

Family Outreach Program

FGCNYS, Inc.

The program was designed to reach families using a different approach! This program began in one Club and has now become a state-wide initiative. Many Libraries are struggling to stay open so getting creative was their only answer. Our local library decided to lend out gardening and home improvement tools making it possible to borrow a shovel, hoe or a hammer, items donated by hardware stores, or from home owners downsizing, etc.

As the program grew we decided what a great idea! How can we as a Garden Club get on the band wagon Thus the "Frog Bag" was born. Using a local Printing Company we created a washable book bag that kids could borrow!

Since we started the program in the Spring of this year, it was decided books, newsletters to the kids and their parents, along with give-always, would change with the seasons. Starting with Spring, the bag contained the National Garden Club President's book "The Frightened Frog", a zip lock bag containing peat pots, soil for pots, sunflower seeds and string bean seeds. Also enclosed were directions to the parents and child on how to plant and replant when the seedlings are ready for the ground. The child was able to borrow the bag for a week then at the end of that week, return the bag and book and keep the giveaway. As a Club we had had made up many zip lock give-away packets and letters to the family. The librarian was requested to reload the bag for the next child to borrow. As Summer approached, the contents of the bag switched to a Summer theme. The Library was told they could choose one of their books using the theme of bugs, leaves, or plants. Along with a newsletter to the families the bag contained a magnifying glass, directions on making a Ecological Survey site in their back yard, and directions on making a Nature Explorer's Journal to record their sightings. After a week the book and bag would again be returned for the next child to borrow. As Fall is approaching the bag contents will change and we will be adding the new National book the "The Saved Seed"! Along with a newsletter to the child and parents, the child will receive 3 flower bulbs to plant, craft directions on

making things with leaves and saved pumpkin seeds. With each newsletter in the bag parents are encouraged to help teach the child the importance of saving our environment.

At the same time given information on joining a local garden club. We have 4 libraries in our area on board with the program. And a waiting list of children waiting to borrow our Frog bag.

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