

Reading and literacy for families at Logan City Council Libraries

In June 2003, Logan City Council Libraries received funding from the State Library of Queensland's 'Library Innovation Grants' program to run a series of family literacy workshops. The program, titled 'Reading and Literacy for Families' (RALF), was to provide free adult education and literacy workshops for parents and carers and their children under the age of five, as well as to promote Logan City Council Library services and resources.

The RALF workshops commenced in March 2004 at the Logan City Council Libraries' Central Branch located at Woodridge. Professional early-childhood educators (Beverley Broughton, Jennifer Cartmel, Wendy Pini and Barbara Reed from QUT and Griffith University) planned and presented the sessions with Logan City Council Library staff. Workshops were implemented weekly and consisted of two-hour sessions of learning activities and discussion on specific topics including: raising a reader, writing for toddlers, helping your child learn through television and videos, technology for toddlers, and making your own learning resources from everyday mate-

rials. These workshops were then revised, improved and repeated in May and June.

To attract parents and carers who were non-library users, the sessions were advertised through a series of library outreach visits to community and support groups throughout Logan. Individual parents and two groups from community centres registered to attend the workshops. These groups included students from the Mabel Park High School, POWER parenting program and participants from Boystown's Glugor House.

Overall, the RALF program did encourage non-library users to become active members, with approximately sixty per cent of parents interviewed stating that they had joined the library as a result of the program. Thirty-nine parents and twenty-eight children (including seventeen children under 18 months of age) attended the workshops. Approximately eighty-five per cent of attendees had never visited the council libraries and yet

gave positive feedback about the program with comments such as 'I wish someone had told me about the library before', and one parent remarked that 'instead of taking the children to a shopping centre for a free outing' that they were in future 'going to visit the library for some free activities'. The majority of participants were also interested in attending future work-



Presenter Barbara Reed with two workshop participants

shops and other library programs. One of the other benefits of the program has been the establishment of a wider and more active network with community organisations and parenting groups in the local area.

A resource package of materials from the program is being compiled and revised and will be available to any interested libraries or organisations by the December. This package will include user and presenter handouts, activity ideas, and resource lists. If anyone is interested in receiving a package or would like further information about the grant program please contact jenniferhall@logan.qld.gov.au.

Outreach visits are currently being scheduled with community organisations from August to October 2004 to advertise the workshops and strengthen networks with local organisations. From the experience gained during the grant workshops, library staff at Logan will be able to conduct another series of RALF workshops during November and throughout 2005, thus ensuring the continuation of this project at Logan City Council Libraries.

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RALF participants in the Logan City Council library

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