

Community Library Programs That Work

Building Youth and Family Literacy

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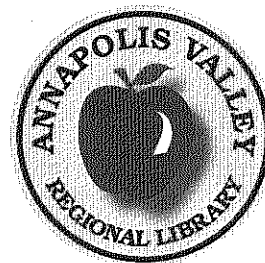


LIBRARIES UNLIMITED

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StoryWalk®

Annapolis Valley Regional Library
Bridgetown, Nova Scotia
Canada



Target Audience

This initiative is appropriate for all age groups.

Community Connections

- Outdoor trail associations
- Municipal department responsible for parks and recreation
- Schools
- Neighbourhood associations
- Sports organizations
- Community centres
- Environmental interest groups

Program Description

A picture book is replicated onto signboards with each board featuring a two-page spread of the book. A related suggested physical activity, such as hopping, skipping, or running, is included at the bottom of each sign. The signboards are laminated and mounted on stakes that are spaced out and installed on popular walking paths. As children and families walk along the path, they read the book and complete the suggested activities.

Originally created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont, and developed with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg-Hubbard Library, StoryWalk® is now installed in Jubilee Park in Bridgetown and in Port Williams Community Park in Kings County, Nova Scotia. The Annapolis Valley Regional Library also has three portable StoryWalk® sets for schools and community groups to borrow.

This project combines the benefits of literacy, physical activity, and time outdoors to experience nature, art, community, and family time. It provides a fun, active way to experience a book. It turns a picture book into a multimodal object and is a great way to remind people about reading and libraries in a non-traditional setting.

Outcomes & Benefits

- Combines literacy, art, and physical activity in an outdoor setting
- Provides a fun, interactive family experience
- Addresses inactivity and rising levels of obesity through active participation
- Encourages families to come to the library to share more stories
- Raises visibility of the library in a non-traditional setting
- Demonstrates the relevance of the library to different community groups and all community members

How It Works

Contact the appropriate officials to get permission to install a StoryWalk® on trails, walking paths, parks, or playgrounds. Invite other community groups with a vested interest in the space to become partners and contribute to the initiative.

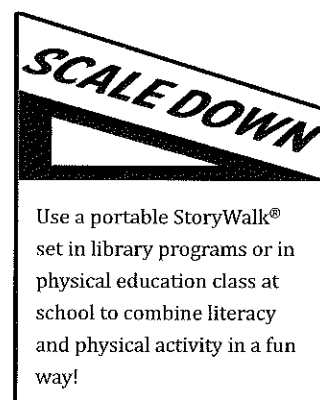
When selecting a picture book to use for a StoryWalk®, focus on something with minimal text, a great story line, and illustrations that do not cross the centre of the book. In Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, the book *Juba This and Juba That* by Helaine Becker is used. With permission from the publisher, copy the book onto panels of plastic board and mount onto sign posts. Staple boards to stakes and secure them by using heavy-duty Velcro. In Vermont, the library originally purchased two copies of the book, cut out the pages, and laminated them before affixing them to stakes and hammering them into the ground.

Add suggested activities related to the story to the bottom of the pages, to encourage children to become more active as they move from sign to sign. For example, Sign 2 for *Juba This and Juba That* says, "Juba is just waking up. Can you stretch your arms high over your head, and hold them that way to the next sign?" Sign 4 instructs, "Juba and the cat are running all around. Can you run in big zig-zags all the way to the next sign?"

The spacing of the storybook stakes varies depending upon the length of the walk; however, approximately 40 paces between pages works well. It is best if the next page can be seen in the distance from the previous page's vantage point. For young children, a walk of a half a mile total distance is the maximum manageable.

Position a guest book with laminated pages and pencils in a weatherproof box at the end of the walk where participants can record the date, the number of people in the party, and any comments or suggestions. Consider placing participants' names in a draw to win a copy of the book or some other prize.

The Annapolis Valley Regional Library has three mobile StoryWalk® sets for schools and other organizations to sign out and use.



Supplies & Materials

- Suitable StoryWalk® book and copyright permission to use it
- Colour board upon which to print the pages, or three copies of the book to cut up, mount, and laminate (one copy for repairs)
- Four foot high mahogany stakes (will need 15–20 depending on length of story)
- Staples
- Velcro
- Guest book
- Weatherproof box
- Copies of books for prizes

Budget

The project costs approximately \$3,000 in total for five sets of the StoryWalk® boards (design and printing), sign posts for two parks, stakes for temporary sets, launch parties, and copies of the book to give away as prizes.

Marketing & Promotion

Invite local school groups and the general public to the launch of the project, which can be advertised on the library website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. Issue media releases and schedule library staff interviews with local media. Encourage the author and illustrator of the selected work to actively advertise the initiative.

For More Information

Need more information about this program? Please contact:

Angela J. Reynolds
Head of Youth Services
Annapolis Valley Regional Library
Bridgetown, NS
902-665-2995
<http://www.valleylibrary.ca>

Acknowledgements

If interested in offering a StoryWalk® in your area, the trademark must be used and the following credit line must be provided in any promotional material and at the beginning of any StoryWalk®: *The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont, and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library.*

Geocaching: Treasure Hunting in Your Neighbourhood

Anythink Libraries
Rangeview Library District
Thornton, Colorado
United States



Target Audience

Families with children of all ages are invited, but pre-teens and teens will learn the most about navigation using a Global Position System (GPS) device.

Community Connections

- Municipal agencies—parks, landmarks
- Non-profit organizations—churches, schools
- Small businesses
- Local outdoor enthusiasts and trail associations

Program Description

Families gather at the library for an information session outlining the basics of geocaching. Geocaching is an outdoor adventure game that uses navigation skills and treasure-finding tactics. During the program introduction, families are shown examples of the size of the cache they will be searching for. Each cache holds small tokens and a log book for searchers to record their find. Teams are given location coordinates for four hidden treasures and set out in different directions to avoid congestion. Along the way adults use smart phones and digital cameras to record their team's adventure. After an hour, teams return to the library, photos are shared, and everyone talks about the experience.

Outcomes & Benefits

- Gives all family members an opportunity to meet new people and make new friends
- Helps children learn or hone navigation and hiking skills
- Presents an opportunity for a family outdoor activity
- Establishes the library as a key community presence
- Provides digital literacy activities, including photography and GPS navigation

How It Works

Choose four locations within walking distance (a half mile) of your facility. Locations must have appropriate hiding places, such as inside shrubbery, on a pole, or under a rock. If cache locations are on property owned by an organization, permission from that organization must be obtained in advance. At the Anythink York Street library program, one cache was hanging from a tree and one was lodged inside a fake sprinkler head! Prepare your cache by hiding tokens, a log book, and pencil or permanent marker inside a small, durable container, such as a plastic tub. Once you have hidden the cache in a secure place, get accurate GPS coordinates, using your GPS receiver. The best coordinates are obtained on clear days with no overhead interference (i.e., fog, canopy of trees, etc.). These coordinates are the ones you will provide to families gathered for your event.

On program day, participants gather in the library and are divided into teams. Assign an adult to each team to keep them together and to take pictures of the adventure along the way. If possible, assign library staff or volunteers to these roles. Give participants an introduction into the process of geocaching and instructions for finding the caches. Each team receives four tokens to replace the ones they will remove from the cache. Once they understand how to use their GPS or smart phone to locate the coordinates, demonstrate to participants how to use their keen observation skills and treasure-hunting abilities to find the cache. At the Anythink library program, staff showed participants examples of the style of container they would be looking for, to help them determine potential hiding places.

Teams embark on their adventure with four sets of coordinates that they are directed to find in turn. Once a cache is located, teams remove a token and replace it with the one they brought and sign the logbook. An adult gathers the team for a photo with the cache. After the cache is safely returned to the exact same hiding place where it was found, teams repeat the process with the next three cache locations.

After one hour, regardless of their success rate, teams return to the library to share pictures and reflect on their experiences.

RAMP UP

Use your geocaching adventure as an opportunity to connect with neighbourhood organizations. Local churches, schools, family restaurants, and other businesses might enjoy being selected as a cache hiding location. Businesses may be willing to provide small prizes or coupons that you can hide inside each cache to serve as the token and are likely to allow you to display a poster or flyer advertising the program.

Library staff demonstrate how interested families can become geocaching enthusiasts on their own time by joining with others from around the world at <http://www.geocaching.com/>

Supplies & Materials

- Four sturdy, waterproof containers
- Tokens, such as key chains, shells, or small figurines
- Four small journals to serve as logbooks
- Golf pencils or small permanent markers
- Computer and data projector for photo display
- Posters and flyers for program marketing

Budget

Supplies, including tokens and containers, cost \$60.00 to purchase for an anticipated group of 30 participants. Anythink library staff used personal GPS devices and smart phones, so no costs were incurred. Marketing materials were also taken from existing supplies.

Marketing & Promotion

Use the library website and a printed calendar of events to advertise the program. At Anythink York Street Library, this program was offered as a part of a Family Night series that has regular participation from preschoolers to grandparents.

For More Information

Need more information about this program? Please contact:

Laci Wright—Children's Guide or
Kathy Totten—Experience Expert and Branch Manager
Anythink York Street
Thornton, CO
303-287-2514
<https://www.anythinklibraries.org>

Bikemobile

Greater Victoria Public Library
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada



GREATER VICTORIA
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Target Audience

The *Bikemobile* reaches community members of all ages and backgrounds and attracts library users and non-users alike.

Community Connections

- Local bike store
- Farmers market or community gathering places
- Popular family venues, such as parks and beaches
- Community festivals and events

Program Description

A bicycle pulling a book-filled trailer is the “little mobile-library on wheels.” The staff cyclist pedals around the community, issuing library cards and lending library books to anyone interested in borrowing. The *Bikemobile* also appears at festivals, parks, beaches, and the local Farmer’s Market.

Library materials are made more accessible by bringing them out into the community and encouraging borrowing. Passersby are introduced to resources they may not be aware are available at the library, and interaction with the library staff member encourages them to visit and discover more.

Outcomes & Benefits

- Raises the profile of the library in and around the community
- Showcases the library as an innovative organization
- Serves those who may not be able to come into the library, in an eco-friendly manner
- Inspires community members (patrons and non-patrons alike) to read
- Encourages people to come into the library to return materials, to discover more, and to become regular users

How It Works

Develop a focused and specific *Bikemobile* collection that includes materials for various ages with a range of genres and formats, including picture books, graphic novels, and thrillers. Use a rotating collection of regular library materials, if purchasing a separate collection is not possible.

Have the library's marketing department or a contracted designer develop a logo and signage. Hang signs on all sides of the *Bikemobile* so that it is easily identifiable. Print the graphic on a T-shirt for the library staff member to wear while on cycling duty.

Armed with a trailer full of library material, new library cards, registration forms, and a clipboard with paper, the staff member cycles around the community, stopping at regular intervals to interact with people. If an existing library patron wants to sign out books, note their library card number along with the item barcode. If individuals want to join the library, give them a library card registration form to complete, verify their identification, and issue a card immediately. Once back at the library, input all information into the computer circulation system. Alternatively, you can use an iPad or laptop computer equipped with the library's circulation system to issue library cards and sign out materials remotely, if this service is available through your Integrated Library System. If your library uses an internet-based or cloud-technology system, check for wireless hotspots.

At Greater Victoria Public Library, the *Bikemobile* makes regular stops at popular locations, such as the Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings. If customers would like to know in advance where the *Bikemobile* will be, they can check the library's website or sign up to receive regular Twitter updates.

RAMP UP

Take a page from Fraser Valley Regional Library's "Library Live and on Tour" initiative and launch a fully loaded, souped-up car that visits underserved areas and is present at community events. The emphasis of the touring library vehicle is to raise awareness of the library, answer questions, break down barriers to borrowing, and advertise what the library has available. The car has a pumping stereo system, a plasma TV, and a gadget bar where visitors have hands on access to try e-readers, iPads, and other electronic devices. <http://www.fvrl.bc.ca>

SCALE DOWN

If an ongoing mobile library is beyond your means, set up a library table or booth at community events or in high traffic areas, such as malls or grocery stores. Increasing the library's profile outside the library walls provides an opportunity to reach all members of the community and reminds everyone of what the library has to offer.

Supplies & Materials

- Bike
- Bike trailer
- Signage
- T-shirt with logo
- Variety of library materials
- Cards
- Registration forms

Budget

The cost of a bike is approximately \$200 and a bike trailer is approximately \$350. The signs designed by the library's marketing department cost approximately \$30 and the T-shirt approximately \$25. Professionally prepared press releases cost approximately \$50.

Marketing & Promotion

Send press releases announcing the *Bikemobile* initiative to various media outlets. Place signage at all library branches and post information on the library website. Create and post a logo with the tagline "Bikemobile . . . A little library on wheels!" on signs adorning all four sides of the bike trailer. Send out tweets to the public via Twitter to announce where the *Bikemobile* will be visiting.

For More Information

This program was submitted by Avi Silberstein, then Outreach Librarian and *Bikemobile* cyclist, for the Greater Victoria Public Library system. Mr. Silverstein has since become the Library Director at Grand Forks and District Public Library in Grand Forks, British Columbia, Canada.

Need more information about the program? Please contact:

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Greater Victoria Public Library
Victoria, BC
250-413-0382
<http://www.gvpl.ca>