CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 4

MEETING DATE: Thursday, September 23, 2010
AGENDA ITEM #: 10
ITEM: REPORT FROM COUNTY LIBRARIAN

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
- None
August 10, 2010

Dear «First_Name» «Last_Name», Friends of the «Library»,

In November 2006, the Contra Costa County Library opened a full service library at Juvenile Hall. With a collection developed specifically for the teens incarcerated there, the library proved to be so successful at encouraging the residents to read that a similar library was established at Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility (OAYRF) two years later.

In a survey done in 2007, 39% of the residents reported that when they first came to Juvenile Hall they did not like to read at all. After being incarcerated, 94% said they now loved to read. In the first three years the Juvenile Hall library was open, more than 60,000 books were checked out and, in the first year the OAYRF library was open, more than 11,000 circulated. This amounts to an average of six books a week per resident. However what is most impressive is that every day staff members hear residents say that until they came to Juvenile Hall they had never, in their lives, read a book from start to finish.

Both of these unique libraries were initially established with generous grants from the Dean and Margaret Lesher Foundation and are staffed with funding from the Contra Costa County Library and Probation Department. The funds required to purchase new books however is generated entirely through grants and individual, tax-deductible donations.

At the last Library Commission meeting when I passed around a copy of the a new poetry booklet written by the incarcerated youth, one of the Commissioners suggested asking the Friends groups if they would be interested in selling copies of the poetry booklet at their book shops or book sales to help raise funds for the collections at Juvenile Hall and OAYRF. Thus, I am writing to ask for your help selling copies of the poetry book that is included with this letter. Written by the youth living at Juvenile Hall and Orin Allen this past spring, as part of special grant-funded programming to celebrate National Poetry Month, I believe that you will find their words to be moving, inspiring and eye opening.

The books cost about $1.25 to produce. It is my hope that you be willing to make a donation of $3. per copy to sell in your stores and or at your book sales for the same amount.

When asked why the library is important to him, one of the boys at Juvenile Hall wrote, “Just because your body has been locked up doesn’t mean your mind has to be.” So please, be a part of keeping minds free by contributing to the book budgets of these two very special libraries by returning the order form that is enclosed.

If you have any questions about this fundraising opportunity please feel free to contact me at (925) 646-6423 or accain@ccclib.org or to learn more about either of these libraries visit our websites: http://ccclib.org/locations/juvenile.html or http://ccclib.org/locations/orinallen.html.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anne Cain
County Librarian
JUVENILE HALL & ORIN ALLEN YOUTH REHABILITATION FACILITY
POETRY BOOK ORDER FORM

Date: __________

A check, made payable to Contra Costa County Library for the following amount is enclosed:

$30 for 10 copies  □

$75 for 25 copies  □

$150 for 50 copies  □

Return payment and order form to:

Karla Mathwin, Accounting Technician
Contra Costa County Library
1750 Oak Park Blvd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Books will be delivered to your Friend’s Library to the attention of:

Contact Person: __________________________
Phone #: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________