Library Celebrates Diversity in ‘Read Together Kits’ Project

A new addition to the Monterey County Free Libraries circulating story time kits is a version which celebrates our diverse and interesting world for children and early readers.

The new additions are called “Read Together Kits” and are created with the...
importance the Libraries place on inclusion in mind.

“For all our users, but especially our youngest, we want story times to be both mirrors that reflect their lives, which they can relate to, as well as windows into the wonderful and diverse world around them,” says Be Astengo, Managing Librarian of the Marina Branch.

Recent data finds that 62% of children in Monterey County are living with one or more foreign born parents and 40.6% of children are English Language learners. Census data reports that 59% of our population is Hispanic, 29.8% is white, 6.8% is Asian, 3.5% is African American and 3.8% is more than one race.

Keeping those figures in mind, organizers make sure each kit contains 5 to 10 books featuring children and people from diverse backgrounds based on different themes. Themes include: animals, colors and shapes, community, counting, families, feelings, friendship, nature, school and sound. There are Spanish language kits available in some themes (the library hopes to expand those offerings) and a bilingual kit is available focused on family and friends (familia y amigos). Kits are aimed at either preschool age or Kindergarten through 3rd grade; however, readers and listeners of all ages will find the stories and themes engaging and enjoyable.

In addition, each kit contains a story time curriculum that offers suggestions for songs, finger plays and early learning ideas to provide inspiration for a full and rich story time experience.

Patrons can place holds on kits to have them delivered to their closest branch library. Just visit the website, click on “Search Our Catalog” and use the search term “Read Together Kits.”
Natividad Diabetes Program Sees Success, Renewed Funding

Congratulations to Natividad and the Natividad Foundation as their diabetes prevention programs are showing results and are continuing to receive grant funding.

The Community Foundation for Monterey County has awarded Natividad Foundation a $30,000 grant for its 5 Steps to Prevent Diabetes® program. This is the eighth consecutive year of funding for the program, which grew by 25% each of the last two years.

Natividad’s Diabetes Education Center offers outpatient services to children and adults with diabetes Type 1, Type 2, gestational and pre-diabetes. Outpatient services include individual and group counseling and education, community presentations and outreach. Services are available in English, Spanish and other languages.

In Monterey County, 57% of adults have diabetes or prediabetes, outpacing the national average of 42%. Type 2 diabetes is preventable!

The program’s Annual Status Report was recently completed which involved analysis and submission of patient outcome data including clinical outcomes, patient behavioral-changes and a quality improvement project. Patients completing the program saw meaningful improvement in their average Hemoglobin A1c levels, the standard for long-term blood-glucose control.

For more information on the Center and the 5 Steps to Prevent Diabetes® program, go to: https://www.natividad.com/community/diabetes-education or https://www.natividadfoundation.org/programs/trauma-education-and-prevention/

Contracts/Purchasing Shares Tips in National Publication

The Contracts and Purchasing Division, which has been recognized for its excellent practices, is now sharing its ‘how to’ tips with other agencies.
You’ll see Contracts and Purchasing Officer Mike Derr commenting in an article for this month’s edition of American City and County Magazine. This publication is geared for city, county and state leaders, reporting news, government trends, policy alternatives and operational solutions.

Derr was asked to talk about Monterey County’s positive efforts for an article titled, “Targeted Training Ensures Purchase Requests are Error Free - Open Communication Helps Procurement Departments Meet Customers’ Deadlines.”

Derr spoke of how his small division is able to support and be responsive to all departments despite reduced resources, telling the magazine:

“In order for our department to be responsive to the needs of our customers, we have to ensure that we have an open communication process, where the entire team touches base each day as needed to provide status reports as well as to request assistance, if needed, from another team member” and that “We’ve created response time lines for the processing of our different types of procurement documents submitted by our customers.”

Derr also shared the success of the division’s Contract and Purchasing Academy which offers training to county staff to better understand the procurement and contract process and needs.

Also featured in the article, some up and coming activities and efforts from this division, such as a new cloud-based online RFP system and the implementation of a time and money saving online sourcing program.