

Overview of Project Transformation Rio Texas and Its Community

Mission: To transform communities by engaging children, college-aged young adults, and churches in purposeful relationships.

BECAUSE

Vision: We envision a world that is rooted in love, pursues the equity of all people, and amplifies God's call on every life.

Program Design

The program takes a holistic approach which integrates academic progression in literacy, social and emotional learning, and enrichment programming. The interventions incorporate a variety of teaching methods to develop knowledge and skills in the social emotional areas. Program practices at Project Transformation (PT) include Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Developmental Relationships, Restorative Practices, Trauma Informed Care, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI).

Program Pillars

The Pillars of PT's programming are *Celebrate Diversity, Cultivate Leadership, Develop Literacy, and Serve Community*. These four pillars are aligned to the organization's mission, vision, and core values and are based on leading research in social-emotional learning and 21st century skills.

Program Goals

Project Transformation's goals are to support participants in increased literacy skills, build developmental relationships and lessons that foster social-emotional learning in participants, and introduce participants to God as we are conscious of a living God in participants, their families, and in the life of the community. We respect and honor that God is already working and offering grace to the participants.

Community Demographics

- 70+% children of color
- 75+% children qualifying for free or reduced lunch
- 80+% of children come to Project Transformation reading below grade level reading goals
- Participants represent 70+ elementary and middle schools from public school districts, charters, and private schools across southwest Texas
- 20+% of participants understand Spanish and English

Program Impact

- 90+% of participants maintain or improve their reading level each summer
- 3,500+ books read by participants each summer
- 165,000+ minutes read each summer
- 1,500+ books sent home each summer
- 70+% of participants gain confidence as readers each summer
- 70+% of participants improve their self-confidence and social emotional skills each summer

Site Church Libraries

Children and youth who participate in Project Transformation programs have access to their Site Churches' library during program. Project Transformation Rio Texas Site Church (PT) libraries support program components including but not limited to Reading Buddies, Reading Rockstars, LIT Clubs, and an overall love of literacy. PT libraries should also be available to children and families in the community to increase access to quality books, interest in reading, and improved literacy skills. PT participants and community members are encouraged to read during programming, while at the church, and to take books home.

Collection Development Goals

The main objective of Project Transformation Rio Texas Site Church (PT) libraries is to create, support, and enhance access to equitable books for children and youth in PT communities, while supporting curriculum and activities during PT programs. The PT library collection will reflect the needs of the community by providing a wide range of diverse materials in a variety of formats, with broad appeal, and of varying levels of difficulty. The collection will support the diverse interests and viewpoints of the PT community as well as allowing for the presentation of a variety of viewpoints and perspectives.

Guidelines

Areas of focus for developing Project Transformation Rio Texas Site Church (PT) libraries:

1. Equitable representation
 - a. Books that authentically represent the community and surrounding world.
Books to be used as:
 - i. Mirrors: “in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience
 - ii. Windows: “offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange
 - iii. Sliding Glass Doors: “readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author.”
 - b. **Authentic, anti-bias, not distorted:** “In order to avoid “distorted mirrors and windows,” be sure the books contain accurate representations of other cultures and remember that no single book can adequately portray one particular group’s experience”
2. Improve and enhance resources for diverse learners, including but not limited to:
 - a. **High/Low Books-** “highly engaging age-appropriate subject matter at a low reading level for struggling readers.”
 - b. **Spanish/English bilingual-** books with the text in Spanish and English
 - c. **Shared reading-**books intended for reading to alternate per page between the adult reader and child reader
 - d. **Increase genre variety-** poetry, graphic novels, essays, short stories, non-fiction, biographies, historical fiction, etc.
 - e. **SEL-**Books with Social Emotional Learning themes
 - f. **STEAM-**books focusing on and encouraging Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math
 - g. **Beginning readers** (Guided Reading levels A-E, phonics sets)
3. Quality texts with a Guided Reading level
4. PT libraries should reflect the pluralistic society in which we live, free from stereotypes including sexual, racial, religious and bias.
5. Reflect best practices and information, based on:
 - a. [Database and resources provided by Project Transformation](#)
 - b. [American Library Association Book Awards and Lists](#)
 - c. [The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books](#)
 - d. [We Need Diverse Books](#)
 - e. [Social Justice Books: A Teaching for Change Project](#)
 - f. [The Conscious Kid](#)

Selection Responsibility

Selection of materials is an ongoing process. PT libraries should reflect best practices and information, interests and needs of the community, and feedback received from participants, families, and community members. Project Transformation will provide resources to guide selection and books donated to the organization will be distributed to site churches. The final collection of books is the responsibility of the site church.

Selection Criteria, Collection, Inventory, Evaluation, and Assessment

The program curriculum, participant needs and interests, and the existing collection are given first consideration in determining the materials to be selected for PT libraries.

Donations and gifts are evaluated in the same manner before being added to the collection. Considerations for selection include:

- Presentation
- Educational significance (curricular connection—relevant to SEL/relationships/program/etc.)
- Readability
- Authenticity and accuracy
- Artistic Quality or literary style
- Factual content
- Clarity of content and organization
- Use of special features such as useful illustrations, photographs, maps, charts, and graphs
- Technical production and construction

The collection should provide materials in a variety of formats that are clear, comprehensible, appealing, and well-organized. The library collection should provide a body of material appropriate to a variety of ages, developmental stages, and accessibility levels of people in the program/community. To encourage a caring culture, the collection should represent a diverse community.

PT site churches should utilize the PT Libraries Collection and Evaluation Rubric to guide collection, inventory, and weeding of their libraries in order to ensure individual titles and the collection as a whole are meeting the goals listed above.

Weeding

Weeding, the removal of items from the library collection, is essential to maintaining a relevant, current, and appealing collection. The library collection should be continually evaluated in relation to evolving curriculum, new materials, new instructional methods, the current needs of its readers, and best practices in building an anti-bias collection. Materials considered for removal from a collection should include items:

- In poor physical condition
- Containing obsolete subject matter
- Containing outdated or inaccurate information
- Having low interest level from readers
- With multiple copies no longer needed
- With limited literary or educational value



Library Collection Development Guidelines

Repairing Damaged Materials

Books and materials should be well taken care of. When books or materials are damaged, a reasonable effort should be made to repair and reuse the resource. Books that are worn can be transitioned from PT Libraries to summer Free Book Stores or Little Free Libraries. If a book or material is beyond repair, it should be recycled or thrown away as appropriate, at the discretion of the site church.

Challenged Materials

PT library books and materials can be challenges by any member of the Project Transformation or site church community. All challenges should be recorded on the PT Library Challenged Materials Form. Challenge forms will be reviewed by the Project Transformation Program Director and Program Committee who will make a recommendation to the site church. The PT Library Challenged Materials Form is available upon request.