

## Response to 2012-13 Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Ventura County Library

Report Date: June 7, 2013 Responding Agency/Dept. Ventura County Library

Response by: Jackie Griffin Title: Director, Ventura County Library

### FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: FI-01, FI-02, FI-05, FI-07
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefore.)

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04 have been implemented/  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.) or are partially implemented at this time.
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.  
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ require further analysis.  
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.  
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

7/16/13

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Jackie Griffin  
Director, Ventura County Library

Number of pages attached: 5

## Findings

- FI-01 The Grand Jury found that VCLS is not conducting adequate outreach into the community to gain volunteers. It also limits their ability to meet with school administration in order to demonstrate their available services, and to obtain the assistance of the community to provide specific programming, all due to limited staff.**

The Ventura County Library System (VCLS) agrees with this finding.

In order to improve our ability to get out into the community, develop partnerships, relationships, and to inform community leaders such as school administrations about our services, VCLS has begun to use technology to relieve staff of some rote desk tasks in order to allow library managers and children's librarians to go outside library walls and into the community. While we are at the early stages of this program, we are already seeing significant partnerships and relationships in several communities.

- FI-02 Used book sales provide extra income. However, not all of the libraries in the VCLS take part in this venture. Ojai appears to be most successful due to its volunteer base.**

VCLS agrees with this finding.

All of VCLS libraries have Friends Groups actively supporting them with the exception of Piru. This library is in an unincorporated community that is not close to a city that could provide support. Meiners Oaks and Oak View are supported by the Ojai Valley Friends and Foundation. The Avenue and Saticoy libraries are supported by the Friends of the San Buenaventura Library.

- FI-05 The summer reading program is very successful. It deserves an opportunity to expand through greater networking. The program would also be enhanced by asking for more volunteer assistance**

VCLS agrees with this finding.

VCLS agrees that broader networking would make the summer reading program a greater success than it already is. This process has been started. As in the past, all school districts in our service area were sent flyers for all the classrooms promoting SRP. This year we reached out to all the schools with class visits, school assembly presentations and presentations to various Boys & Girls Clubs in our areas. We also participated in this year's Summerfest in Ventura that reached 7,000-8,000 kids.

Instead of our summer reading log being available to children only in the library, this year the summer reading log is available on our website to print out and is located at various businesses throughout the communities for children to pick up. Also, the summer reading log was in the VC Star, both in print and on their banner. Volunteers have been actively recruited, mostly teens, to assist at the library.

**FI-07 Based on interviews, observations and analysis of information, the Grand Jury determined that a well-functioning and community-supported library system can potentially provide invaluable services to the community.**

VCLS agrees with this recommendation.

### **Recommendations**

**R-01 The Grand Jury recommends that a strategy to expand the most successful summer reading library program be established.**

VCLS agrees with this recommendation.

For FY 12/13, our key goal was to increase the amount of school visits in an attempt to make all public elementary school students aware of our summer reading program. We were able to achieve 130 classroom visits, visits to Boys and Girls Clubs and contacts with school administration, reaching approximately 7,600. We expect to see a sizable increase in children participating in our summer reading program this year. We will use this as a baseline for future participation in the program.

**R-02 The Grand Jury recommends that a means to reach out to potential volunteers be initiated. There are a number of programs that could be staffed with volunteers. Also, the VCLS may find that the community will help support the development of new programs, such as:**

- **used book sales**
- **tutoring for remedial reading, English and mathematics, to relieve the VCCCD and enhance the services provided by the VCLS**
- **enhanced study programs**
- **research assistance and guidance**
- **encourage more help from the list of organizations, identified as "Friends of the Library" and the local public**
- **provide programs that showcase the library and expand public awareness, such as professional workshops and entertainment**
- **pursue electronic and Internet programs that offer the library participants volumes of information and references that could not be housed within a small library**

- **investigate the potential of linking the libraries within the VCLS, whereby every library within the system has total access to the collective information sources of the system libraries**
- **pursue and encourage book clubs, business groups and organized educational entities to use the facilities in their local libraries.**

This recommendation has been partially implemented.

**Volunteers** - VCLS currently uses volunteers in a number of programs:

- VCLS utilized 19,782 hours of volunteer work from 462 volunteers in FY 11/12 at our libraries and headquarters.
- The literacy program for VCLS, READ, had an average of 134 tutors, 220 adult learners, and provided 6,268 hours of instruction over each of the last five years.

The following additional steps will be taken to increase volunteer participation:

- Publish press releases with each tutor training series and program and other volunteer opportunities
- Post volunteer opportunities at the City of Ventura website in addition to the postings we already provide on Volunteermatch.com and the United Way's Volunteer webpage.
- Set up a speaker's bureau page on VCLS website.
- Provide an exhibit in the Hall of Administration to attract potential volunteers to our programs.
- Promote "Book to Action" programs to create community interest in community volunteer possibilities.

**Used Book Sales:**

Book sales are currently provided at all libraries that have sufficient available space. Piru Library and Soliz Library do not have adequate space for book sales.

**Tutoring and Enhanced Study Programs** – the following programs are currently in place:

- READ currently partners with Oxnard Adult Education and Simi Valley Adult Education to provide their remedial reading instruction.
- READ serves many VCCCD students by providing assistance with their classes.
- All VCLS branches, with the exception of Oak Park and Piru offer afterschool homework help.

READ will explore the possibility of partnering with VCCCD to provide remedial instruction for their students.

**Research Assistance and Guidance** – these programs are currently in place:

- VCLS provides print and online research materials at all our libraries. Trained library staff offer support for these services and guidance in how to locate information and to use our resources.

**Provide programs that showcase the library and expand public awareness, such as professional workshops and entertainment** – the following programs are currently offered:

- Each library provides story-times and programs for children.
- Our libraries provide a broad range of adult programs, both ongoing and onetime events. Programs include ongoing writer's groups, frequent music programs and a ukulele club. Future events will include a program for Hispanic Heritage Month and a Comic-con in October.

Also, Oak Park will be offering an ongoing robotics club for young adults interested in learning to build and operate robots. This program is a partnership between VCLS, CSUCI and the Society of Engineers.

**Electronic and Internet programs:** These programs are currently in place at all of our libraries.

**Linking libraries within the VCLS via computer to allow total access:** This access is currently available.

Our library catalog is available online 24/7. The catalog is available within the libraries during all open hours. Patrons can browse our catalog, renew and request items anywhere they connect to the internet including mobile and desktop devices, at home, work and school.

**Pursue and encourage book clubs, business groups and organized educational entities to use the facilities in their local libraries:**

Currently, two of our libraries have book clubs.

VCLS also has three libraries that have meeting rooms. VCLS, in association with the Ojai Valley Friends and Foundation, and the Fillmore Friends, is seeking to add meeting rooms to the Ojai and Fillmore Libraries.

We also pursue and establish ongoing relationships with any civic, business, community or educational groups that need facilities or library services. The following additional steps will be taken to increase outreach to business groups and community entities:

- Speakers Bureau events will be posted on the library website so that groups can have access to speakers who would provide information about services and facilities that are available.
- All library managers have been asked to achieve a minimum of one contact in their community each month.
- All children's staff have been asked to attend one program or presentation outside of their library each month.
- Library managers are being trained in making contacts, have been given tips from Toastmasters, and are getting information about implementing PowerPoint and other resources.

**R-03 The Grand Jury recommends that the library system be viewed on the basis of what it can provide to the community rather than from a monetary position. This may provide the incentive to find a means to allow libraries to meet or exceed the claims of independent systems and to become a credit to the County.**

VCLS agrees.

We have been reaching out into our communities to expand knowledge of our services and their value to our citizens and communities. It is our task to make our communities aware of how valuable an educated and literate community is to business, to our tax base, and to the quality of life of all of our citizens.

**R-04 The Grand Jury recommends that the VCLS administration invite city managers to discuss ways and means to assist in the improvement of libraries within their cities. This may initiate more involvement, enlightenment as to the potential of libraries, new ideas and possible additional funds and resources.**

VCLS agrees and has partially implemented.

VCLS has attended the monthly meetings of City Managers. The VCLS County Librarians meet with City Managers, City Staff, Library Advisory Commissions and City Councils to provide information on library services and programs.

VCLS has launched an initiative to ask more questions of our communities about what they desire in a community library, and what they need for services in their local libraries.

We will include this recommendation in our future plans.