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   Virtual Author Talks

2. Library/Committee
    applying for funding   Mountain View Public Library
    Name   Paul Sims
    Email   Paul.sims@mountainview.gov
    Mailing Address   585 Franklin St, Mountain View, CA   94041

3. Amount of funding requested $14,990

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program

1. One paragraph project summary.

Imagine a consortium of libraries Kickstarting virtual Ted Talks with bestselling authors. The Mountain View Public Library proposes to do just that by creating a virtual best selling author-talk series for all libraries in California. Mountain View Public Library would schedule at least twelve big name authors to talk via Skype, WebEX, Google Hangout, or another video conferencing application. Libraries across California would be invited to share the cost of the speaker and host a live, synchronous virtual author talk at their library. The more libraries that buy-in, the lower the cost per library to host an event will be.

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

Like many small to mid-size libraries in California, Mountain View Public Library has a limited budget for programming. Most small to mid-size libraries are unable to afford visits from big name, best selling, A-List authors. This program will allow all libraries to reduce the cost by sharing top tier authors. Virtual Author Talks would give readers in the community the opportunity to see some of their favorite authors speak live via webcam.

To stay relevant and connected to the community, Mountain View has created high interest programming, focusing on content from topics like 3D printing, crafting, gardening, biking and much more. This project will provide Mountain View Public Library the opportunity to update the delivery of the already vibrant, topical and customer centric programs by adding the virtual component. This project makes use of technology to break down physical barriers between the library and authors. Authors would not even have to leave the comfort of their homes and many libraries could participate relatively easily as long as they had a computer, a webcam and decent Internet connection.

Collaborating with other cities, towns, and outside organizations is a priority for the City of Mountain View. The Virtual Author Talk program would create a fundamental framework for collaborating to bring in otherwise unattainable guest authors. Libraries across California would be able to participate in our program sharing the cost and utilizing the guidelines and practices created for this project. A number of libraries and librarians have expressed interest in participating.

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

The Virtual Author Talks would feature live streaming of best selling authors to library community and program rooms all over the state. A diverse set of best selling fiction and non-fiction authors would appeal to broad audiences in nearly every community. An author selection team would identify these authors. A paid library intern would make an overture to the individual authors or author representation, establish potential dates for an author event and determine the speaking fee. This information would be posted to a group of libraries inviting them to participate by sharing the speaking fee, and committing to a proposed date for the event. The paid intern would coordinate the letter of engagement finalizing the agreement with the author to speak.

Participating libraries would use existing programming funds to contribute to the author's speaking fee. A centralized pledge/payment system would be set up through a support group or through one of many online payment systems like PayPal. This project would be an excellent way to engage library support groups like the Friends and Foundations.

The intern and the author selection committee would create a unified marketing campaign to ensure the broadest audience is aware of the *Virtual Author Talks*.

Mountain View's population is 74,066; however the daytime population grows to more than 100,000 due to the tech heavy industry dominated by Google.   More than half the population is between 20 and 54, and 25% of the population is between 25 and 34 with the median age of 34.6 years. Mountain View has seen a tremendous influx of tech savvy residents that are accustomed to Skyping and communicating virtually with family, friends and coworkers. California at large has also experienced a dramatic shift in the adoption of technology. Many individuals would not think twice about viewing a virtual talk or viewing recorded or live entertainment through the web. *Kahn Academy*, *Livestream*, *Ustream*, *Live Events: YouTube*, and *Yahoo Screen Live* are some of the more popular virtual lecture and entertainment venues and continue to grow in popularity.

Virtual author talks are not unprecedented for libraries. The *2014 National Teen Lock-in* featured live-streaming teen authors. Last year, Dan Brown, author of the Da Vinci Code, hosted a live streaming event which was his only public appearance in support of Inferno.   Mountain View Public Library was one of the few libraries across the state to participate. Despite the 4pm start time on a weekday, over sixty people visited the library to hear him speak. The audience was thrilled to hear him talk about his novels, his writing process, his family and other amusing anecdotes. New York Public Library recently hosted a sold out talk by Rick Riordan through *Livestream.*

The Mountain View Public Library's *Virtual Author Talk* series will focus on helping the library fulfill the role of as a free, local community resource for reading, information and lifelong learning. This project will strengthen the ability of California libraries to work together to provide high quality library experiences.

4.   The goals and objectives of the project.

Goal 1: Provide patrons with access to big name authors

  Objective a: Hire a library intern / practicum student to devote twenty hours per month for twelve months to help contact and schedule virtual author visits

  Objective b: Identify best selling authors and submit proposal to have them speak virtually

  Objective c: Establish a framework for hosting virtual author visits including technical requirements, best practices, and shared pricing schema

Goal 2: Attendance to exceed ten thousand people throughout the state

  Objective a: Create attractive high impact graphic marketing collateral for a coordinated campaign to signup library locations and generate attendance

  Objective b: Use social media and author contacts lists to promote appearances

Goal 3: Collaborate with other libraries

  Objective a: Establish an author selection team comprised of librarians from three or four different libraries

  Objective b: Create a website where libraries can easily and quickly sign on to host a *Virtual Author Talk*

5. The project timeline (activities).

Activity	2015											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hire Intern	X											
Author Selection Team	X	X	X	X								
Choose 1st round of authors		X										
Identify dates		X										
Create Letter of Engagement		X										
Intern contacts authors & reps			X	X	X							
Choose software & platform			X									
Create marketing & website			X	X								
Schedule Authors to speak				X								
Create participation guidelines				X	X							
Invite Libraries to participate				X								
Market Author talks					X	X						
Hold author talks							X	X	X	X	X	X

January 2015
- Hire and train practicum student/intern to help plan/assist with *Virtual Author Talk*
- Assemble an author selection team with Librarians from a variety of libraries
- Purchase equipment for use by moderating library

February 2015
- Author Selection Team meets to make initial list of authors
- Identify dates & timelines based on library program nights and author events
- Establish Letter of Engagement to include terms and conditions of speaking engagement

March 2015
- Intern begins contacting publishers, agents and authors
- Test and select video conferencing software/application with the selection team
- Finalize list of desired authors with the selection Team
- Create website for both marketing and signup resource for libraries
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April 2015
- Trial run with at least ten libraries to pilot software and logistical issues
- Begin scheduling authors to speak
- Develop and publish
  - Author interaction guidelines,
  - Marketing and event best practices
  - "Day-of" event logistic checklists
- Develop marketing collateral

May – June 2015
- Market through library networks, social networks, print and other mechanisms
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July 2015
- Host first of the monthly *Virtual Author Talk* events

August 2015 – June 2016
- Ongoing monthly Author Talks

6. The evaluation of the project.

Anticipated project output:
- A minimum of twenty libraries will participate in each Author Talk
- Author Talks will exceed 10,000 cumulative participants after twelve events.
- MVPL will partner with at least three organizations, companies and/or agencies to promote authors, reading, and literacy at libraries.

Anticipated project outcome: Creating this new delivery mechanism will allow small to midsize libraries across California to host big-name authors in a low cost / high impact way.

Develop a scalable framework for further virtual speaking engagements at the local, jurisdictional, state, and even national level.

Community members and library customers will recognize the library as a technologically cutting-edge resource that provides programming relevant to their reading tastes.

7. The project budget.

- $7200 grant funded paid intern or hourly-on call staff to sign, schedule and offer administrative support 20 hours per month for 1 year at approximately $30 per hour.
- $1600 - website and marketing collateral
- $4500 - seed money for first authors
- $1690 - equipment including tax
    o 13 inch Macbook Air $1,199.00
    o Yeti Pro USB Microphone $249
    o Display and Internet cables $92