

**Pacific Library Partnership
Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program**

Due Friday, October 10, 2014

Please provide the following information in a Microsoft Word document. Please email the completed form to Wendy Cao at caow@plsinfo.org.

1. Title of Project **Building Brains, Building Communities**
2. Library/Committee applying for funding Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL)
Name Erik Thurman
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Mailing Address 11160 Speegle St., Castroville, CA 95012
3. Amount of funding requested \$15,000

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program

1. One paragraph project summary.

The Building Brains, Building Communities (BBBC) project will regularly host board and video gaming events at 6 of MCFL's branches in various locations throughout the county. Lack of interesting and stimulating activities and social isolation are seen as a major cause for much of the spread of gang behavior in Monterey County. The goal of the project will be to encourage all the gamers, digital and analog, to learn a new game and to play with someone they do not already know *at every session*. With this grant, MCFL will purchase state of the art/popular video game consoles, new and well reviewed video games, as well as high quality board games, and create a welcoming and safe environment where participants will be able to attend free BBBC events, and get to know other members of the community as they join them in playing video and tabletop games.

2. Explain how this project fits with the library's strategic directions.

The Mission of Monterey County Free Libraries is to bring ideas, inspiration, information and enjoyment to our community. Our 2013-2016 Strategic Plan reaffirms our commitment to serving youth. It calls upon MCFL to respond to the community's desire for "cultural and educational programs for adults and children by providing *high-quality, high-interest programs in large and small branches for youth and adults.*" MCFL is also a key part of the Monterey County Gang and Violence Prevention Team. Gang violence is one of the biggest challenges facing Monterey County. Lack of interesting activities and social isolation are a large contributing factor to gang behaviors in Monterey County youth.

BBBC Days will help build community in our diverse areas. Games are an effective and welcoming way of bridging cultural and linguistic barriers to have shared experiences. Tabletop/board games enhance traditional literacy through direct reading, critical interpretation, and application of learned skills. Video games increase critical engagement and comfort with technology and digital systems, important components of digital literacy. Local youth will have an opportunity to access and gain familiarity with gaming activities trending among their peers, many of which they may not have access to in their own homes.

3. A description of the proposed project including the population served and the demographics of that population.

With this grant, MCFL will purchase video game consoles, video games, and board games in order to host regular Building Brains, Building Communities Events at 6 of our branches in various locations throughout the county. Participants will be able to attend these free events to join other community members in playing video and tabletop games. Gamers, digital and analog, will be encouraged to learn a new game and to play with someone they do not already know at every session.

Demographics: According to the 2010 census, Monterey County has a population of 415,057 people of which over 220,000 live in MCFL's service area. Monterey County is spread over 3,280 square miles of which 3,125 are in MCFL's service area. Over 16% of the County's population lives below the poverty level, with the number significantly higher in many sections of MCFL's service area. Unemployment in Monterey County is 7%. The highest rates are King City (11.9%), Gonzales (13.7%) and Greenfield (11.0%). Monterey County has the highest rate of youth homicides of any California county. Statewide, the homicide victimization rate for youth ages 10 to 24 in California was 8.06 per 100,000. Monterey County ranks number one, with almost 4 times the statewide rate at 23.32 per 100,000.

Large areas of rural Monterey County do not have access to high speed Internet or advanced technology in the home. Many households have not had exposure to popular board games and to the benefits they bring, including critical and analytical thinking, independent decision-making, numerical reasoning, and socialization.

In addition, cultural and linguistic differences fracture many of our communities. Games, especially those that are not language-dependent, surmount these differences and provide a venue for involvement and shared experience for all participants, regardless of background, which will help reduce isolation within and between our communities.

4. The goals and objectives of the project.

BBBC Days will help build community and social skills in our diverse areas. Games will help bridge cultural and linguistic barriers and invite youth to participate in a shared experience. Family members will be encouraged to attend together, building bonds within the family by giving them opportunities to do fun activities together in a non-threatening and relaxed environment. Game playing encourages friendly competition and teaches youth to enjoy the thrill of the contest and the steps of the gaming process, instead of focusing only on the outcome.

Board games will be used to enhance traditional literacy through direct reading, critical interpretation and analytical skills, as well as converting knowledge and instructions into action. Digital games will increase comfort with and critical engagement with technology and digital systems, important components of digital literacy.

5. The project timeline (activities).

November/December 2014 - Inventory existing collection of board and video games.

November/December 2014 - Evaluate age demographics by branch location.

November/December 2014 - Recruit volunteers to assist with programs.

December 2014 - Select/purchase equipment and games.

January 2015 - Train staff at participating branches.

February 2015-December 2015 - Host monthly BBBC days at participating branches.

April 2015 - Add additional games based on popularity of current collection.

July 2015 - Add additional games based on popularity of current collection.

October 2015 - Add additional games based on popularity of current collection.

December 2015. Evaluate and make recommendations for 2016.

6. The evaluation of the project.

The BBBC project will be evaluated on a monthly basis, using attendance numbers, popularity of specific games, and anecdotal observations.

Monthly surveys of participants will ask three questions:

- 1) Did you learn a new game?
- 2) Did you meet someone new?
- 3) What were your favorite games?

7. The project budget.

Each participating branch will receive the following:

- 1 Wii U* + 6 Wiimotes + 6 Wii nunchuks + 1 Wii U Pro Controller + S&H= **\$800**
- 5 Video Games with an average cost of \$50 each= **\$250**
- 3 Quarterly Video Game Additions with an average cost of \$50 each = **\$150**
- 7 Board Games with an average cost of \$40 each = **\$280**
- 3 Quarterly Board Game Additions with an average cost of \$40 each = **\$120**
- Healthy Snacks (yearly budget) = **\$400**
- Staff hours: 3 hours per session x 11 sessions= 33x15.46= **\$510.18**

* Some alternate consoles may also be purchased

Total Cost per Branch: **\$2510.18**

Total Budget for 6 branches: **\$15,061.08**