

Essentials of Running a Literacy Program  
~ or ~  
How does Your Garden Grow?

Diane Moseley                      Marcia Tungate  
READ/Orange County  
2006

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Your Program

- Multi-sites
  - Large county programs
  - City programs
- Single site programs

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Overview

- Till the Soil
- Plant the Seeds
- Feed the Roots
- Make it Bloom
- Nurture your Program

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## Till the Soil

### Essential Knowledge

- Mission Statement
- Organizational fit
- Adult literacy facts
- Literacy needs in the community

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## Till the Soil: Mission Statement

- Learn the Mission Statement
  - Every good organization has one
  - Do you know yours?

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## Till the Soil: Where do I fit?

- Know Where You Fit
  - Organizationally in the library
  - In the local city and county government

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## Till the Soil: Adult Literacy Facts

- Gather the facts—just the facts
  - *National*: ProLiteracy / NALS / Census
  - *Statewide*: Literacyworks / Department of Education
  - *County*: Library Reference desk / Registrar of Voters
- Learn the facts
- Create a facts sheet

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## Till the Soil: Community Needs

- Community Needs Assessment
  - Existing services
  - Trends
    - Demographic
    - Educational
    - Economic
  - Where are the gaps?

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## Plant the Seeds

- Far-sighted Plan
- Active Support Group
- Valuable Linkages
- Good, Solid Management

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### Seeds: Strategic Plan

- Multi-year
- Externally focused
- Developed by Program Leadership

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### Seeds: Operational Plan

- One year
- Internally focused
- Created by Staff

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### Seeds: Support Group

- Governing or Advisory
  - Forwards the mission
  - Reflects Stakeholders' interests
  - Ensures stability
  - Develops resources

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### Seeds: Community Linkages

- Further the mission
- Integrate literacy into the community
- Contribute to the well-being of the community
- Comprehensively serve program participants

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### Seeds: Solid Management

- People
- Paper
- Money

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### Seeds: Solid Management

- People
  - Employees
  - Volunteers
  - Learners
  - Other library staff

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**Seeds: Solid Management**

- Paper
  - Accountability
    - Accurate
    - On-time

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**Seeds: Solid Management**

- Money
  - Budget
    - My responsibilities
    - On-going record-keeping
  - Accountability
  - Resource Development
- Potential grants *must* align with the strategic plan

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**Feed the Roots**

- Raise Awareness
- Be Client-Oriented
- Develop People
- Build Leadership

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## Feed the Roots: Raise Awareness

- Utilize Marketing Tools
- Partner, Partner, Partner
- Collaborate with Community Partners

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## Feed the Roots: Raise Awareness

- Partner with local businesses
  - Identify
    - Big companies
    - Small companies
  - Offer
    - Know what you can offer
    - Remember the WIFM's!
  - Ask
    - Don't start here
    - Do your research

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## Feed the Roots: Raise Awareness

- Collaborate with your Collaboratives!
  - Take advantage of opportunities to piggy-back
  - Don't just sit there – Do something
  - Stay alert for opportunities to serve
  - Don't overextend

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## Feed the Roots: Be Client-Oriented

- How do you meet participants' needs?
  - Continually assess your services
    - What do you have now?
    - What do your volunteers want?
    - What do your learners want?
  - Watch Trends

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## Feed the Roots: Be Client-Oriented

- Everyone is your client
  - External
    - Participants: Tutors, learners, etc.
    - Businesses
  - Internal
    - Library staff
    - City staff
- Advocate internally & externally

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## Feed the Roots: Develop the People

- Prepare for succession
  - Nobody stays forever
- Build Staff
  - Volunteer
  - Paid
- Provide opportunities
  - Growth makes people stay
  - Limits Attrition

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## Feed the Roots: Build Leadership

- Leaders beget Leaders
  - Volunteer staff
  - Community businesses
  - Trainers
  - Public speakers
  - Advocates
  - Experts to train special classes

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## Make it Bloom

- Grow Level of Service
- Utilize a Support Board
- Increase Public Awareness

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## Make it Bloom: Grow Level of Service

- Learners
  - Support, Support, Support
  - Train, train, train
    - Give 'em a job and get 'em involved
    - Remember your succession plan

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### Make it Bloom: Grow Level of Service

- Tutors
  - Support, Support, Support
  - Retain, Retain, Retain
    - Give 'em a job and get 'em involved
  - A cautionary note:
    - Sometimes you need to free up a volunteer's future for other opportunities.

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### Make it Bloom: Utilize a Support Board

- They already love you!
- Expand your net – get experts from other fields
- Let your Support Board find other good members

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### Make it Bloom: Increase Public Awareness

- This is On-Going
  - Apply for every award on earth
  - Keep your name in the paper
  - Remember your marketing tools
  - Become your local literacy guru

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## Nurture Your Program

- Remain abreast of literacy facts
- Be positive with learners and all volunteers
- Draw on your support board
- Maintain positive public relations
- Keep management policies and records up to date

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## Review

- Till the Soil
- Plant the Seeds
- Feed the Roots
- Make it Bloom
- Nurture your Program

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## Best Practices

- Pay attention!
- Ask:
  - "What works?"
  - "What doesn't?"

**STAY POSITIVE & ENJOY!**

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## Resources

- Books
- Web pages
- People
- Handouts

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