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August 7, 1964

TO: Library Workers

FROM: Virginia Steele, Library Co-ordinator
901 1/2 Nelson Street
Greenville, Mississippi 335-2173

RE: MEETING ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, in GREENVILLE

WHAT

WHY

Our Community Center Co-ordinator, Annell Ponder, has suggested that we have a group meeting, as have the teachers, the health workers, and community center workers, to discuss our problems, our accomplishments, and suggestions for the continuation of the libraries already set up, and the further distribution of this backlog of unsorted books. She has also suggested that each of us try to bring with us to this meeting, a local person who could help see to the continuation of the library after we leave.

WHERE

WHEN

Because so many of the libraries are in the northwest area of Mississippi, the meeting will be held in the hot Delta (pray for a cold front):

Greenville Freedom School

Saturday, August 15

10:30 a.m.

Any coming from a long distance who can come Friday night and bring sleeping bags, can sleep in the Freedom School which has a bathroom and is near a good cafe.

WHY

The place Greenville, and time next Saturday have been chosen partly because on Sunday, August 16, Mileston is having a roof raising of a new community center, to which everyone is invited. Gene Nelson has set up a good, well-sorted library which you might like to see. There is a famous author hidden out there, too. I couldn't promise that you'd meet him, but I'd make every effort to see that you did.

VISIT

I think you might want to stop and just look in on as many libraries as you can on your way, to help size up your own, get ideas, and maybe some sense of relief if you've felt guilty about your own difficulties and disorganization.

BRAIN-
STORM

Will you utilize all available brainpower in your own group to brainstorm the opportunities we have with this mass of books and these people who have had almost no opportunity or time or encouragement to become familiar with books and their worth. (Perhaps it will be well to remember there are many views of the worth and lack of worth of a book.)

- I. Would you have in mind for a "round-table" the most useful and interesting things about your library you could mention in five minutes.

BRAINSTORMING

- II. Here are some problems we need to brainstorm:

1. --Who will keep the library going?
--How can the care and use be self-perpetuating?
--Will a rotating responsibility offer better possibilities for continuing interest?

Individuals, committees, boards, club sponsors, church sponsors?
2. --What are the best plans for dispersing the mass of books available?
 - a. How to get them sorted?
 - b. What to do with the text books?
 - c. What to do with discards:
old, undesirable, worthless, etc.
 - d. How to get little libraries going in rural communities, and where to put them.
3. Ways of involving young people in use and concern about the libraries.
 - a. Ways they can help in the actual operation of the library and its chores.
 - b. Library participation projects: clubs, book reviews, mimeographed book reviews and library news published by the patrons (perhaps in areas of current school assignments), crafts.
4. Novel ways of interesting people in taking books home, if only just to look at them at first.
5. Simple, perhaps self-help systems, for check-out and return, and for arranging books.
There is more and more reported in library journals about not using Dewey, but "Reader Interest Classification," e.g., Negro Life, Hobbies, Home & Child Care, etc.
6. Useful supplies, "gadgets," methods of marking, etc.
7. Problems of weeding, clutter, labeling shelves clearly, and orderly, sensible storage.
8. How to get books we need: Negro Life books, children's books, particularly with integrated pictures, etc.
9. WHAT SHOULD GO ON A SIMPLE INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR SETTING UP A LITTLE LIBRARY FROM SCRATCH.

IDEAS FROM VOLUNTEERS TO THINK ABOUT
(We've got some right sharp brains in our midst!)

1. Set up library near high school (in a room, store, home).
2. Arrange textbook loans for period of semester or year.
(Renew monthly?)
3. Box texts in MARKED boxes, with number of books stated, but keep out a copy of all on a display shelf.
Possibly catalog these with the number stored on the card, to keep tab on how many available.
4. Demonstrate how home libraries (perhaps for school books) can be set up -- "home library kit"
e.g., short planks on bricks or worthless books to make shelves; apple box or stout cardboard box library; bookstops of bricks, decorated if want to.
5. Make a collection of children's books and easy-reading-teen and adult books in front shelves (with a few early reading and literature texts -- yes! they get a kick out of a school book out of school --) for ALL to check out. Label some way beside "Children's Books" because adults want these books, too.
(Watch what they like to take out, and make a front shelf of these.)
6. Sort books and pack small "basic collections" to go to all churches in areas (perhaps with minister asking an interested person to be responsible for the books. Simple instruction sheet should go with collection, including suggestion for a swap with other libraries at end of three (?) months.
7. Book "mobile" services at schools: bringing a box or two of books in a car to a school yard (or near) so students can check out books there. (Get student assistance.)
8. Get children and high schoolers to make books, with drawings or photographs in them, firmly stapled or clasped, in file folder or cardboard or notebook covers (or use backs of worthless books). Put in library for use. (Don't be picky about how they look or how incorrect they are...they can read their own misspelling. You just put it up for use. My 2nd & 3rd graders wrote a study on the grasshopper that is the most checked-out book in the Edgewood, Pa. Community Library.)
9. Save those gems of prejudice & stereotype you find, LABEL them for what they are, and use them...for illustration. (Arlene Block found a Southernplay book with parts for "Mr. Nigger.")

10. Let's engineer a "six pack" of books in a carrier, on a week's loan, to offer a variety to look through at home: e.g., a child's picture book, a mystery, an animal story, a picture book, a magazine which if not current has an article about Negro life or people, etc.

Could you design such a carrier?

11. Crafts projects:

- Simple home library shelves and bookstops.
- Book jackets out of wall paper, with label titles.
- Reinforcement of the original jacket by pasting Kraft paper on the inside.
- Cutting out blurb on inside of book jacket and pasting on flyleaf, using rest of jacket for display.
- Display stands from coathangers, blocks, etc.
- Covered, decorated bricks for bookends.

12. Help. Get the children (or let them) to help you straighten books. Take the time to show them how. Put someone in charge on a rotating system.

If you have a disordered pile of stored books, take the time to round up 3 or 4 available men and get order, with aisles between stacks. Put best packed, largest boxes on bottom. SUPERVISE or you may have another shambles, if they're young people.

(In Hattiesburg, in 20 minutes, 3 men from a bar across the street put in order 75 large boxes of books which were in a total shambles, engendering much discouragement, and such relief when put in order.)

HOPE TO SEE YOU NEXT SATURDAY

Directions to Freedom School, Greenville, Mississippi
(Enter Greenville from Leland on Route 82)

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|----------------|----|--|
| Jct. 82 & 1 | 1. | Pass number of motels & come to Jct. 82 & 1; |
| Right turn | | (much construction). |
| Left turn | 2. | Right turn on Hwy 1, to traffic light, turn left. |
| Right turn | 3. | To light; Eureka St., turn right. |
| Over tracks | 4. | Drive to end of street, bear left over tracks. are. |
| Thru light | 5. | You're now on Nelson St. where COFO office & school/ |
| COFO office | 6. | Through one traffic light; just before set of rr |
| 2 sets rr | | tracks, on left, by James Cleaners: COFO office. |
| tracks | | Small VR sign. Upstairs. |
| Gas station | 7. | Over <u>two</u> sets of tracks, pass Gas station on left, |
| Freedom School | | in center of next short block, on left, under |
| on left side | | 2nd Coca-Cola sign over door: Freedom School. |
| | | (A new school building in sight on right.) |

WELCOME