loans.

Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

Vision Statement

The Mason County M. Beven Eckert Memorial Library is the gateway to resources and services to meet the educational, informational, recreational, and personal development needs of Mason County's citizens without regard to their age, gender, race, abilities or socioeconomic background.

Mission Statement

The Mason County M. Beven Eckert Memorial Library's mission is to contribute to the educational, cultural, and economic development of Mason County and its citizens and to provide a community meeting place for all citizens.

Goals and Objectives for the Library

The Library Board and Library staff will use these goals and objectives to address key issues involved in supporting the vision and mission of the Library. The implementation of these goals and objectives will result in a library whose contents, services, and programs satisfy the current and future needs of an ever-changing community.

Goal 1: Create a dynamic center for information literacy and lifelong learning

Objectives:

- 1.1 Create a broad, long-range technology plan that utilizes new technologies as they become available and are proven reliable
- 1.2 Explore innovative ways and technologies for users and organizations to use space for meetings, recreation, and entertainment
- 1.3 Review the library collection and the web site to ensure that all media and resources are current and relevant

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1.4 The Librarian will continually research and apply for available grants

Goal 2: Provide services which engage the community

Objectives:

- 2.1 Develop a plan to increase the community's awareness of the Library's content, services, and programs
- 2.2 Implement a feedback mechanism to determine the community's changing library needs
- 2.3 Determine and make productivity improvements on a continuous basis
- 2.4 Devise improved methods for measuring total Library use and allocate staff resources accordingly
- 2.4 Make patron service a priority
- 2.5 Develop a plan for broad-based staff training
- 2.6 Fully utilize volunteers
- 2.7 Annually assess library programs that lend themselves to volunteer assistance and leadership
- 2.8 Offer pilot programs and activities to assess their appeal to different groups

Goal 3: Maintain and update our attractive facility and grounds as a lasting community and cultural center

Objectives:

- 3.1 Analyze the use of existing space for the different ways that patrons use the library and explore other ways patrons might effectively use library services
- 3.2 Investigate the library's capacity to accommodate community and business meetings by creating an electronic community meeting room
- 3.3 Annually inspect the building and grounds

Goals and Objectives for Outreach Plan Program

Goal: The M. Beven Eckert Memorial Library will offer a Summer Reading Dog Day during the summer reading program to provide a program that will encourage children to continue reading during the summer and promote the love of reading and nurture future library supporters.

Objective: The objective of the M. Beven Eckert Memorial Library is to offer a therapy dog for one day a week during the summer reading program to encourage beginning readers to continue to develop their reading skills by reading to a dog.

Outreach Programs

The program, Summer Reading Dog Day, is the program the library will be doing as part of the PEARL project. This program will focus on beginning readers in grades one through four. The program will continue to develop their reading abilities during the summer months.

Statement of need

The library surveyed a cross-section of the population. A survey was distributed in the community, and 97 completed surveys were returned. While the survey did not provide a clear need in the community, some areas that were identified included teen programs, Spanish-language materials, Spanish-speaking staff, ESL, and GED training. Several responders mentioned the need for early literacy support, especially among beginning readers.

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Description of the larger audience or target group the library wants to reach
The Mason Elementary school has 276 students.

Description of the specific segment of the target group the proposed program will serve
The program is specifically targeted to children in first through fourth grades in the Mason County ISD identified as reluctant readers by teachers at Mason County ISD Elementary School.

Estimated number of potential participants
It is estimated 20 young people will participate in the program.

Description of the characteristics of the audience (age, gender, interest, where they live, transportation issues if any, best hours for a program, etc.)
The expected participants range in age from five to ten years old. The majority of children targeted for the program live within the city limits or are within driving distance to the library. It is expected that 20% of the children referred by the elementary school will attend the program at least once during the summer and the children who attend will check out at least one book to read at home during the six-week program.

List potential partners based on your assets assessment
The potential partners for the programs are Mason County Elementary School, Reigning Cats and Dogs, local banks, and Mason Community Foundation.

List available library resources that could contribute to the success of the program

Physical:

The resources available include sufficient meeting space to provide the program, sufficient staff to plan and carry out the program, and sufficient supplies and materials needed to promote the program. The collaborative relationship the library enjoys with community members and organizations is an additional resource.

Skills:

The library has trained professional staff to plan and execute the programs. The library is already committed to early childhood development with staff and materials designed to support these programs. The staff knows how to and is willing to work with other groups to encourage early childhood education.

Detailed Action Plan

Action Plan Goal(s):

The goal of the action plan is to:

1. Develop the program.
2. Promote the program.
3. Implement the program.
4. Provide programs.
5. Evaluate the program.

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Action Plan Objective(s):

1. Consult with the dog handler.
2. Create and distribute promotional materials.
3. Coordinate set up of the facility.
4. Develop, administer, and analyze evaluations.

Action Plan

The table below gives the library's action plan for the Summer Reading Dog Day.

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IMPLEMENTATION			EVALUATION	
Action What action, activity, or task needs to be done?	Name and Date Who will do it, and by what date will it be done?	Resources Needed How much time, money, materials, and personnel are needed?	Measurement How will progress be measured (#, % of participation or attendance)?	Analysis How and when will data be gathered and analyzed to determine success?
Contact handler and set day and time the dog will be available	Patti--January 30,2012	Time-1 hour \$ 0 Materials-telephone Personnel-1	6 dates and times agreed upon	Count number
Designate what area will be used for the program	Patti --February 1,2012	Time-30 min. \$0 Materials-None Personnel-1	Area designated and prepared for program	Area ready
Contact first grade teachers for names of children who are reluctant readers	Patti--March 1, 2012	Time- 1 hour \$0 Materials-telephone Personnel-1	Names and contact information is compiled	Count number
Contact local banks to ask for donation to buy books and prizes to give to children	Patti--March 19, 2012	Time-1 hour \$0 Materials-telephone Personnel-1	4 sponsors for program are contacted	4 sponsors have committed to provide funding for the program
Select a book to give each child at end of program	Nancy--March 25,2012	Time-1 hour \$0 Materials-catalogs, computer, telephone Personnel-1	Books are selected	Count number
Order books	Nancy--March 30,2012	Time-1 hour \$200 Materials-telephone, computer Personnel-1	Books ordered	Count number
Design invitations to send to the children	Patti--May 1, 2012	Time-1 hour \$0 Materials-computer Personnel-1	One invitation designed	Count number

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Design flyers to publicize the program	Patti--May 1, 2012	Time-1 hour \$0 Materials-computer, Personnel-1	One flyer designed	Count number
Publicize program on Facebook page and library website	Patti--May 15, 2012	Time- 30 minutes \$0 Materials-computer Personnel-1	Posting are made to website and Facebook	Count website hits & Facebook hits
Write radio spot & newspaper article to publicize program	Patti--May 15, 2012	Time-30 minutes \$0 Materials-computer Personnel-1	Spot & article written	Spot airs on radio and appears in local paper
Contact local radio station & local newspaper	Patti--May 15, 2012	Time-15 minutes \$0 Materials: computer, email, fax, paper, printer Personnel-1	Radio station & newspaper contacted	Count number of times spot airs and article appears in paper
Begin Program	Patti & Dog handler--June 4, 2012	Time-2 hours \$0 Materials: program materials, books, evaluation forms Personnel-2	Program held and evaluations completed	Count number, compile evaluation results
Program ends	Patti & dog handler--July 9, 2012	Time- 2hours \$0 Materials- program materials, books evaluation forms Personnel-2	Program completed and evaluations completed	Count number, compile evaluation results.

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IMPLEMENTATION			EVALUATION	
Action What action, activity, or task needs to be done?	Name and Date Who will do it, and by what date will it be done?	Resources Needed How much time, money, materials, and personnel are needed?	Measurement How will progress be measured (#, % of participation or attendance)?	Analysis How and when will data be gathered and analyzed to determine success?
Compile evaluations	Patti-- July 15, 2012	Time-1 hour \$0 Materials-computer Personnel-1	Evaluations compiled	Report submitted to Pearl office
Submit story on program to local paper	Patti--July 15, 2012	Time-30 minutes \$0 Materials-computer, fax	Story submitted	Story runs in paper and submit copy to Pearl office & Pearl website
Gather all statistics and stories including anecdotal	Patti--July 20, 2012	Time- 1 hour \$0 Materials-computer,	Statistics and anecdotes with written report compiled	Submit to Pearl office and post on Pearl website

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**Appendix A:
Evaluation Forms**

Summer Reading Program Dog Days

Date: _____

Thank you for Coming! Please tell what you think about reading with a dog.

Place an X or checkmark beneath the number that best represents your evaluation.

GENERAL	Really Good 5	4	3	2	Not Good at All 1
1. The program was:					
fun.					
2. The dog was:					
friendly					
3. Refreshments were:					
tasty.					
4. The room was:					
comfortable.					
5. Because of the program I:					
Have read more books this summer					

Parents' Comments:

How did you hear about this program?

Appendix B:
Evaluation for Children
Mason County M. Beven Eckert Public Library

Did you like reading to the
dog?



YES



NO

Do you want to come to
the library again?



YES



NO