

Name of Library	Tablelands Regional Library Service	  
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Title of project/innovation/initiative	Reading with My Father
Date initiated	Oct 2010
Date completed	Jan 2012

Program Concept

To improve the literacy skills of, and enhance relationships between, inmates of Lotus Glen Correctional Facility and their children.

This project has been generously assisted by a 2010-2011 Expanding Horizons Grant from the State Library of Queensland.

Project details

The program aims to not only encourage literacy but strengthen the bond between a father and his child.

The interchange allows the inmate and their child to interact in an enjoyable and non-confrontational manner with each developing literacy and relationship skills as they listen to the story and read along.

The existing literacy programs offered at Lotus Glen Farm endeavour to improve employment opportunities for the inmates while the Reading With My Father program aims to address family relationship issues.

The two programs are complementary and not only benefit the father and child but also improve social inclusion by reducing social and economic disadvantage for those in most need.

Program Delivery

Participating Inmates

Inmates are coached by the Lotus Glen Farm's literacy tutor with the support of prisoners with higher literacy skills.

Once the fathers are ready to record a *Reading With My Father*, the project officer undertakes the recording at Lotus Glen Farm adhering to relevant procedures.

The recording and book are then sent to the nominated child.

Participating children

Participating children are coached by the *Reading With My Father* project officer.

When the child is ready, the story is recorded at either a Tablelands, or Cairns Library, meeting room. The book and the recording are then sent to the father at Lotus Glen Farm.

Benefits/Outcomes

Personal

- Improve literacy skills of the father and child.
- Increase self-esteem of inmate who may never have thought themselves able to read to their children.
- Enable father to maintain and enhance links and develop a greater bond with their children and families.
- Enjoy reading for pleasure.

Education

- Enhance and support the existing literacy programs offered at Lotus Glen Farm.
- Improve literacy skill and hence employment opportunities.
- Improve literacy skills of other prisoners assisting with coaching.

Families

- Facilitate and improve family relationships and possibly assist in reducing some distress of fathers and children missing each other.
- Support the importance and love of reading and broad literacy development.
- The book and CD remain with the father and child and can be enjoyed over and over again.
- Encourage increased contact between father and child.

Community

- Support Lotus Glen Farm officers
- Assist with re-integration of prisoners into community by maintaining family relationships.
- Children become aware of their public library and its services.

Social Inclusion

- Reduce disadvantage by improving literacy
- Increase social participation with family

The Partner Organisation

The Lotus Glen Correctional Centre, located 25 kilometres south of Mareeba, accommodates high and low security prisoners. Lotus Glen Farm, with a capacity of 100, operates the open access prison. Its population is generally comprised of between 60 to 70 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

TRC Libraries have established a strong relationship with Lotus Glen Farm and provide the farm with regular bulk loans.

Inspiration for the project

'Storybook Dads' program run jointly by Otago Correctional facility and Methodist Mission's Prisoner Education service.

Funding

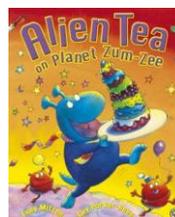
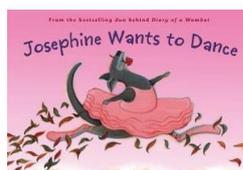
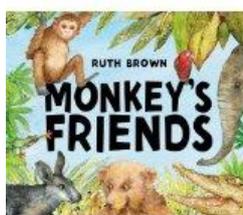
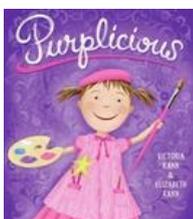
- SLQ Expanding Horizons grant -\$27,500
- Lotus Glen (in kind) - \$9,600
- Tablelands Regional Council (\ in kind) \$6900

Costs

- Wages –Literacy Tutor/Project officer
- Materials - Books, CDs, postage, publicity material
- Staff time -creating procedure manual, registration & evaluation forms, recording & editing instructions, liaising with tutor etc

Highlights for me

- Having the opportunity to listen to a recording of a father reading to his children
'Hello kids, it's Dad. Are you ready to read the story with me?ok, time to turn the page, kids..... ok, kids it's time for me to go. ...be good, See you when I get home, bye kids'
- Working with an enthusiastic and committed Literacy tutor who encourages participants to develop their own expressive reading style



Some of the titles read by fathers and children