

PURCHASING BI-FOLKAL KITS WITH COMMUNITY DONATIONS

The Senior Stories project at the Fresno County Public Library was an ambitious one, but they proved that it can be done. *They did it!* Designed for staff and volunteers of senior-focused agencies, the project included the purchase of program materials, the development of new materials, publicity, and workshops (how to use the library, how to program, and how to set up intergenerational projects).

A grant from the California State Library provided some of the funding they needed, but let Project Coordinator Karen Moore Reynolds tell you how they got the rest in this article reprinted from our newsletter.

Fresno Finds Funds

As anyone who has written an LSCA grant knows, community participation and support must be shown before the funding will be awarded. Letters of support are easier to get than cold, hard cash. As we thought about this, suddenly a light dawned. It is much easier to get someone to buy one physical object, than it is to get them to put the same amount of money into a big pot. Sweeten the deal by labeling the object with the donor's name, written big enough for all to see every time the object is used forevermore, and the sale gets easier yet. The object then becomes either a charitable donation or an advertising medium, whichever their accountant wants.

Bi-Folkal kits are ideal for this approach, since their usefulness and quality is easily demonstrated, and the kit bag has a large window on the side for the label. Since the kit name is also on the bag tag, we turned the Bi-Folkal label over and wrote the donor's name in calligraphy.

But who actually bought the kits?

1. The Friends of our library
2. The local library network council, representing all kinds of libraries
3. The Fresno Teachers Association, an affiliate of NEA (Teachers like the historical and literary potential for curriculum use.)
4. A community-conscious realtor
5. Two Kiwanis Clubs, always helpful
6. ACT-CO, the organization to which activities coordinators of senior residential facilities belong
7. Senior Life and Club 55, the senior-focused divisions of two area hospitals

As you can see, some sponsors are library related, some senior-related and some are generally service oriented.

How do you get them to do this?

Really believe in the kits, and in the reasons you need them. Borrow one through inter-library loan for demonstration.

Use everybody's connections—it's much easier to sell to someone you know. If your library is very large, you will have a public relations specialist who can do some of this for you. If your community is really small, you probably go to church with the hospital administrator, and the head of the Kiwanis is on your library board.

The best prospects are those who want to use the kits, and those who are already library boosters.

Don't get discouraged. Some people will "Just Say No," and some will send you up and up in their organization until about the sixth person who hears your whole presentation says, "We don't do that type of thing."

Spread out over the whole area your library covers. The one-person branch in a small town is the one those folks will listen to, not a speaker from the big central library in the county seat. If your towns and counties are all small, maybe each area could get two or three kits, and your region would then have them all. One is better than none.

We did it! And you can do it too.

Karen Moore Reynolds

Librarian, Retired

Gillis Branch, Fresno County Free Library

Benefits for older adults:

- personal relationships with a child
- positive, fulfilling use of retirement time
- reduces isolation and loneliness through social contact
- sensory stimulation
- unconditional acceptance and emotional support
- improved self-esteem
- opportunity to share a lifetime of experiences and skills
- chance for reminiscence

Benefits for the library:

- breaks down barriers between age-distinct departments
- stretches tight resources
- stimulating new sense of purpose for staff
- ability to serve greater spectrum of community
- new source of volunteers
- new library users

Benefits for the greater community:

- greater utilization of resources and experience in community
- increased communication among segments of the community
- improved image of children and of older people
- historical and cultural traditions are maintained
- partnerships among community organizations and individuals
- cohesive community spirit

5. We have just a few more suggestions for things to consider when putting together the budget for your grant proposal. Of course you will want to start with a complete set of Bi-Folkal kits. You should also think about:

Training component. A gathering where you can introduce the kits and let lots of people have their hands on the kits will insure that people feel comfortable with the kits—and that they tell their friends and colleagues about them.

Publicity. How will you let people know you have the kits and explain how they may be borrowed? Consider posters, brochures, and a direct mail campaign. You may want copies of our introductory video, *A Time Machine Called Memory*.

Equipment. Will you want to loan equipment along with the kits to groups in your community? Your funding agency might be willing to purchase them for you.

GOOD LUCK!

Finding Funds

Lots of libraries across the country use their regular budgets to purchase Bi-Folkal kits. But others have successfully sought special funding, either through grants or community donations. We've included tips for finding either kind of funding.

Purchasing Bi-Folkal Kits with Grants

1. In any proposal, you need to match the needs that are met with the dollars that are spent. This requires you to identify local needs and explain how your project will meet those needs. Involve representatives from community groups in your proposal planning and project development. Contact senior centers, schools, churches and synagogues, historical societies, nursing homes, day centers, and families.
2. If you're proposing a **remembrance or oral history project**, note that the slide/tape in our kit ***Remembering the Depression*** nears its conclusion with the lines:

*And Franklin D. Roosevelt would be back again in 1940.
By then the worst was over. But not before the Depression
made a hero out of every sufferer who made it through.*

*Your history needs to be shared. At the least, younger
people will feel proud to be your children. At the most, your
insights can form a survival handbook for tomorrow.*

It's up to us. We do care. We need to know how people made it through the Depression, and the world war. We want to know how they worked and how they celebrated; and how they feel about growing older. We need to get writing our survival handbooks for tomorrow. Tell your potential funding source.

3. If you are proposing an intergenerational project, you might use this list of benefits derived from such programs (© by Rhea Joyce Rubin, Rubin Consulting, Oakland, CA):

Benefits for children:

- personal relationship with an elder (grandparent substitute) for children who do not have grandparents nearby
- development of pro-social behaviors (e.g. sharing, helping, cooperation)
- fostering of positive attitudes toward aging and the life cycle
- promotion of empathy
- unconditional acceptance and emotional support
- understanding of physical limitations
- learn skills and wisdom of another generation
- sensory stimulation
- mentors, models