Building Common Ground: Discussions of Community, Civility and Compassion

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ALA Webinar: Winning Library Grants

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Executive Summary

The Kellogg-Hubbard (K-H) Library is pleased to submit this grant proposal to the American Library Association’s Public Programs Office (ALA-PPO) in collaboration with the Fetzer Institute with hopes of hosting *Building Common Ground: Discussions of Community, Civility and Compassion*. The goal of this initiative is to engage the community of Montpelier, Vermont, and adjacent communities, in the contemplation and discussion of the importance of community, civility and compassion in our daily lives. By bringing together primarily adult audiences in our public library for *Building Common Ground* (BCG) activities and events, we hope to enhance the quality of life and learning in our community. BCG activities and events will include reading groups, film screenings, discussion panels, and more.

The K-H Library is committed to providing cultural and community programming as an essential aspect of library service. Our philosophy is similar to the ALA-PPO’s position on library service. Essentially, our core values and philosophies are aligned with the ALA. The *Building Common Ground* series is part of our strategic plan to be a hub for community building and civil engagement.

We are planning an eight-week, multi-format series of events that utilize the recommended minimum of three *Building Common Ground* resources and include program elements of action, reflection and engagement. We are partnering with the Vermont Humanities Council, a local non-profit organization, to provide program and speaker resources, as well as access to target audiences. We are asking for one of the $2,500 grants that are going to be awarded to 30 American public libraries by the American Library Association’s Public Programs Office (ALA-PPO) and the Fetzer Institute next year. Your support would benefit our library and community a great deal. We hope to be considered a suitable candidate for funding for this exciting program in the summer of 2012.

Organizational Information

The Kellogg-Hubbard Library, located in Vermont’s state capital, Montpelier, serves a community of nearly 8,000 residents. The K-H Library has been a staple institution in the Montpelier community since 1895. We serve patrons of diverse ages, abilities and genders, including children, teens, adults, and elderly people. We pride ourselves in our service to a diverse community.
We currently host meetings and discussion groups for non-profit environmental organizations such as Transition Vermont and educational organizations such as the Wisdoms of the Herbs School.

Many of our patrons and community members visit our library for our 1st Wednesdays Humanities Lecture Series. This eclectic lecture series offers talks in nine towns in Vermont on the first Wednesday of each month, October through May. Topics are varied, timely, timeless, thought provoking, and fun. First Wednesdays talks always include a question and answer time, offering a chance for the audience to interact with the speaker(s). The talks bring vitality and the opportunity for lifelong learning to Vermont’s communities and foster community connections. Beginning in June of 2012, we are planning to schedule the BCG events on Wednesdays as well, for the sake of continuity. In this way, library patrons and community members will already by used to attending our programs on Wednesday evenings.

Our staff consists of more than a dozen trained librarians and volunteers. Daniel Pudvah is our Executive Director. Robin Sales is our Library Director. Rachel Senechal is the Program Coordinator for the Building Common Ground Series. Rachel is also the Program and Development Coordinator at the K-H Library. These professional librarians hold advanced degrees in librarianship and have more than thirty years of library experience between them. Their resumes are attached as Appendix E.

Statement of Need

We want to provide a space to host the Building Common Ground: Discussions of Compassion, Civility and Community series so that our community members will have access to a forum where they can reflect upon and discuss issues of diversity, tolerance, empathy, community building, and more. In an era when social bonds are strained, global conflicts abound, and political extremism is on the rise, the core themes of the Building Common Ground series are important to contemplate and discuss at the community level. Building Common Ground participants will have the opportunity to reflect on content, engage issues through discussion, and learn of opportunities to take action on behalf of their communities. We will not be able to solve the world’s problems over the course of several weeks, but we will be able to raise awareness and learn from each other and the guest speakers.
Program Goals

- Provide a space for a series of events for community members to meet, contemplate and discuss the themes of compassion, civility and community in their daily lives.
- Bring adult audiences together to explore meaningful issues in an effort to understand and relate to each other.
- Promote tolerance of diverse forms of faith, politics, ethnicity, and nationality.
- Promote compassion, empathy, and understanding in our community.
- Learn about compassion and its various interpretations within the literature of diverse religious and philosophical traditions.
- Enhance the quality of life and learning in our local communities.
- Provide cultural and community programming to our patrons.

Proposed Program

We are excited about the multi-format series programming we have planned for the Building Common Ground series. We have invited speakers, authors, artists and facilitators from a variety of backgrounds, faiths, and traditions to present films, books, and art exhibits concerning the topics of compassion, civility and community.

We are planning to host an art exhibit created by several local artists that focus on the themes of civility, compassion and community through their art. We have already secured three commitments from local artists to participate in the BCG series. We are waiting to hear from others. We are very excited to host a small group of Buddhist monks who live in Burlington, Vermont, as refugees from their native Tibet. The monks have offered to create a mandala in our library to support the BCG series. A mandala is a form of sacred art that has spiritual significance in Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions. In this case, the Tibetan monks are going to create a sand painting that is related to the BCG themes of compassion, civility and community.

We have selected Karen Armstrong’s Twelve Steps Towards a Compassionate Life as the core book for our community-wide reading initiative as part of the BCG series. There is going to be a book
discussion group where readers can gather to reflect upon the reading and discuss the themes in the book related to compassion and civility. We plan to use the discussion guide and some of the facilitation questions provided on the Building Common Ground Web site. Three discussion sessions are scheduled. We have multiple meeting rooms in our library to host the discussion groups.

We are going to host screenings of two films, recommended by the Fetzer Institute, at the local Savoy Theater. The films are Forgiveness: A Time to Love and a Time to Hate and The Power of Forgiveness, followed by a facilitated discussion utilizing the Conversations About Forgiveness Facilitator’s Guide provided by the ALA-PPO. We have already received approval from the Savoy Theater to screen the films in their space. The Savoy’s letter of support is attached as Appendix H.

We are planning a discussion panel with world-renowned speakers and authors, including Karen Armstrong, Vandana Shiva, and Winona LaDuke. These authors are popular amongst our readers and patrons, and should draw plenty of eager participants.

We have created a space on our blog for community members to post their reflections and responses to the book, art exhibit, films, and other program content (www.kellogghubbard.blogspot.com/).

Program Schedule – Summer 2012

- June 6th – Opening Event Potluck for BCG series
- June 13th – Discussion Group for Karen Armstrong’s 12 Steps Towards a Compassionate Life
- June 20th – Film Screening of Forgiveness: A Time to Love and a Time to Hate followed by a facilitated discussion group
- June 27th – Discussion Panel with Karen Armstrong, Vandana Shiva, and Winona LaDuke
- July 4th – 12 Steps Towards a Compassionate Life Discussion Group
- July 11th – Art Exhibit created by several local artists and a mandala sand painting creation by Tibetan Buddhist monks
- July 18th – Film Screening of The Power of Forgiveness followed by a facilitated discussion group
- July 25th - 12 Steps Towards a Compassionate Life Discussion Group
- August 4th – Closing Event Potluck for BCG series
Evaluation Methods

We have developed a questionnaire to survey people who attend the various Building Common Ground events. We are hoping to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from the survey. We want to know the amount of attendees and the demographics of local community members and people from around Vermont who attend the events. We also want feedback concerning the individual events, speakers, books, films, art exhibits, and the series as a whole. The survey questionnaire is attached as Appendix K.

Budget Proposal

Below is an outline of the proposed budget for the Building Common Ground series at the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. We will be providing the space and technical equipment for the discussions, film screenings, and other events, which is a benefit of having a library host the series. We are going to contribute $500 from our own funds to finance the BCG series. We have already created a brochure to promote the BCG series in our community. The brochure is attached as Appendix L. People who attend the events may contribute voluntary donations, which will help contribute to future library programming. We are excited about the possibility of the Public Insight Network (PIN), a project of American Public Media, helping with marketing and promotion of the BCG series in our community. Three free local publications, Seven Days, The Bridge and The World, offer free advertising for upcoming local events in our service area. We plan to promote the program in both of these publications, as well as on our Web site.

Program Expenses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Honorariums &amp; Travel Expenses</td>
<td>$2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Coordinator Compensation</td>
<td>$850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies &amp; Reading Materials</td>
<td>$100</td>
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Marketing & Publicity Materials  $50

Total BBC Program Expenses  $3000

Program Funding:

Kellogg-Hubbard Library Contribution  $500
Fetzer Institute-ALA BCC Grant  $2500

Total Funding for BCC Program  $3000

Conclusion

The Kellogg-Hubbard hopes to be one of the thirty public libraries to receive funding from the American Library Association’s Public Programs Office in conjunction with the Fetzer Institute. We believe in the mission of the Building Common Ground program and are eager to host a series of events to promote and discuss compassion, civility and community in our area. In this way, we hope to enhance the quality of life and learning in our community.

Appendices

Kellogg-Hubbard Library 2011 Annual Report..........................................................Appendix A
Kellogg-Hubbard Library 2011 Annual Budget.........................................................Appendix B
Kellogg-Hubbard Library 2012 Projected Annual Budget........................................Appendix C
K-H Library BCG Proposed Program Budget........................................................Appendix D
Resumes of K-H Library Directors & BCG Program Coordinator..............................Appendix E
List of K-H Library’s Board Members & their Affiliations.........................................Appendix F
Letter of Support from Vermont Humanities Council.............................................Appendix G
Letter of Support from Savoy Theater..................................................................Appendix H
Kellogg-Hubbard Library’s 2011 IRS 990 Form.....................................................Appendix I
K-H Library’s IRS Determination Letter confirming 501c(3)......................................Appendix J
Evaluation Survey Presented to Event Attendees....................................................Appendix K
Kellogg-Hubbard Library Building Common Ground Brochure.............................Appendix L
References


