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Publications and Promotions

Since the conception of Library Week in 1988 by the professional body for librarians at the time, the South African Institute for Library and Information Science (SAILIS), librarians have embraced this as an opportunity to promote libraries and its services. However, over the past decades dwindling numbers of staff serving borrowers that have mushroomed in numbers have placed severe time constraints on library staff, even though their enthusiasm for this event has not waned.

In 2003 the celebration of Library Week in March was instituted as proposed by the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) and that left library staff with even less time to start planning activities and displays for this event at the beginning of the year. Suggestions from public libraries to disclose information about Library Week earlier were heeded and therefore, this preview will enable librarians to start planning their Library Week campaigns earlier. (See suggestions featured on page 13.)

Background

The 2005 campaign featuring a house built from books was, with some exceptions, generally well received and it appealed to a whole spectrum of readers, presenting librarians with many applications in displays and activities.

For Library Week 2006 the younger borrowers in the community will be targeted, from babies who need to be read to, to the older teenager who is set to conquer the world.

Focus on the youth will emphasise the role of libraries in providing information for their educational, as well as recreational needs as a healthy alternative to street life, drugs and crime. Promotion of the positive benefits of reading and activities in the library will create an awareness of the library

as an entertainment centre with a wide variety to suit every taste, free of charge.

Acting on suggestions of librarians, it was decided that the message of the 2006 campaign will be conveyed in a series of posters with a *Faces* theme. Photographs of six children ranging from baby to teenager and encompassing different personality types will feature interesting messages reflecting their reading habits, interests and other clever slogans and witty comments promoting books, libraries and reading, for example, *Yummy reading, Books are brain food; Books are like noses, they guide you; I love the smell of books; Happiness is a rainy day spent reading in the library, et cetera.* (See page 43 for a preview.)

Each poster can be used individually as well and children will definitely recognise aspects of themselves in them. It strongly indicates to young readers that it is okay to be different and that this uniqueness translates itself into a unique taste in reading matter suited to their personalities. Reading is portrayed as a positive activity, opening doors and providing entertainment with a wide selection of genres to choose from.

This campaign relates to the 2006 national campaign of LIASA with the theme *Libraries: partners in learning, nation building and development.* It conveys the message that libraries should make a determined effort to educate the population by promoting the use of the resources available in libraries and have the opportunity to contribute towards improving the quality of life of their communities.

Free promotional material

As in the past the Provincial Library Service has gone to great lengths to design, produce and distribute promotional material, free of charge, to public libraries affiliated to the Western Cape Provincial Library Service via the regional organisation. The new material will enable public librarians to plan and launch Library Week celebrations during March 2006.

Posters

A series of six posters each featuring a

different child or teen will be available in three languages.

Bookmarks

The *Faces* theme will be continued on the bookmarks with some additional information.

Plastic bags

Library Week with the customary plastic carry bag is unimaginable. As in the past libraries will receive colourful bags to hand out to borrowers.

Stamps

Another suggestion from librarians was the production of a stamp proclaiming *Books rule!* The last stamps to be provided to libraries were the Bhuki stamps in 2002. Stamps are popular and stamping little hands do not take up too much of librarians' valuable time.

Awareness bracelets

Librarians need special handouts as prizes in competitions and special events organised during Library Week. On suggestion a limited number of awareness bracelets will be produced and distributed to libraries.

Activities

Favourite activities have proven to be puppet shows, face-painting, colouring-in competitions, a fashion show where children dress up as their favourite book characters, library orientation and visits to local schools.

Conclusion

Library Week 2006 will introduce a new dimension to library work with children, introducing to them the concept of tailor-made individualised reading material suited to the needs of each and every one of them. This presents new challenges to library staff, but simultaneously new opportunities to use their creative skills. Librarians have space, books, ingenuity but not enough time. Hopefully this information, released four months before the event, can contribute to many successful Library Week programmes from 20-25 March 2006. As one of the slogans on the posters reminds us: **ABC U at the nearest library!!!**

Note: Remember to share your favourite Library Week moments with the readers of the CL. Photographs with detailed captions must be clearly marked on a sticker pasted to the back of each photograph and must reach us not later than 19 May 2006.



A preview of some of the posters which must still be finalised

