

Writing Sample : Webstory/FaceBook Post for The Douglas Center

Link to blog post : https://thedouglascenter.org/news/library_community.html

Title :

Library = Community Big and Small

Facebook Content :

Libraries promote much more than reading. The ideals of libraries and books promotes community, caring, sharing, reflection and growth.

Webstory:

The Importance of Libraries for Community

Short Text :

A library is more than a place to read, it represents community and the opportunity to grow. We love our libraries! Trips to the Skokie Public Library and our time in our on-site library.

Long Text :

A library is much more than a place to read, it represents community and the opportunity to grow. At The Douglas Center, we love our libraries. We love our trips to the Skokie Public Library and our time in our on-site library.

Our on-site library started as an idea and has grown to over 245 books and a space to relax and grow. We are now outgrowing our shelf space and expanding to accommodate all the books we have received. Our collection includes book with reading levels from pre-reader to advanced reader, even a set of encyclopedias. The importance of libraries cannot be understated, they are important for the enrichment of our participants.

Libraries promote:

Community

Libraries are a great opportunity for community integration. Our connection with Skokie Public Library was pivotal in creating our own small space experience. Our participants attend the Skokie Library's "Let's Get Together Book Club" and enjoy being part of a group. They are matched with other community day service members and local schools to meet, read and discuss a books.

Care and Ownership

In the development of our on-site library, we emulated a big library on small scale. By having similar cataloging systems, we create a sense of belonging and ownership. Much like the large public library, our system allows the participants to take an active role in maintaining the community space, re-shelving books and leaving the area organized for the next friend to find their way about the books. The books are color-code and shelved according to reading level and genre - fiction, non-fiction, how to and reference areas. There is also a "book in

progress” section, where as the book is marked with their name and place within the book, so shared books are available to be read at their own pace by more than one reader.

Sharing

The Douglas Center is very fortunate to have several volunteers who love reading and sharing their time with our clients each week. The Douglas Center currently has 5 volunteers that are devoted to helping in the library and we are always welcoming more. Whether, helping an individual read on their own, providing assistance by echo reading ([link to source: https://study.-com/academy/lesson/echo-reading-definition-strategy-examples.html](https://study.-com/academy/lesson/echo-reading-definition-strategy-examples.html)) or practicing reading related skills, our volunteers help the participant feel comfortable. This 1:1 time with a volunteer gives the client a space to make mistakes and learn without their peers and often helps with anxiety or embarrassment, so the participants can focus on their individual goals.

Confidence

The individual help of volunteers builds confidence for everyday interactions. Participants look forward to coming into The Douglas Center library. Seeing their progress, from being able to read a chapter at one sitting with a volunteer to reading 2-3 chapters in that same amount of time. It is an amazing boost to their confidence.

We have also started developing "peer reading coaches." Some of our participants that able to read well help their peers, by reading to them or assisting with echo reading or helping each other sound out words and phrases. This interaction provides a great boost for personal skills, ability and purpose for those who are the peer coach. No matter the ability, we work towards confidence and progress.

Growth

Progress is one of the main indicators of success. Our library provides a space for those who want to improve and practice reading, to those who can't read at all. Improving reading skills helps build confidence which then translates to a real-life opportunities like applying or interviewing for a job in the community. Some individuals who cannot read or have limited vision can still experience story through volunteer, staff and peer interaction. Everyone that chooses to, participates in discussion with their peers or as part of book club. But the main goal is to contribute to their individual learning and growth.

While the image of a library is that of words, pages, and book-lined shelves, the power of the library is found in the interpersonal experience, pride and accomplishment of those who share the quiet space. Libraries promote much more than reading. The ideals of libraries and books promotes community, caring, sharing, reflection and growth.

end of story