CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 7

MEETING DATE: Thursday, November 19, 2009

AGENDA ITEM #: 11 C

ITEM:
JUVENILE HALL & ORIN ALLEN YOUTH REHABILITATION LIBRARIES

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
- Commissioners will consider Commissioner Prater's (San Ramon) item
This message was submitted to the Library Commission.

emailmessage: This message was submitted to the Library Commission.

subject: Commission mail, Correspondence with Bruce Pelle

to: ccclibcommission@ccclib.org

comments: Mr. Pelle is the superintendent of Juvenile Hall. After the librarian from Juvenile Hall spoke at the Sept. meeting and provided a wish list including "Demonata No.9-Dark Calling" I wrote a letter to Mr. Pelle expressing concern over the reading matter in the library in this facility. I have his reply. I believe this exchange should be an agenda item at an upcoming meeting.

Name: Penny Prater
email: pennyprater340@gmail.com
spambegone: Library
Phone:

v1.1
Mr. Bruce Pelle
Superintendent of Juvenile Hall
202 Glacier Dr.
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Mr. Pelle:

Recently I was appointed to Contra Costa County Library Commission, representing the City of San Ramon. I attended my second meeting on September 24 and heard a presentation from the librarian at the Contra Costa County juvenile hall. She described in glowing terms the library facilities and the juvenile hall in Martinez, as well as the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation facility. Apparently the kids couldn’t wait for their turn in the library. She indicated that the inmates came from low income environments and in most cases were awaiting trials for non-violent crimes.

I was disturbed when she presented a “wish list” of books the library wanted people to order for them from Amazon. None of these titles (including *The Way I Am*, by Eminem and *Legends of Rock*) sounded particularly uplifting, but I was especially shocked by *The Demonata #8: Dark Calling* by Darren Shan. I asked the librarian why they wanted this book, since it was obviously concerned with the occult. She replied that this was a very popular horror series among the inmates. She indicated further that incarcerated kids also want to about other incarcerated people because they relate to them.

I can understand, to some extent, why certain popular literature must be included in a general circulation library which is open to the public. Censorship is...
to be avoided in a free society. Juvenile Hall is not, however, a free society. I do not understand why literature such as the Demonata series must be provided in a closed environment to minors who already have severe problems. The librarian's excuse seems to be that they must stock what the kids want to read to get them to read at all. If they are reading primarily occultic books, then they shouldn't be reading at all. I looked up a synopsis of this book and the gore in it was sickening. If these kids were non-violent offenders before, this material could increase their tendencies to violence. Furthermore, I don't agree that inmates should be reading about other incarcerated people. The lifestyle should not be glorified or treated as normal. What the inmates read in juvenile hall is a concern for the general public safety and welfare.

In your capacity as Superintendent, have you recently reviewed the content of the libraries of Juvenile Hall and the Orin Allen facility? Possibly there is material in them which is inappropriate. The commission on which I serve acts primarily in an advisory capacity and has no authority to clean up these libraries. Perhaps you can do something. In the meantime I will keep the City of San Ramon informed.

Yours very truly,

Penny Prater
October 27, 2009

Penny Prater
6230 Lakeview Circle
San Ramon, CA 94582

Re: Concerns regarding Juvenile Hall Library

Dear Mr. Prater:

I received your letter of October 5, 2009, in which you shared your concerns regarding the reading material that was available to residents detained in the Juvenile Hall and Librarian Alison McKee’s “wish list” for books.

Attached please find a copy of the “Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall Library” policy. As you will note in section 2.6 materials prohibited from the library collection are hate literature, materials that promote or glorify gang activity, promote or glorify violence, promote or glorify drug and alcohol abuse or use, promote or glorify irresponsible sexual behavior, are predominately sexually graphic, Telephone books, Newspapers, and movies rated higher than PG-13. You will also note in section 3 of the policy that there is a procedure for removal of objectionable material. The library committee meets when there is question regarding material and the policy is followed. Items that the committee found objectionable have been removed in the past.

As for your concerns regarding, “The Way I am,” by Eminem and “Legends of Rock” both of these showed positive reviews when I did some research on them. In particular “The way I am” had positive reviews from parents who read the book after purchasing it for their children. As for the “Demonata” book, it is one in a series that was a “2009 American Library Association Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers.” The Demonata books are also in the Middle School and High School libraries of the Mt. Diablo Unified School District and in the High School libraries of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. I don’t know if you are familiar with the “Goosebumps” series of books by R.L. Stine but
they are extremely popular among readers who are generally a little younger than the average age range in the Juvenile Hall. The “Demonata” books are along those same lines only for an older group. Although it sounds like it the books are not about the occult they are about teens fighting demons, both internal and external. These are the type of books that this age group likes to read and these books get them reading.

As for censorship we try to maintain a balance between freedom of choice and material that conforms to the Library Policy as outlined in section 2 of the attached policy. I would like to point out that since the Juvenile Hall Library opened in November of 2006, more than 57,000 books have been checked out. I would also point out that at the OAYRP library that was opened in September of 2008 over 10,000 books have been checked out so far. The Juvenile Hall library, when it was first opened, was one of only four county libraries located in Juvenile Halls in the state of California and was an extremely innovative concept.

I have personally observed the enthusiasm of our residents when the library staff visits the living units and brings requested books and when they get the opportunity to visit the library. The residents, on the average read 6 books each week. Many residents have told the library staff that until they came to the Juvenile Hall they had never in their life read a book from start to finish. Many residents who leave Juvenile Hall now use the public library. I have observed some of the groups visiting the library at the Juvenile Hall and have watched as they have given oral reports in front of other residents on books that they have read. I have also observed the librarian give quizzes on the Dewey Decimal System, which is still in use, to residents visiting the library. The library staff has the residents write critiques of the books they read and there are literally hundreds of these critiques posted in the library.

In addition Alison has brought in various authors including Omar Tyree author of “Flyy Girl,” “Leslie” and “Boss Lady” to the Juvenile Hall. Many residents were I watched his presentation and the residents in the audience with him were extremely excited as many had read his books. When he discussed making a movie out of one of the books one resident became so excited that he got up and said he wanted to be a particular character in the movie and was ready for the role as he read the book.

We appreciate your interest and concern about the reading material that our residents are exposed to and we appreciate your comments. We have reviewed and researched the material and although the titles may be a bit off-putting the content is within the library policy and it the type of material that motivates some otherwise unmotivated readers to read.

Should you have future concerns please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at (925) 957-2710 if you have further concerns.

Sincerely,
Bruce Pelle, Superintendent – Juvenile Hall
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY JUVENILE HALL LIBRARY

MISSION
The Betty Frandsen Library at Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall will promote a love of literature and reading, support the school curriculum, and encourage the development of a lifelong habit of self-directed learning.

1. POLICY
The library collection will consist of materials that meet the educational, information, recreational, career/vocational, and personal needs of its users with the purpose of fostering a love of reading for pleasure as well as aiding in the residents’ rehabilitation and eventual successful re-entry into the community. The library will provide materials that represent a diversity of experiences, opinions, and social and cultural perspectives to support the idea that free access to information is a prerequisite for effective and responsible citizenship in a democracy. The library endorses the ALA Freedom to Read Statement, the “Free Access to Libraries for Minors” statement, and the Contra Costa County Library’s collection development policy. Library books and magazines are for the exclusive use of the residents. Staff are prohibited from using library materials for personal use. If a staff member would like to use library materials for unit programming or curriculum support, it will be necessary to make arrangements with the librarian.

2. GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS
2.1 The librarian will exercise his or her critical and professional judgment in selecting the best materials for the library and will use standard review media such as Library Journal, VOYA, Booklist, etc. to aid in the selection process.
2.2 Materials will be judged individually according to their intrinsic value as well as the needs of the organized collection.
2.3 All materials, regardless of the format, will be considered as a whole and will not be excluded because of specific or individual sections that may be deemed offensive or regarded as controversial.
2.4 Requests and recommendations from staff and residents will be encouraged.
2.5 The Probation Department acts in loco parentis and may restrict an individual youth from receiving certain materials.
2.6 The following types of materials are prohibited from the collection:
   2.6.1 Hate literature
   2.6.2 Materials that promote or glorify gang activity,
   2.6.3 Materials that promote or glorify violence
   2.6.4 Materials that promote or glorify drug and alcohol abuse or use
   2.6.5 Materials that promote or glorify irresponsible sexual behavior
   2.6.6 Materials that are predominantly sexually graphic in nature
   2.6.7 Telephone books
   2.6.8 Newspapers
   2.6.9 Movies rated higher than PG-13
3. PROCEDURE FOR THE RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

3.1 Anyone who wishes to enter a concern about material in the library collection must complete and sign a copy of the “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form and give it to the librarian. Forms will be kept at the Sup. II’s desk and in the library.

3.2 A staff committee consisting of the Librarian, Chief Deputy Probation Officer, or designee(s) and the Mt. McKinley principal, or designee(s), will objectively evaluate the specific item under reconsideration and decide whether or not it meets the guidelines for selection of materials.

3.3 All available printed reviews as well as the original reason for purchase will be considered.

3.4 The staff committee is expected to review the item in its entirety.

3.5 The committee will decide whether or not an item stays in the collection based on a quorum vote.

3.6 The librarian will prepare a written response and communicate the committee’s decision to the individual who made the initial request for reconsideration.

3.7 No material will be removed from the collection unless this process has been followed.

4. PROCEDURE FOR RESIDENT ACCESS TO UNIT COLLECTION

4.1 A binder for book check out will be kept at the probation counselors’ desk. Each resident will be issued a page in the binder. Probation staff or a trained volunteer will record the title, check out and check in date of each book a resident borrows. Probation staff or the trained volunteer will also note whether or not there is any damage to the book upon check out or check in.

4.2 Residents are allowed 2 books in their room at a time. Books are due back in 2 weeks.

4.3 Residents will have access to the unit collection 2 days per week.

4.4 There will be a maximum of two rooms at a time out on the unit selecting their books.

4.5 Before a resident checks out a book from the unit collection, a Probation staff member or a trained volunteer will check the book for existing damage. If any existing damage is found the book will be removed from the collection and returned to the librarian.

4.6 When the resident returns the book, the staff member or volunteer will recheck the book for damage and note the date it was returned. If the book is damaged, tagged, marked, written in, defaced or misused while the resident is in possession of it, the resident will be placed on book restriction, may be charged with destruction of county property and an incident report will be written. Book restriction is defined as a minimum period of one week in which the resident will be prohibited from checking out any books, will receive room time and get a zero for both rules and peers. The date the book restriction starts and ends will be marked on the resident’s page in the library binder.

4.7 Normal wear and tear of books is to be expected and will be determined by the staff member or volunteer.

4.8 Residents may not borrow books from other residents or loan books to other residents.
Residents who do will be placed on book restriction.
4.9 If a resident changes units, he or she will not be able to take books with them. Probation staff will be responsible for making sure all library materials are returned and that they are crossed off of the resident’s page before the resident is transferred to a new unit.
4.10 When a resident is released from Juvenile Hall, he or she will not be allowed to leave with a library book. Staff are to check the resident for books prior to the resident leaving the housing unit for release.

5. CHECKING OUT DVDs
5.1 Only teachers and Probation staff are allowed to check out DVDs directly from the librarian or a trained library volunteer during library hours.
5.2 Teachers and Probation staff can only check out DVDs for use on the unit or in the classroom. DVDs may not be removed from the Juvenile Hall facility.
5.3 DVDs will be returned to the Sup. II’s desk when the library is not open.
5.4 Teachers and Probation staff will not have more than 2 DVDs at a time.
5.5 If a DVD is lost, damaged or destroyed, the borrower will be responsible for its replacement cost.

6. PROCEDURE FOR RESIDENT ACCESS TO LIBRARY
6.1 Each unit will visit the library one day per week. Pine will have a library day on the unit once a week for residents who are not allowed to leave the unit.
6.2 No more than 15 residents will be allowed in the library at one time.
6.3 A box will be kept on the unit to return books that belong in the library.
6.4 Inappropriate behavior during library times may result in a library restriction. Library restriction is defined as a minimum period of one week in which the resident will be prohibited from participating in library times, will receive room time and get a zero for both rules and peers. The date the library restriction starts and ends will be marked on the resident’s page in the library binder.

DEFINITIONS
Librarian—employee of Contra Costa County Library professionally trained in library services.
Designee—employee of either the Probation Department or Mt. McKinley School approved by the Chief Probation Officer or Mt. McKinley principal to serve on the library committee.
Volunteer—member of the community who has passed the Probation background check, gone through the VIP and library training.
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Adopted this Resolution on November 16, 1999, by the following vote:

Ayes: SUPERVISORS GIOIA, ULSH, DESAULNIER and CANCIAMILLA

None: NONE

Absent: SUPERVISOR GERBER

Abstains: NONE

RESOLUTION NO. 99/595

SUBJECT: IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTING A POLICY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AND ACCESS TO THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION.

Upon recommendation of the Acting County Librarian, this Board adopts the following policy and rescinds all previously adopted policies and rules and regulations (including Resolution No. 1238) for the Library’s Collection Development and Access.

POLICY FOR COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS

It is the policy of the Contra Costa County Library to meet the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of the community by providing a variety of library resources. Professional judgment and ongoing community analysis guide the selection process.

Selection Responsibility

Legal responsibility for the selection of library resources rests with the County Librarian. (Education Code, Title 11, Part 11, Chapter 8, Section 19149)

Selection Guidelines

The Library provides resources that appeal to all ages and encompass a variety of formats and subject matter. The Library identifies and responds to changing demographics in order to meet community needs. The Library selects resources based upon principles of open access for all its users to many forms of information that provide diverse points of view and meet the ongoing needs of the people in the community. An item will not be excluded simply because it is frank or controversial.

Selection Criteria

The Library selects resources according to a general set of criteria that applies to all age levels and formats. These criteria include community interest and input, use of the collection, critical merit, relevance to diverse populations, usefulness, currency of information, and appropriateness for intended audience.

Access

Resources are purchased for the library in the most appropriate format for use. The Library collects titles in the following formats: books, magazines/newspapers, pamphlets, microfilm, audiocassettes, compact discs, videocassettes, and CD-ROMs. As new formats become available, they will be evaluated for the collection. All library users have equal access to all library resources, regardless of format.

Gifts

The Library may accept gifts of either resources or money for the collection within the guidelines set forward in County Administration Bulletin 117.5. The Library accepts gifts in accordance with selection criteria and guidelines.

Reconsideration of Library Resources

The Library welcomes expression of opinions about its collection from members of the public. The Library will evaluate and make an effort to respond in writing to any patron request to remove a particular item from the collection or restrict access to a resource. The Library’s evaluation will be based upon the tenets and guidelines contained within this Policy.

The County Librarian shall develop a collection development plan and procedures for the implementation of this Policy.

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: November 16, 1999

PHIL BACHELOR, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and County Administrator.

[Signature]

By [Signature], Deputy
TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: Anne Cain, Acting County Librarian
DATE: November 3, 1999

SUBJECT: Library Policy for Collection Development and Access

SPECIFIC REQUEST(S) OR RECOMMENDATION(S) & BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

RECOMMENDATION:
Adopt Resolution #99/95 regarding a County Library Policy for Collection Development and Access.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
None.

BACKGROUND:
The Board of Supervisors last adopted a Collection Development policy for the library in 1995. The library has undertaken a comprehensive review of its collection development policies and practices and has developed a revised policy that has been reviewed by County Counsel.

CONTINUED ON ATTACHMENT: YES SIGNATURE: Anne Cain

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR ☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE
☐ APPROVE ☐ OTHER

SIGNATURE: [Signature]

ACTION OF BOARD ON November 16, 1999
VOTE OF SUPERVISORS:
☑ UNANIMOUS (ABSENT 6 IT)

AYE: _______ NOES: _______
ABSENT: _______ ABSTAIN: _______

County Librarian
County Auditor
County Administrator

ATTACHED: November 16, 1999
By PHIL RAYCHEL, CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

By [Signature], Deputy

[Document Details]