Bahamas Rotary Clubs

The Barry Rassin National Literacy Campaign

Theme: “Get Fit with #Lit”

L.W. Young Jr. High School Pilot Project

Introduction	According to the International Literacy Association (2018), Literacy is defined as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. The need to cultivate a literate nation is imperative to the sustainable growth and development of The Bahamas. According to statistics from the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO), globally, there are at least 750 million youth and adults still cannot read and write and 250 million children are failing to acquire basic literacy skills. Further, The Institution of Statistics at UNESCO estimates the number of adults in The Bahamas over the age of 15 who are unable to read and write to be over 10,000. To further exacerbate these results, the National average for the past several years consistently showed a "D" grade. According to research, when children, adolescent and adults read at a functional level, they become better citizens. "Improved literacy can contribute to economic growth; reduce poverty; reduce crime; promote democracy; increase civic engagement; prevent HIV/AIDS and other diseases through information provision; enhance cultural diversity through literacy programmes in minority languages; lead to lower birth rates as a result of increased education; and confer personal benefits such as increased self-esteem, confidence and empowerment" (READ, 2018). To promote the advancement of functional literacy locally, The Rotary Clubs of The Bahamas (RCOB) is proffering a national literacy initiative that's being dubbed "Get Fit with Lit". RCOB is therefore committed to: • The implementation of an effective literacy plan designed to meet the academic needs of all students in public schools throughout The Bahamas; • Provide opportunities to allow stakeholders in the school community to understand the importance of using data to drive decision making when it comes to literacy; • With the help of The Bahamas Ministry of Education as the major partner stakeholder, assist in achieving improved national results regarding literacy;

	• Developing programs and school community initiatives that promote reading skills to advance levels of literacy that is necessary for a functionally literate society; • Promoting and cultivating core transferable skills in critical thinking and reading that can be utilized across the curriculum in all subject areas and • Supporting academic programs that will increase the graduation rate of students matriculating the public school system in The Bahamas.
Program Goals	The objectives of the 'Get Fit with Lit' program are to: 1. Identify literacy needs of participants; 2. Administer literacy assessments; 3. Provide professional development for teachers emphasizing best practices; 4. Provide strategies and resources to support literacy; 5. Select a school literacy team; 6. Explore digital literacy opportunities and 7. Encourage parental involvement to support the literacy growth of children.
Statement of Need	The future success of the National Diploma Program of The Bahamas Ministry of Education is heavily dependent on the amount of students who are able to transition from Jr. High School to Sr. High School with the mandatory 4 Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) passes. Formal testing from the onset will indicate that some students lack the basic literacy skills needed to succeed in these exams. According to the research, a number of factors can be attributed to a student not being able to qualify at this level. Such factors are likely to include, but are not limited to, a combination of individual learning styles, failure to grasp major concepts in primary school, dyslexia, unfavourable sociocultural conditions and a lack of motivation to succeed academically. The RCOB is committed to in the first instance, and through its initial pilot program, make major improvements to the literacy deficit at the L.W. Young Junior High School. It is expected that this will be achieved by providing academic assistance (Trained Reading Specialists), technical support (Specialized Reading Tools) and

	financial resources to ensure that all students are successful in their quest for academic achievement. We are confident that this pilot program will yield positive results and provide additional opportunities for the implementation of additional programs throughout the public school system in the country.
Program Description	The 'Get Fit with Lit' pilot project will enable at-risk students to improve their reading and critical thinking skills through the utilization of technology, reading software, resource booklets, and motivational coaching. The students will increase their reading speed and comprehension, which will help them obtain classroom subject proficiency. Additionally, literacy strategies will be introduced and modelled to improvement student achievement.
Partners	The RCOB, The Bahamas Ministry of Education, Bahamas Literacy Association, Brighter Bahamas, The Royal Bahamas Police Force, Guidance Counsellors Association, Literacy Teams, School Administrators
2018-2019 Literacy Events	**<u>Literacy Events 2018-2019 for school participation</u>** • Literacy Symposium for Ministry of Education Officials, School Administrators and Student Success Coaches • Literacy Seminar for students and parents • Reading in Da' Square Showcase (2019) speech competition, essay competition, Bahamian Author showcase, etc.
Pilot School: L.W. Young Junior High School	Participants: 9th grade students matriculating into High School Amount: 20-25 GPA Criteria: 1.50-1.99 Program Duration: September 2018 - December 2018 School Partners: Content Area Teachers, Student Success Coach, Administration, Guidance Counsellor, RCOB Representatives
Project Resources	• Certified Reading Specialists • Reading Garden for Little Library Project • The Group Reading and Diagnostic Assessment (GRADE) • School Literacy Team (selected teachers and parents) • Tablets • The Seven Strategies of Literacy Resource Book

Stages in the Planning Process	
Stage 1	**Where are we now?** • Audit amount of At-Risk Students for the National High School Diploma in Grade 9. **What are the needs?** • Identify targets • Identify staff and training needs • Identify resources required • Mandatory Train the Trainer Workshop
Stage 2	**Encourage Buy-In** • Organize on-going professional development for students, parents and teachers • Establish incentive and rewards program • Staff updates • Stakeholder Updates
Stage 3	**Assign Literacy Committee** • Monitor progress of literacy program • Monitor effectiveness of strategies • Establish further training needs • Evaluate and suggest recommendations Meetings should be held once per month with accompanying reports.
Stage 4	**Implement Literacy Plan** Implementation Date: September 2018
Stage 5	**Monitor, Review, and Evaluate** Assessment of the program will occur in December 2018 for Spring Roll-out.

References

International Literacy Association. (2018). Why Literacy? Retrieved from https://www.literacyworldwide.org/about-us/ why-literacy

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