Greater Northeast Keizer Neighborhood Association

Tammy Kunz President;

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[nekna2022@gmail.com](mailto:nekna2022@gmail.com)

503-991-1671

Project Title; Story walks and Little Libraries

Project Overview;

Story Walks promote early literacy, physical activity, and family time together in nature.  They are also an opportunity to reach community members who may not come to the library. When the team is driven by the goal of improving student learning, and teachers are a valued part of the process, it becomes much easier to improve instructional practices. This is how we as Greater Northeast Keizer Neighborhood Association are partnering with our families, Libraires and other parts of the community.

At the end of a walk, we will place a little Library, that will have books for English learners and Spanish learners. This will help break through some of the barriers our families face. This also enhances the educational goals of families. The Libraires will also host books for ages 0 to 18 years of age, this helps the older children to engage with the younger siblings. Our main focus is early learning ages 0 to 6 years to help prepare of children to enter school.

Storytime should last about 30 minutes and consist of three to four books alternating with fingerplays, songs, and stretches. Try to start and end with a book. These are small ways to create change and bring families together while preparing them for school and supporting the early educational goals for teachers and families.

Objectives;

The main goals for this project are to include promoting literacy and family engagement, encouraging physical activity outdoors, and fostering a love of reading through interactive, community-based experiences.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of potential project objectives:

Promoting Literacy and Reading Engagement:

* **Increase children's interest in reading:** Literacy walks can make reading more accessible and fun by taking it outside of traditional settings.
* **Develop early literacy skills:** Story walks can stimulate listening and speaking skills, build vocabulary, and prepare children for school.
* **Connect reading with real-world experiences:** By incorporating local community resources and natural environments, literacy walks can show children how reading connects to their surroundings.
* **Support parent-child interactions and language learning:** Literacy walks can encourage parents and children to read together and discuss stories, fostering a love of reading and language development.
* **Highlight valuable community resources:** Literacy walks can showcase local parks, libraries, and other community spaces, encouraging families to spend time outdoors and explore their surroundings.
* **Promote a love of reading:** By creating a fun and engaging environment, literacy walks can help children develop a lifelong love of reading.

Encouraging Physical Activity and Outdoor Engagement:

* **Promote physical activity:** Literacy walks encourage families to get outdoors and be active while engaging with literacy. Aims to strengthen community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie, promoting safer and more caring places to live.
* **Encourage the use of local outdoor assets:** By using parks, trails, and other community spaces, literacy walks can promote the use of local outdoor resources.
* **Combine literacy with physical activity:** Literacy walks can combine reading with other activities, such as scavenger hunts or nature walks, making learning more engaging and fun.

Fostering Community Engagement and Collaboration:

* **Build relationships with communities:** Literacy walks can be a way for libraries and other organizations to connect with families and build relationships within the community. Focus: The events provide an opportunity for neighbors and to interact positively, building trust and relationships.
* **Engage with hard-to-reach groups:** Literacy walks can be a way to reach families who may not otherwise participate in traditional library programs. Activities: Communities host various events, including block parties, neighborhood gatherings, and activities that promote community involvement and safety awareness, and building community resilience.
* **Provide a platform for outreach and collaboration:** Literacy walks can be a way for different organizations and community partners to collaborate and share resources.
* **Increase library visibility:** Story walks can be a tool to bring the library out to the community with the goal of increasing visibility of the library.

Finally, the goal is to help fight the battle our families are facing with children entering school who can’t read and some in school who have learning challenges with reading. This is a new and exciting way we as Greater Northeast Keizer Neighborhood Association can help protect our families and their educational goals of learning while enhancing the family relationships and community Partnerships. This will be for English and Spanish learners to start and as other languages need to be addressed, we will do that.

Implementation plan;

1 book per month to begin with, June to September each year

We will order and prepare material for the Story Walk or Literacy walks ahead of time; we will also have the book stocked in the Little Libraries at the end of each walk. They will be placed near where families are spending time, parks and walking pathways.

We have a group of 15 people and are partnering with other community partners such as, Keizer Library board Member Kris Adams, The Early Learning Hub; Keizer United, Other Neighborhood Association.

Planning the Story Walk Path:

* **Choose a location:** Select a path that is accessible, safe, and aesthetically pleasing.  Location 1. **(Keizer Park way walk path that gets used by 3 schools and families.)**
* Location 2. **Claggett Creek Park near the off the other side of the playground along the Creek path**.
* **Determine the length of the path:** Ensure the path is long enough to accommodate all the panels but not so long that it becomes overwhelming. **Location 1.** has a path to each place for school it is about 15 walks depending on length of steps. **Location 2.** Is about 10 minutes from one side of the park to the other.
* **Plan the placement of panels:** Consider the flow of the story and the natural landmarks along the path to create a smooth reading experience.
* **Design the panels:** Make sure the panels are easy to read, durable, and weather-resistant.
* **Consider accessibility:** Ensure the path and panels are accessible to people with disabilities.

Staffing the walk at the beginning of the introduction of the book will be 3 people from our Greater Northeast Keizer Neighborhood Association, and what ever community Partner is signed up for the book release and partnership. This is part of Kennedy Elementary School, Weddle Elementary School and Claggett Middle School each one of these locations. We also have 5 Daycare homes in this same community. Keizer Community Library and 3 parks. This helps to build a stronger community for a better tomorrow.

Date reporting; I will create a spreadsheet to keep track of the books and how well each was viewed. We will also track how many books are being used from the little library, along with resources used for each book. I will track what I can during the summer and see if the teachers have seen a change in reading skills, as other skills set as well. We will be looking at the language of materials served so we know how to serve the community better.

This will also help us look and evaluate the process and goals to be sure we are meeting or exceeding those goals. The main goal is to have at least 300 families impacted for the first year, and increase this each year so no one is left behind.

Tammy Kunz