

POUDRE RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Name of Requestor: Holly Carroll & Ken Draves
Appearance Date: February 10, 2014
Time Required: 15 min.
Date Decision Needed: February 10, 2014

Agenda Item:

VII. NEW BUSINESS
**A. Endorsement of PRPLD as a
Sister Library to San Juan Del Sur
Biblioteca, Nicaragua**

Objective:

Board endorsement of PRPLD as a Sister Library to San Juan Del Sur Biblioteca, Nicaragua.

Situation:

The San Juan Del Sur(SJDS) Biblioteca, located in San Juan Del Sur, on Nicaragua's Pacific coast, was established in 2000 by a Colorado native, Jane Mirandette, in cooperation with local residents. The SJDS Biblioteca was the first public lending library in the country of Nicaragua. Since its inception, the library has provided services to the residents of San Juan Del Sur as well as mobile library services to remote and rural towns and villages in the surrounding region. Once formed, the library quickly became a community hub and as source of community pride, enriching the lives of many who previously lacked access to books, computers and information. More information about the library can be found at <http://www.sjdsbiblioteca.org>.

The SJDS Biblioteca recently acquired a new, larger space, with four times more square footage than its current site. PRPLD staff member Ken Draves and Victor Zuniga met recently with Ms. Mirandette, who is a Loveland resident for part of the year, and Justin Martinez, a designer and architect who helped design Council Tree Library, in order to provide suggestions for space planning and technology in the new library. Additional conversations with other PRPLD staff and with Holly Carroll ensued. As we talked we identified many areas of mutual interest regarding ways to enhance services for our respective user communities. From those conversations emerged the idea that we form a Sister Library partnership.

In the next couple of weeks Ken Draves is participating in a virtual library design process with public library administrators, architects and designers from throughout the US, along with Ms. Mirandette, to develop a space plan for the new 2,000 square foot library in SJDS. At this time plans are for Victor Zuniga to travel to SJDS for a week in March to help automate the new library, with all travel and lodging expenses paid for by the Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries for All Program, a Colorado-based, tax-exempt, charitable foundation (www.librariesforall.org).

Advantages:

Sister Library programs, like Sister City and Friendship City programs, can offer significant benefits to participants. The American Library Association recognizes the value of Sister Libraries and the ALA's International Relations Round Table has a Sister Libraries Committee.

Benefits of a Sister Library collaboration include:

- Raising awareness of issues and needs facing libraries internationally
- Offering opportunities for patrons and staff to learn more about a different region or country.

- Sharing strategies, knowledge, and technologies to help solve problems and address challenges
- Broadening the Library staff's view of the varied and evolving library profession
- Sharing information, resources, expertise and training between libraries
- Supporting SJDS Biblioteca's successful efforts to create replicable programs that expand the culture and practice of free lending libraries throughout Nicaragua, Central America, and the world

The San Juan Del Sur Biblioteca, the Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries for All Program and Ms. Jane Mirandette, are known and respected internationally and in the US library and educational communities. In 2009, the Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries for All Program was the recipient of the ALA Presidential Citation for International Innovation, awarded by James Rettig, ALA President 2008-2009, for significant innovative international contributions. Current and past partners include Simmons College's Library and Information Science program, the University of Maryland's iSchool and Robert H Smith School of Business, and Lincoln IB Middle School in Fort Collins, which brought students to SJDS for several years. Monetary support is provided from sources as diverse as Gillette, Wyoming's Rotary Club and British Petroleum. Ms. Mirandette presents regularly at ALA conferences.

Many exciting, mutually enriching, and low-to -no cost opportunities for sharing between libraries are possible, including Skype-style conversations between our staffs, and our respective patrons, including children, utilizing the communications capabilities of our Old Town Library collaboration room. Also possible are exchanges of children's artwork and exchanges of poetry (please see examples of student poetry from SJDS Biblioteca's poetry contests here: <http://www.sjdsbiblioteca.org/poetry-contest/prior-winners/>).

Disadvantages:

Potentially, questions might arise regarding PRPLD funds, materials or equipment being used or expended outside of the District. As designed and intended, no Library District funds, materials, or equipment would be donated or provided through a Sister Library relationship. Activities would be intended to provide equal benefit to both libraries and their respective service communities. While we are providing staff time in February and March, we anticipate any further commitments of paid staff time to be quite modest. We also expect our staff's involvement to provide benefits to our District's staff and patrons, through leadership and learning opportunities that will enhance knowledge and skills and foster beneficial applications within the Library District.

Requested Action:

Board endorsement of a Sister Library relationship with San Juan Del Sur Biblioteca.

Potentially Affected Interest:

Staff, citizens

Level of Public Interest and Participation:

Low to moderate