

Cops 'n Kids Literacy Program Guide

2020 Edition

Introduction

One normally wouldn't put the words "cops," "kids," and "Quotarians" in the same sentence, but a program called Cops 'n Kids has inextricably linked the three. Founded in 1997 in Racine, Cops 'n Kids has promoted literacy, and a positive image of the police force, through book distribution and literacy programming in this Wisconsin, U.S.A., community. Quota of Kenosha-Racine has been instrumental in the program's success in their community, helping program founder Julia Burney to develop a squad car reading program, collecting books for distribution, and reading to children. Since 1997, the children of Racine have received tens of thousands of books, and can read them—or be read to—at the Cops 'n Kids Reading Room.

Both police forces and Quotarians across the country have been inspired by the program's success in Racine. Many police departments throughout the United States have established and operate their own Cops 'n Kids or similar literacy programs, often by partnering with local Quota clubs. Because of its opportunities for hands-on service, publicity, fellowship, and strengthened connections with the community, we encourage all Quota clubs in all Quota countries to consider adopting this program and adapting it to their communities' needs. Whether you choose to initiate a Cops 'n Kids program in your area, collect books for an existing one, read in classrooms, or get involved in the program in one of many other ways, this is an opportunity to do hands-on work that makes a difference you can see. For more information check out the Cops 'n Kids official website: <https://www.cops-n-kids.org/> .

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How Quota Supports Cops 'n Kids

Quota clubs have found unique ways to support Cops 'n Kids including:

- Developing the program from scratch!
- Holding fund-raisers to support the program and construction of facilities.
- Volunteering at reading rooms to read aloud to children and help them pick out books.
- Organizing and implementing book drives and seeking other donation sources.
- Sorting and distributing books.
- Supporting police stations with events for neighborhood children.

Past Quota club successes have included...

Quota of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

- Engaged others (Girl Scouts, local youth) in any of the ways they can serve: donations, storage, collection, distribution
- Donated over 68,000 books including 4,000 books to hurricane-devastated schools in Florida

Quota of Flint, Michigan, U.S.A.

- Worked with local police departments for press, fund-raising, distribution

Quota of Kenosha-Racine, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

- Held hearing and vision screening at Cops 'n Kids site
- Partnered with local school in book give-away

Quota of Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A.

- Conducted a book drive (which included opportunity for cash donations)
- Had fun arranging distribution center and helping kids pick out their free books

Quota of Rockford, Illinois, U.S.A.

- During the holidays, Quotarians held an event where police officers brought children to a local community center for kids to pick out books for their siblings' gifts. Quotarians provided books, wrapping, refreshments, and more
- Provided books and refreshments for children at other police-sponsored events

Quota of Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A.

- Held Beef & Beer and Chinese Auction fund-raiser for program
- Worked with Police Athletic League (PAL) to create reading room in their center, staffed by Quotarians and furnished with donated Ethan Allen furniture

Reasons for Launching Cops 'n Kids in Your Quota Community

You can be sure that you are doing valuable service work when you get involved with Cops 'n Kids, but taking part in the program will also make a positive impact on your club and its members. Consider the following benefits of running a Cops 'n Kids program:

All members can get involved.

There are so many different ways to help, in publicizing events, organizing programs, collecting and sorting books, distributing books at community centers and programs. Each of these tasks also provides an opportunity for Quotarians to work together.

It's flexible.

You can do as much as you want with the program, depending on the needs of your community and your club's strengths and abilities. Collect and distribute books locally, send them to impoverished areas, fund-raise for Cops 'n Kids programming or to create a local reading center, volunteer to read books in classrooms, or create other ways to promote literacy. Choose one, some, or all of these ideas to get involved.

Publicity opportunities abound.

Community members and local media will have plenty of opportunities to learn about Quota as they see your flyers and advertising campaigns and attend events.

You don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Several Quota clubs have already adopted the program and can share their tips and resources with you. If you want to be creative, you can develop your own program.

Build connections with the community.

You'll have the opportunity to work not only with the police force, but also with local government officials, schools, churches, and other service organizations. These connections are valuable as you recruit members and pursue other projects.

The program can operate at minimal expense.

At its most basic level, the program involves collecting donated books and/or reading aloud to students in classrooms and community centers. You don't need a lot of money to make a big difference.

Adopt the Cops 'n Kids Program: Steps for Getting Started

Cops 'n Kids provides children with access to literacy, but also helps members of the police force develop positive relationships with those children and the community. To achieve these goals, Cops 'n Kids programs have:

- Opened a reading room where students can pick out books, read quietly, and hear volunteers read aloud to them.
- Kept children's books in their cars to distribute to children as they see them, or to share with children in domestic situations.
- Maintained donation center in their station so neighborhood kids can come by to pick up books.
- Visited schools and other community centers to read aloud to children.

How can you adopt this program?

Find out if there's a Cops 'n Kids program in your area. If there is, ask what opportunities they have for you to get involved. These may include collecting, sorting, and distributing books, reading to children, and fund-raising. If you feel that there are other ways you can help, let them know.

If there's not a program in your community, you can:

- Approach the local police force about establishing the program.
- Partner with other organizations to achieve similar goals.
- Adapt the program so your club can run it on its own.

What are the steps to getting started?

1. *Come up with a plan of action.*

You need to know what you're doing before pitching the idea to the people you'll need the support of. Before sharing your plans, you should be able to answer the following questions:

a. What will your program do?

Focus on clear goals, like collecting and distributing a certain number of books, opening a book distribution center, or holding a book giveaway at a local community center. It's better to start simple at the beginning, and add ideas as you succeed.

b. What roles do you see the police force and other organizations playing?

It's important to make clear to those to whom you pitch the program precisely how they'll play a part—and why doing so is a benefit to them! This is a great way to develop a strong public image. Consider the list at the top of this page, or on page 2, of ways police forces have been involved in the past as you determine how to involve them.

c. Where will you get your books?

Consider the many different sources. Along with book drives in schools and churches, you can set up donation bins in public areas. Past clubs have received significant donations from local bookstores and large corporations with generous donation policies (like Coca-Cola and Barnes and Noble), as well as publishing presses.

d. *Where will you store the books?*

You'll need to find a dry, safe place to keep a lot of books! In the past, club members have used their own homes, rented storage space, or solicited space donations from local businesses.

e. *How will you make the public aware of the program?*

This is crucial for collecting books and for sharing Quota's mission. In the past, clubs have used local media (radio and newspaper), and posters and signs posted throughout the community. Consider connecting with area organizations, schools, churches, and businesses to ask if you can speak to their members. Also consider going online and using platforms such as Facebook to get the word out.

f. *How will you support the program on an ongoing basis?*

Consider how you will ensure that you have a sufficient influx of books, and individuals to distribute them, over time. This should be a diverse and long-term plan that can include: book drives, donations from large corporations, and fund-raisers to purchase books, as well as the involvement of other volunteers to ensure that you have sufficient staffing to keep the program running.

2. Pitch the program to the relevant people.

Once you've decided what the program will look like, seek out the individuals and organizations you'll need to make it happen. Make clear to them what a valuable opportunity this is, and be prepared to answer all their questions so they know you're serious about the program. Be flexible and willing to cooperate.

3. Establish a timeline and consistent communications.

Work with your partners to solidify the program. Assign roles and be sure to cover all important tasks, including publicity, correspondence (solicitations and thank-you's), public relations, etc. Communicate with them consistently about every issue and make sure that the goals and expectations for all are clear. For more publicity tips check out Quota's Publicity Pointers Kit, available to view or print on www.quota.org.