**Volunteer Impact Library Learning Lab Template:**

**{Notes in brackets are other possibilities}**

**Project/Program:**

More programs run by volunteers.

Example of current program run by volunteers: Lego Club run by Volunteers: A weekly Lego Club with two rooms available. One for neurotypical kids, one for Neurodivergent Kids

**Your Purpose:**

I am participating in this Learning Lab to expand my understanding of volunteers’ importance and how I can advocate having a strong program of adult volunteers at the library. If I market and recruit correctly, I should draw motivated and engaged community members to volunteer at the library i.e. the community hub.

My purpose is to show how important volunteers are to the library as more than just an extra shelver. Their roles are only limited to our imagination. There are skilled people out there who want to share their knowledge and would want to share their expertise in their fields with us in the form of a class, workshop, or program.

**Library/Program Mission:**

Enriching Peoria’s evolving community through equal access to information,
while offering inclusive programs, innovative technology and diverse collections.

Beneath our library logo we also include three words that the library lives and breathes: Innovative, Interactive, Inclusive.

**Library Values:**

Our library’s values include being an innovative space where patrons can turn to for their own advancement. We are interactive in that we value outreach into the community, and we want to provide a space for them here in which everyone is welcomed and met with something for everyone. With our recent renovation, we made changes to be up to date with ADA codes and have become certified by the Certified Autism Center. Inclusivity of all is an important value that the library practices as we actively look to meet the needs of our diverse community by having programs for more than just all ages, but also neurodivergent people, homeschool families, LGBT and allies, small business owners, students, and more. Lego Club would fall clearly in the category of inclusivity. The City of Peoria prides itself as being professional, ethical, open, responsive, innovative, and accountable with all members of our community and the library supports those values.

**Audiences**:

The big audience would be our local community. For example, our patrons, their loved ones, our staff at the library (from top leadership down to our enter level staff), our volunteers, our program partners, our City Council and other elected officials.

**Volunteer Promise/Purpose:**

The library involves volunteers in the library for many purposes, we have 6 positions in which volunteers can volunteer in like shelving, technical services, and programs to name a few in order to extend the services we offer.

In terms of the Lego Club, what better people to run a program here than people who live and breathe Peoria? People who are invested in our community and cherish giving back to their own make great volunteers as they reflect our community that we serve. The strongest purpose of involving volunteers for Lego Club is to allow for more programs. Without them, some programs would not exist in the library. For example, having a volunteer consistently in to run Lego Club has allowed for the program to exist while the level of service remains consistent or even increases, instead of suffering due to having to pick between regular services like ILL’s and circulation over programs like Lego Club. {This is a good illustration of what it means to have volunteer involvement.}

**Practices:**

I would focus on communication and evaluation as I would want to see the community impact of this program. Do they like it, what can we improve, what is their experience volunteering, and what are their ideas? I believe developing trust through communication is a priority when achieving our volunteer promise.

**Proof/Indicator Ideas:**

* Quantitative/numbers (amount or scope of what’s happening)

# of participants, # of returning participants, # of volunteers facilitating programs, # of parents staying to participate, # of new referred kids

* Qualitative/stories/quotes/testimonials (nature or depth of what’s happening)

Quotes from the kid participants about Lego Club and other library programs

Quotes from parents about Lego Club, having a sensory friendly environment for their child, meeting other parents in our community, or about having the ability to browse the library freely without their child.

Quotes from volunteers about how they are enjoying their facilitating of Lego Club and how they get to work with the library as a volunteer, being mentored in.

Images of the community connecting with each other, and also staff and volunteers.

* Satisfaction (level of satisfaction with what’s happening)

A survey can be conducted for all participants in Lego Club to glean satisfaction level. I would survey kids, parents, volunteers, and staff who are around the area to see how this program is being received. As it stands, I plan to set up my evaluation survey at the end of summer.

**Proof/Indicators Collection and Reporting**

**Indicator 1**: Number of Participates and returning participants

* Link(s) to mission, values, and/or volunteer promise.

The Library has a core mission of being interactive, of being a place to come for the purpose of not only education but also leisure. Creating fun and free programs like Lego Club is the way that the library can fulfill this mission. Knowing that we are providing such a fun program that consistently reaches 30+ kids every week is an accomplishment. We are providing higher quality of life to several families looking for ways to entertain their kids.

* Source(s)

Each week, Lego Club volunteers set up over 40 seats for participants between both rooms and they keep track of how many kids and parents come through to participate in Lego Club.

* Method(s)

We keep a tally in each room as we have a white board sign at the entrance of each room to entice children to Lego Club. Each child and parent are counted in this tally to have an accurate picture of participants. We transfer these statistics to a calendar on which we track all program attendance so that we have all statistics to submit at the end of the month.

* Audiences and Reporting Formats

This statistic is added to our Fiscal Year Statistics log and also emailed to our Senior Technology Librarian who complies all of our statistics to create a report. This report is seen by leadership staff within the library and all the way up to City Council. Knowing how far our reach is within our community is important to show that we are interacting within our community, thus an important department to fund as a goal of the City of Peoria is to be a full service city.

**Indicator 2**: Number of Hours Volunteered

* Link(s) to mission, values, and/or volunteer promise

Diversity is among our City’s top priorities. We want to reflect our community by having members of our staff and volunteers mirror the community it serves. Connection is more easily created when there are commonalities to build an effective relationship between our staff/volunteers and our patrons.

* Source(s)

I am a Library Specialist and one of the many hats that I wear is Adult Volunteer Program Liaison. I recruit, onboard, train, and evaluate all the adult volunteers within the Peoria Public Library. I track volunteer statistics including: how many volunteers we have, how many hours they work, and where they are placed.

* Method(s)

I track volunteers with simple pen and paper. I keep a binder with everyone’s schedules, their training log and lastly, their time sheet. I compile this information on a shared library document where we track circulation statistics and is sent to the Senior Technology Librarian who creates a report viewed by management.

* Audiences and Reporting Formats

There is an annual report that is seen by City Council and several departments within the city that have the power to affect what the library is able to accomplish. Budgets are formed using this report. While it is important to prove that we are an effective staff, volunteer hours are also highlighted within this report. This year, I am sure this report will include a mention that programs like Lego Club would not have been possible without Library Volunteers. It is important to report that volunteers extend library work because without them, this program is not possible.

{Also a good place to talk about the need for an Adult Volunteer Program Liaison to support and steward this work. It helps demonstrate the staff-volunteer partnership and justify that portion of the Liaison’s work.}

**Indicator 3**: Quotes from Parents

* Link(s) to mission, values, and/or volunteer promise

Parents whose children participate in our volunteer-led Lego Club have made comments stating how they are able to connect with other parents with children like their own. Other comments include the benefit the parents feel in building a connection with others in our community. This Club has a social aspect in that all the kids, parents, and staff/volunteers have a place to come together building relationships with the library and the community of Peoria.

It is this Inclusion that is another component of not only the library but also for our City of Peoria. Providing a sensory-sensitive program on a weekly basis has been a goal that the library has been wanting to meet as we noticed an increase in needs for patrons with these specific sensitivities. Peoria prides itself on being responsive to our patrons on the spectrum not only by including them in our programing but also by funding its Libraries to becoming a Certified Autism Center.

* Source(s)

Participating parents themselves have stated to me that they “like coming to the library because I have an opportunity to practice my English with other ladies like myself during the time my kids play.” This opportunity is only available to her in part by volunteers that can take over facilitating this program. They are the “staff” working directly with them all, making sure that we have two rooms open for Lego Club.

* Method(s)

The method to collect this valuable statistic is conversation. Sitting in while the program is happening and listening in to the chats all the families are having with each other, the fact that they talk about looking forward to Lego Club because they get to sit and chat together too. Success looks like more than just hours a volunteer worked, but also, all that a volunteer’s time is able to accomplish due to their wonderful donation.

* Audiences and Reporting Formats

Although profits may speak louder to some, there is great value added to our community through the relationships being made within its government’s walls. Reporting to our leadership the wonderful additions made possible to the library due to a community member’s donation of time, is priceless. Proving our City’s mission advancement while also connecting is community carries weight in an presentation about the invaluable use of volunteers.

**Indicator 4**: Increase in library use

* Link(s) to mission, values, and/or volunteer promise

An increase of circulated items, new library cards issued, and even the increase in library volunteer numbers itself is an indicator that proves the value of volunteer contributions. Volunteers are great advocates for the library. They volunteer because they care about the library and as such they promote our library services naturally in conversations with our program participants.

* Source(s)

Volunteers and staff have commented on the impact of the Lego Program. They’ve noticed the increase in circulation of youth items. Also families who meet their friends for Lego Club end up creating a library card before they leave.

* Method(s)

Reports can be run to find out exactly how many extra books are being checked out compared to the previous month or even the previous year to gauge how many extra items are being circulated. However, in speaking to staff we can also glean this information as they are assisting our patrons with check out and opening new library cards.

* Audiences and Reporting Formats

The audience for this information is likely our branch manager and director. They set goals with staff and by extension, our volunteers to increase library use as they review library usage reports and guide us every year. This guidance allows for the library to slowly move forward and continue to be a community hub.

{Could also be valuable information to include in or with the annual report mentioned above.}