



FREE Bookmobile of Sonoma County

FREE BOOKMOBILE OF SONOMA COUNTY

Promoting literacy and a love of reading



Our start:

The Free Bookmobile of Sonoma County began in 2009 as a family community service project at the weekends.

It has since grown by leaps and bounds to fill a desperate need for literacy outreach and has been a full-time, non-profit operation for the past three years.

As the only public-access bookmobile operating in Sonoma County, the Free Bookmobile reaches disadvantaged populations with high quality books thanks to its mobility and a generous, book-donating public.

What we do:

The Free Bookmobile has become a consistent and valuable resource in Sonoma Valley. It serves individuals and families living in the rural and low-income areas of the Valley, who don't always have access to the library or lack the means to shop at a bookstore. The Free Bookmobile comes directly to neighborhoods, schools, and senior housing facilities. At the beginning of 2014, the Free Bookmobile of Sonoma County became a featured program of the Sonoma County Library Foundation. This partnership strongly supports the literacy efforts between the Free Bookmobile and the public library system. It also means the Free Bookmobile has additional resources to promote its services to an even larger audience.

A single story:

Sonoma County has a proud history of book-service provision. Decades ago, the public library system ran two bookmobiles simultaneously, allowing them to address both rural and metropolitan areas. Like the Bookmobile of old, today's Free Bookmobile helps instill a culture of reading by reaching out to everyone in the community – from young children at preschool through seniors in community-based centers. The difference is that today's Free Bookmobile allows for patrons to keep their books and pass them along to others in their home or community. This creates a cascade of high quality literacy resources in the part of the community where it is most needed. Kids are always excited to see the Free Bookmobile drive up, knowing they will enjoy story-time and be able to go on a book-choosing adventure. These early-reader books then help spread the gift of literacy to the rest of the household, an especially important function in the Boyes Hot Springs area, where so many are trying to learn English and integrate with the community.

Many of the families who discover the Bookmobile become returning patrons and look for the monthly schedule to make sure they can take advantage of regular visits to their neighborhood. We often get feedback about how the program has impacted people's lives, and one email received from a patron in the Springs area of the Valley was particularly touching: "Thank you for your books. The one about how to raise a child has really made a difference in my life."



Impact100 Sonoma has awarded two Community Grants to the Free Bookmobile: \$3,250 for book supplies (2012) and \$3,000 for a carport vehicle shelter for the Bookmobile (2013).

Our future:

Each year we continue to serve new populations and give away even more books. We have given away more than 110,000 high quality books thus far and look forward to the day when we surpass 1,000,000!