



MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS
Letter of Intent

Organizational Information

MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS (MWFB) was founded in 1998. It is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that promotes early literacy in limited resource areas of Tucson, Arizona by giving young children (birth to age five) an opportunity to fall in love with books and reading. Our vision is that all children in our community will enter kindergarten with the necessary reading readiness skills to be successful. We offer a continuum of early literacy programs and services to families with young children, childcare providers, and the greater Tucson community.

Executive Director: Mary Jan Bancroft, Ph.D.

E-mail address: maryjan@makewayforbooks.org

Address: 3955 E. Ft. Lowell Road, Ste. 114, Tucson, AZ 85712

Phone: (520) 721-2334 Fax: (520) 881-0669

Website: www.makewayforbooks.org

Proposed Project Overview

In the summer of 2011, the MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS Summer Reading Buddies program will be offered for the eleventh year. Through the generous support of the Stocker Foundation, an increasing number of Tucson preschools and childcare centers have been able to participate in this popular program.

Several Tucson preschools served by the MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS Preschool Program enroll school-age children during the summer. The Summer Reading Buddies (SRB) program pairs these older children with preschoolers for book-sharing sessions twice a week. Big Buddies (school-age children) help their Little Buddies (preschoolers) complete early literacy activities related to the books. The main program goal is to ***support emerging literacy and reading skills among preschoolers*** so they can be successful once they reach kindergarten. A second goal of SRB is to ensure that the school-age children, as well as the preschoolers, receive quality reading experiences during the vacation months.

Research shows that children who participate in structured reading activities during the summer are less likely to experience a learning loss and can improve their reading skills. The Stocker Foundation can help provide age appropriate reading experiences for disadvantaged children in Tucson, Arizona by funding the MWFB Summer Reading Buddies project for 2011.

Statement of Need and Best Practice

“Given the importance identified in the research literature of starting school motivated to read and with the prerequisite language and early literacy skills, all children, especially those at risk for reading difficulties, should have access to early childhood environments that promote language and literacy growth and that address a variety of skills that have been identified as predictors of later reading achievement.”

-The Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences (1998)

The MWFB Summer Reading Buddies program, unlike other summer programs offered in our community, reaches the children where they spend an average of 25-40 hours each week. These childcare centers are challenged to provide age appropriate instruction to children during the summer. SRB provides fun, educational activities and develops confidence and reading skills in both preschoolers and school-age children.

The MWFB SRB program meets a significant need in Tucson. Many of the preschoolers who participate are not read to regularly at home and do not have age appropriate books of their own. The **free book distribution** component of the SRB program enables all participating children to start or add to their own home libraries.

The Little Buddies (preschool-age children) benefit by developing the essential reading skills so that they will be **“ready to read”** upon entering kindergarten. An integral component of SRB involves storybook extension activities that Big Buddies help Little Buddies complete. Each activity is designed to promote skill development in each of the six reading readiness areas identified in the Arizona Department of Education Standard of Pre-Reading. These areas include: book-handling skills, print awareness, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary development, and comprehension. These categories also correlate to the early literacy skill areas outlined in the “No Child Left Behind” Act.

Our Big Buddies (school-age children) benefit by maintaining and increasing their reading skills. A study published in the *Review of Educational Research* (1996) concluded that all young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Moreover, low-income students experience greater summer learning losses than their higher-income peers. On average, low-income students experience more than two months’ loss in reading achievement.

The reading levels of many of the school-age children who participate in SRB are often one to two years behind where they should be. Summer programs such as SRB offer learning experiences to school-age children that will help to minimize the potential of summer learning loss. (Center for Summer Learning, 2006)

Program Description

The MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS Summer Reading Buddies program ensures that all preschoolers and school-aged children who are enrolled in childcare centers during the summer months receive quality reading experiences.

The program will begin June 6, 2011 and run through the week of July 18, 2011. Fifteen childcare centers located in low-resource areas of Pima County will be selected to participate. Approximately 600 disadvantaged children, ages four to twelve years, will be served. About 75% of the children who will participate are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Approximately 75% of these children are Hispanic, 15% are Anglo, 6% are African-American, 2% are Native-American, and 2% are Asian.

The program will begin with a separate orientation for Big Buddies on how to share books effectively with their Little Buddies. Six to twelve hardcover books will be provided to each of the 15 centers to add to their existing MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS collections. A program facilitator from MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS will visit each center once a week. He or she will read the selected book aloud to Big and Little Buddies. Buddies will then complete story-related enrichment activities together that focus on reading readiness skills for preschoolers. An example activity may involve making puppets so Little Buddies can retell the story for the week. Big Buddies would help their Little Buddies remember the sequence by asking, "What happened first, next, etc." Each week a different reading skill will be emphasized through the enrichment activity. A celebration will be held upon completion of the program. A costumed character will visit each center and give a new paperback book to each participating child.

Project Budget

Item	Predicted Cost (based on 2010)	Stocker Foundation Funds	Diamond Foundation Funds	MWFB General Funds	Funding Total
Staff Salary & Hourly Facilitators	\$7,500	\$2,800	\$4,300	\$400	\$7,500
ERE (tax, benefits) (10% rate)	\$750		\$750		\$750
Direct Operating Expenses	\$600		\$600		\$600
Mileage	\$500	\$500			\$500
120 Hardcover Books	\$1,500	\$1,500			\$1,500
600 new paperback books for children	\$1,800	\$1,800			\$1,800
Incentive Prizes	\$1,750	\$1,750			\$1,750
Costume Rentals	\$150	\$150			\$150
Program & Extension Activity Materials	\$1,350	\$1,350			\$1,350
Printing costs	\$150	\$150			\$150
Indirect/Administrative Costs (10%)	\$1,600		\$1,600		\$1,600
TOTAL	\$17,650	\$10,000	\$7,250	\$400	\$17,650

Stocker Foundation funding will be used to purchase of hardcover books for fifteen center library collections and new paperback books for all participating children. It will cover other programmatic expenses such as character costume rental, program supplies, printing, incentive prizes, and mileage. It will also cover a portion of the necessary salary for this project.

Intended Results

- 1) The Summer Reading Buddies program will increase the number of books in 15 childcare center libraries. Each library will receive at least 6 new hardcover books to share with their kids throughout the summer and school year. Some libraries may receive up to 12 new hardcover books depending on the number of children enrolled.
- 2) 600 children will receive a new book to take home with them to continue their reading experiences outside of the center.
- 3) The time spent on meaningful reading activities will be increased by 60 minutes each week. These activities will include read aloud time, as well as extension activities related to the selected titles and the six areas of reading readiness.
- 4) As a result of participating in Summer Reading Buddies, preschoolers will enhance their reading readiness skills in six different areas identified in the Arizona Early Learning Standard of Pre-Reading.
- 5) Participating school-age children will show increased confidence in their reading abilities.
- 6) As a result of MWFB staff modeling effective read aloud techniques, preschool teachers will gain new ideas on how to incorporate reading in their classrooms in fun and meaningful ways.

Evaluation

Quantitative Data:

- 1) Number of hardcover books provided to centers.
- 2) Number of children receiving new paperback books.
- 3) Amount of additional time devoted to Summer Reading Buddies programming at each center.

Qualitative Data:

Upon completion of the program, questionnaires will be distributed to center directors and participating staff. Questions included on this evaluation will measure the following:

- 4) The extent to which teachers observed changes in overall reading readiness skill development of participation preschool children. Teachers will also be asked, "In which of the six reading readiness areas were the biggest changes observed?"
- 5) To determine whether or not school-age children show increased confidence, teachers will be asked, "In what ways did the school-age children benefit from this program?"
A sample of school-age children will be asked to complete a questionnaire to determine their impressions of the program. They will be asked, "Do you feel that the Summer Reading Buddies program helped you become a better reader?"
- 6) Teachers will be asked, "What new ideas have you gained from the Summer Reading Buddies program?"