MEETING DATE: Thursday, July 28, 2011
AGENDA ITEM #: 12 A
ITEM: LIBRARY TEEN SERVICES, JUVENILE HALL AND ORIN ALLEN YOUTH REHABILITATION FACILITY LIBRARIES

Librarian, Nadia Bagdasar, will give a presentation on the Juvenile Hall and Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility libraries.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
None
Month-Long Exhibits Showcase the Work of Teens Inside Juvenile Hall
by Contra Costa County Library on Thursday, July 7, 2011 at 11:40am

In 2007, Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall Library (Betty Frandsen Library) applied for and received a federal grant from Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in the amount of $118,886 to fund a three-year Artists in Residence Program. The money was used to hire the artists participating in the residency as well as to purchase books and other materials that support the visual, spoken, and written arts.

After an initial year of preparation, the 2009/10 and 2010/11 school years marked the implementation of the two year classroom program. During the course of the program, the Library hosted six visiting artists or artist groups. Every artist conducted four to five 90-minute workshops in each of the nine classrooms at Mt. McKinley, the school inside Juvenile Hall.

The time has come for the culminating art displays that showcase the work our teens have produced under the amazing instruction of the resident artists. We’ve collected some very impressive art, from the visual to the written, and we’re excited to show it off. The month long displays are now showing in a community library near you.

July
Antioch Library • 501 W. 18th Street • Antioch • CA • 94509 • 925-757-9224
Hercules Library • 109 Civic Drive • Hercules • CA • 94547 • 510-245-2420
Kensington Library • 61 Arlington Avenue • Kensington • CA • 94707 • 510-524-3043
San Pablo Library • 2300 El Portal Drive Suite #D • San Pablo • CA • 94806 • 510-374-3998
San Ramon Library • 100 Montgomery Street • San Ramon • CA • 94583 • 925-973-2850
Walnut Creek Library • 1644 N. Broadway • Walnut Creek • CA • 94596 • 925-977-3340

August
Clayton Library • 6125 Clayton Road • Clayton • CA • 94517 • 925-673-0659

Please stop by one of these libraries to check out a display and to pick up a free copy of the booklet that collects our youth’s written exercises.

If you’d like more information about the Juvenile Hall Library, or if you would like to make a donation, please call 925-957-2704 or visit http://ccclib.org/locations/juvenile.html.

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Lisa Marie Castro, Kimberli Buckley and 2 others like this.

Kimberli Buckley the art in our library is absolutely beautiful!
July 8 at 9:02am 1 person
The Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall Art Display

The Betty Fransen Library cordially invites you to...
Some 1,700 residents of the Jessup Correctional Institution in Maryland make very good use of their library. Most inmates will never win early release, so the library becomes a place to improve reading skills, write a letter home, watch an instructional video on auto mechanics or just escape, mentally. Host Liane Hansen visits the prison to talk with longtime prison librarian Glennor Shirley. Shirley runs the libraries for the entire Maryland prison system.

LIANE HANSEN, host: Some 1,700 residents of Jessup, Maryland make very good use of their library, but entrance to the place is strictly limited.

HANSEN: This is the Jessup Correctional Institution and it takes a guard with a belt full of keys to open several sturdy steel doors to the corridor that leads to the library. Glennor Shirley guides us through the stacks. She's in charge of more than a dozen prison libraries in Maryland.

Ms. GLENNOR SHIRLEY (Library Coordinator, Maryland State Department of Education): Good to see you, sir. He's one of our workers.

HANSEN: Glennor Shirley came to this country from Jamaica in the 1980s. She's trim and stylish with a copper-tone jacket and bright scarf. For more than 17 years, she has ministered to the needs of inmates. She says many rarely entered a library prior to incarceration. Here, they often search for the legal tools to help them get out.

Ms. SHIRLEY: We show them how to cite the cases. These are cases that are requested that we'll have to provide.

HANSEN: You have quite a stack of...

Ms. SHIRLEY: Oh yes.

HANSEN: ...almost two inches high.

SHIRLEY: Right. And each of these can be 50 to 100 pages.

HANSEN: Most inmates will never win early release, so the library becomes a place to improve reading skills, write a letter home, watch an instructional video on auto mechanics or just escape mentally.

So, what kind of material exists for just pleasure, pleasure reading?

Ms. SHIRLEY: Oh, they read anything on the New York bestseller list. They love the Grisham, they love even Harry Potter is very popular in here. The guys like fast action.

HANSEN: Westerns are also extremely popular. Shirley says it may have something to do with the lawlessness.

Health and medical information is another favorite field for inmate research. When the clinic prescribes something, they want to make sure they're not part of some medical experiment.

HANSEN: A group of burly men in light denim shirts with big white letters D-O-C printed on the back are sitting around a table in a corner of the library, which, by the way, looks remarkably like the one you remember from elementary school. This is the prison book club. Today, they are discussing "The Brothers Torres," a Latino teen novel. It's getting decidedly mixed reviews.

Most of these inmates have not been cleared to talk to us so we cannot use their names.

Unidentified Man #1: It was Latino-based, so that's why I enjoyed it. It brought back a lot of memories from when I was a kid and how it was growing up in the neighborhoods. And since I'm so far away from home it's hard to adjust to certain things. But the book definitely made me think about home a lot.

Unidentified Man #2: I didn't like it, I didn't like it. Because it wasn't the fact that, I mean, I like reading, I love reading, but first of all, I try to stay away from books like these. I mean, any type of books that, you know, suggest any type of violence, drug dealing, anything like that, because that's what I'm trying to get away from. Second of all, my intellect is a lot more advanced than this is.
Unidentified Man #3: I think it's still a good thing whether you like the book or don't like the book. 'Cause I haven't always been a reader. Now that I'm with the book club, I have become a reader. So, it's going to be things that I don't like to read but I learn from the reading and then I learn from the (unintelligible) and all that stuff. You know what I mean?

HANSEN: One of Glennor Shirley's most successful innovations has been a program where the men read to their children on visiting day. Here's inmate Eddie Connally.

Mr. EDDIE CONNALLY (Inmate, Jessup Correctional Institution): Well, I thought that was like a wonderful program in terms of bringing prisoners, their family and their children together. And they've created a bonding in which they carried on. They actually went to the telephones once, twice a week and talked to the children about the books and that kind of stuff. You know, and it actually changed a lot of prisoners' lives because the one thing that happens in all too many cases is that we only get to see our children in the visiting room - in my case, grandchildren.

HANSEN: But Maryland, like so many other states, is facing a budget shortfall. Funding for Glennor Shirley's program has been severely cut. She doesn't have the money to buy new books and she had to cancel the reading to kids program, something she says is shortsighted.

Ms. SHIRLEY: You have to be very, very careful in terms of public opinion because many people in the public still think, while you're doing this for inmates, what about my child out there in the school, or you're doing for people who've harmed society. So, you have to balance that when you go out and seek public funding.

What I continue to say is if I can help an inmate to go out and work, he'll be a taxpayer rather than my tax keeping in here, and so that's the argument I used a lot.

HANSEN: Shirley also points to studies that show that inmates who engage in education programs are much less likely to return to prison.

For members of the book club, the prison library is a haven.

Unidentified Man #4: Without the library, I think some of them will go insane. Like, I mean, it helps occupy my mind a lot of times. Like right now I'm reading a basic financial management book and things like that. And if I didn't have that, no telling what I'd be doing or what I'd get into.

Unidentified Man #5: My daughter just graduated this year. She just finished high school. I've been incarcerated - she's 19 - and I left when she was eight. So, a lot of my teaching and a lot of my raising was through the mail or over the phone. How the library helped me is some time I would ask her what book she was reading in school and come to the library and try to find the same thing so we could discuss it. And as I said, I could relate to her better.

HANSEN: And we'll give the last word in our prison library story to Eddie Connally, who speaks from experience.

Mr. CONNALLY: I've been locked up for, like, 40 years, right? But the library, and I've been watching it over the decades, right? The one that I notice is the people that come in the prison system and use the library, it actually impacts how they're thinking. I was noticing that brother said he don't like to read that particular kind of book anymore but he comes and he reads stuff that challenges him.

And that challenging aspect of books in the library is what I see that ripples out into the population and it changes people. One day you see a very angry guy, you know, three months later you see somebody who's trying to figure out how can I get out of here? How can I improve myself? How can I move forward? It's the library.

HANSEN: You're listening to WEEKEND EDITION from NPR News.