Learn Your Library Guided Course at The Pike County Public Library in
Milford, Pennsylvania

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pike County Public Library (PCPL) located throughout Pike County, Pennsylvania, would like to propose a “Learn Your Library” guided course to coincide with the upcoming grand opening of the main branch building to the library’s patrons. This course would not only enhance patron’s knowledge of what is currently and newly available to them, as members of the library and the community, but also provide invaluable advertising and marketing for the PCPL as a whole. To adhere to the library’s mission statement, the PCPL must continually design and implement programs that meet requirements of furthering education and providing programs for the public. “Learn Your Library” is a way to include and introduce the surrounding community in the grand opening of their new state of the art library. The library seeks $2,800.00 to implement the course with hopes to begin a new and improved tradition of education and community relationships between the library and it’s patrons.

SETTING

History:
When the Pike County Public Library first opened, it depended on the surrounding area’s summer tourism and the growing population of Milford and neighboring towns. The County still depends heavily on summer tourism, which includes such attractions as antique shops, local cuisine, the Delaware River, and multiple historical landmarks. In the past, the library included information centers in Dingmans Ferry, Bushkill, Paupack, and Lackawaxen, with later branches in Matamoras, Shohola and Blooming Grove. By 1971, only the Dingmans Ferry branch remained. Currently, the PCPL system includes the Milford, Dingmans Ferry and Greeley branches (pcpl.org).

Largely supported and funded by former Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot, an active member of the community and the first director of the United States Forest Service, the library started off with only 1,200 donated books and has grown to hold over 77,000 books and other forms of media (pcpl.org).

*The Pike County Public Library Community:*

Home of the National Historical Site, Grey Towers, former estate of Governor Pinchot, Pike County is a historically beautiful place to call home and to visit. Located only a few miles from Grey Towers, the main branch of the PCPL is also a historical building, the former Milford Community House. The PCPL has three branches within Pike County; the main branch is in the center of Milford, and the Greeley and Dingmans Ferry branches are within a 15 to 30 minute driving range. Surrounding areas include the states of New Jersey and New York. Pike County and neighboring towns offer multiple public transportation options that allow easy access to New York City, upstate New York, and New Jersey. The closeness
to these larger populated and affluent areas allows for Pike County to remain relevant.

Sitting on the Delaware River and between the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania and the Catskill Mountains of New York, Pike County thrives in both winter and summer activities. The area also provides breathtaking landscapes during the fall foliage months.

The Delaware Valley School District is the closest in proximity to the PCPL. It is ranked the 20th of 543 school districts in the state of Pennsylvania, and as of 2010 remains above average in Pennsylvania System of School Assessment testing, better known as the PSSA’s. These facts alone prove that the surrounding community is generally well educated (2010).

Milford Branch in the Future:

With the help of the Friends of the Pike County Public Library and diligent efforts of the current staff of the PCPL, the Milford branch will be opening a new building in September of 2012. After receiving a grant of $2 million and raising private donations of another $2 million, the PCPL is looking forward to bringing the community up to date with much needed technology upgrades. These improvements include 15 new Internet capable computers with word processing software, two copy machines, two scanners, a job-search station, and e-readers. Also, access to online databases and e-books will be restored in the library’s system.

Staff:
The library’s staff consists of 9 employees. This includes one Librarian who acts as Library Director, two Branch Managers, two members of the Technical Services Department, one Interlibrary Loan Assistant, an Administrative Secretary, and an Adult and Children Services Coordinators. The library largely depends on volunteers to maintain the circulation desks and day-to-day activities that the library must complete. There is no permanent reference desk or reference library on staff. The Pike County Public Library Board of Directors consists of 7 members from different parts of the County who meet monthly to discuss the needs and future of the library as a whole (patron’s hand guide).

*Friends of the Pike County Public Library and Volunteers:*

The group of over 400 volunteers, *Friends of the Pike County Public Library*, has been a major part of the Pike County Public Library’s fundraising and advertising the library’s community-based programs. Over the past 28 years, the Friends have raised over $250,000.00 for the betterment of the library and therefore the community. The Friends group consistently and tirelessly organizes educational and cultural trips into New York City and Philadelphia, as well as book sales, membership drives and anything the library could possibly need. The group of volunteers also received the honor of being named the Friends Group of the Year by the Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries in 2001 (pcpl.org).

**STATEMENT OF NEED**
With the arrival of a new information center comes many new opportunities to make up for what is lacking in the current situation. For the purpose of this proposal, the PCPL will be defined as the main branch in Milford for the reason that this branch will be the new building.

Presently, the PCPL owns four computers, one of which is dedicated solely to the use of the online catalog, and one copy machine. Technology is severely limited considering the growing population of over 60,000 people. When the new library opens, there will be 15 workstations that include word processing programs, access to the Internet, the online catalog and online databases. Recently, e-books have been added to this list. Comparing what was available to the community to what will be available in the new space, there is a major gap. For those patrons who are unfamiliar with e-books, online databases and other electronic resources that may even include the Internet for some users, they may be intimidated or unsure of how to use complicated systems such as these. Overall, current searching habits have a trial and error approach and generally lack critical analytical skills (Bell 2009).

The reference librarian needs to be approachable, able to listen and be interested in a patron’s query, as well as being capable of research and following up with patron’s needs (RUSA). The library does not employ a reference librarian and the current librarian is also the Director of the entire system. Joan VanFelton, the Milford branch manager, has noticed a vast drop in reference questions in recent years because “we don’t have the resources to spend time with patrons to answer in depth research questions (April 26, 2011).” To boost
the library's reputation as a community information center as well as a place to conduct research, patrons must be able to perform basic and advanced search skills on their own, without a reference librarian.

**PROPOSED PROGRAM**

The Pike County Public Library proposes a librarian-guided course to teach basic computer skills, and other library skills that are needed to navigate the library. Titled “Learn Your Library,” the course would be one roughly two hour class covering topics such as how to choose an appropriate database, thesauri and controlled vocabularies, search strategies, and online catalog searching. Depending on the general level of skillset within each class, the basic computer skills portion would be secondary to how to conduct simple and advance searching within the library's available resources. The main goal of “Learn Your Library” is to educate the community and not replace the reference librarian, but rather put into place a solid program that can supplement the lack of a reference librarian. If the patrons know how to research or perform simple searches on their own, their use of the library’s available resources will grow and keep the PCPL applicable in this ever-changing world.

The instructor to be hired would need the following requirements: a Masters degree in Library and Information Sciences from an accredited university, at least two years of experience within a library, and a friendly and approachable personality. Experience with multiple age groups would not be a requirement, but an advantage for job applicants. The librarian's payment would be no more than $1,600.00 for roughly 40 hours of work total. The instructor will create a “pocket-guide” that lists basic search strategies and available databases that are available to the patrons (See
Appendix A for example). The instructor will also be required to create a search strategy worksheet (see Appendix B for example).

“Learn Your Library” will be offered four times a year, once every three months. The library will charge $10.00 per member, and $15.00 for non-members. There are 15 workstations available in the new library; therefore there will be 14 available openings per class, leaving one computer for the instructor to provide examples for students. Below, you will see a chart that outlines age levels and times for the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>When Class is Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children: Ages 10-14</td>
<td>Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teens/College Age: Ages 15-20</td>
<td>Weekday 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults: Ages 21+</td>
<td>Weekday 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors: Ages 65+</td>
<td>Weekday 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Materials Needed and Advertising:**

“Learn Your Library” would be a hands-on learning experience with limited materials needed to conduct each lesson. The materials needed are as follows: paper, ink, pens, and access to the Internet.

Advertising would be needed to ensure the community is aware of the class. Advertisements would be implemented in the library itself, the Delaware Valley School District, local businesses, local newspapers, and news channels. Creating fliers and providing interviews and any other public relation materials would be the library staff’s responsibility.
**Method of Evaluation:**

Participation and registration to attend “Learn Your Library” would be the main method of evaluating the success of the program. At the end of the course, a short survey (See Appendix C for survey) would be conducted to evaluate the instructor, the materials used, and the overall effectiveness of the teaching methods. Another outcome of the course would be increased patron activity. The class would be held at the library and therefore be bringing members inside the building. This will increase circulation and membership. The library staff, lead by the library director, will compile the gathered data and present her findings to the members of the Pike County Public Library Board of Directors. The board meetings are open to the public and will members will take into consideration any suggestions the community may bring to the table.

Once proven successful after the first year of “Learn Your Library” classes, after the evaluation process and executing any necessary changes, for “Learn Your Library” will be offered to larger groups within the school and other school districts within the county, as well as at any senior living facilities.

**Budget:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor ($100/class x 16 classes)</td>
<td>$1,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,800.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

To put a price on the value of education and necessary computer and library skills is not possible. With an inexpensive program like “Learn Your Library,” these instrumental skills will help patrons and other community members better themselves and their every day information seeking habits. Whether it be to learn how to communicate with family, research a project or topic of interest, or simply to find out what time a movie is playing, the Internet and keen searching skills can and should be taught to those who are willing to learn. The opening of a new library with new technologies provides for an excellent opportunity to provide the already actively involved community with these skills. The chance to motivate the community to use the library to their full advantage should be taken seriously.

I certify that:

• This paper/project/exam is entirely my own work.
• I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or a website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
• I have not submitted this paper / project to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature: Rose Chiocchi    Date: June 1, 2011
Appendix Materials

A. “Learn Your Library” Pocket Guide
B. Search Strategy worksheet
C. Evaluation Survey

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A
Learn Your Library:
A pocket guide to basic library skills

Some Online Searching Tips:

- Try different search engines such as Google, Bing, Ask.com, and AltaVista
- Use Boolean operators
- Be specific when necessary
- Watch your spelling
- Use a thesaurus or a database's thesaurus

Boolean Operators:

The use of Boolean operators will allow you to broaden or narrow your search.

Use **AND** when combining terms or phrases
Use **OR** when you want to search synonyms
Use **NOT** when you want to exclude specific terms or phrases

Databases Available at PCPL:

- EBSCOhost
- Reference USA
- Power Library
- LexisNexis

APPENDIX B:
ONLINE SEARCHING WORKSHEET

Query/Research Topic:

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Resources Needed (books, websites, etc.):

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Databases or Search Tools:

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Search Strategy:
*use thesaurus to find other possible terms

Concept

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________

Concept

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________

Concept

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________

Revisions and Notes:

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

APPENDIX C:
Learn Your Library Course Evaluation

Would you recommend this course to a friend or family member?  **Yes** or **No**

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being POOR and 5 being EXCELLENT, how would you rate your experience?

1  2  3  4  5

Will you use what you learned during “Learn Your Library” in the future?  **Yes** or **No**

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being POOR and 5 being EXCELLENT, how would you rate your instructor?

1  2  3  4  5

Would you do anything differently within the course?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

May we contact you with information concerning more programs and events at the Pike County Public Library?  **Yes** or **No**

If yes, please provide a valid e-mail or mailing address: ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for participating in this PCPL program!
Milford Pennsylvania Pike County, 1933. Documentation Compiled After. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/pa1398/. MLA citation style: Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator. The Pike County Historical Society Museum in Milford includes in its collection the "Lincoln Flag", which was draped on President Abraham Lincoln's booth at Ford's Theatre the night he was assassinated. The flag was bundled up and placed under the President's head, and still bears his blood. At the intersection of Broad and High is a public square â€“ just as there is at Broad and Market in Philadelphia â€“ and most of Milford's official buildings are located there.[4][6] Within the grid, East-West streets are numbered, Second through Seventh, with Broad Street falling between Fourth and Fifth Streets, while North-South streets are named after Judge. The Milford Branch of the Pike County Public Library, located in the Community House. References.