

Collection Plan

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Collection Plan

Introduction

Community

Calvert County, Maryland, is about 35 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., in Southern Maryland. The estimated population of Calvert County is 93,929 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The countywide library system is Calvert Library, which includes four physical libraries and a mobile services department. The Fairview Branch of Calvert Library is in Owings, Maryland. The population in the four-mile ring around the Fairview Branch of Calvert Library is estimated to be 16,177, which includes about 5,560 households (Providence Associates, 2017). The service population of the Fairview Branch is 84% White, 11% Black, and 3% Hispanic (Providence Associates, 2017). Less than 5% of the population is from non-English speaking homes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Calvert County residents are classified as “savvy suburbanites” who are defined as “well educated, well read, and well capitalized” (Esri, 2022).

Collection Analysis

Calvert Library has more than 199,593 physical items in its collection and more than 116,441 electronic books, magazines, and streaming entertainment shows (Calvert Library, 2023). The Fairview Branch of Calvert Library has 8,134 adult fiction books; 7,139 adult non-fiction books; 4,595 children’s fiction books; and 4,833 children’s non-fiction books (L. Tassa, personal communication, March 8, 2023). The estimated average age of adult and children’s fiction books in the Fairview Branch is eight years, the estimated age of adult non-fiction books is 12 years, and the average age of children’s non-fiction is 14 years. (L. Tassa, personal communication, March 8, 2023). The collection analysis on the picture book collection at the Fairview Branch examined books children would interact with in the countywide initiative called

500 by Five. This initiative encourages parents and guardians to engage their children in 500 books before they turn five. About 35% (126 out of 359) of books in the picture book collection were tagged in their catalog as racially or ethnically diverse. There were only 14 books there are only 14 books related to multiculturalism and multiracial characters. In comparing the picture book collection with literary award winners, out of 27 possible titles of literary award winners with racially or ethnically diverse authors or subject matters, the Fairview Branch has 12 titles in its collection of picture books.

Collection Development Focus Areas

For this collection plan, I will be limiting the definition of diversity to racial and ethnic diversity while acknowledging that diversity needs also include age, abilities, gender identity, and other perspectives. This plan could be easily adjusted to include other areas of diversity as needed. There are three main areas for collection development based on the community's environmental scan and the collection analysis. First, it would be beneficial to increase the number of nonfiction books in the picture book collection at the Fairview Branch. About 80% of the books in the picture book collection are fiction. Introducing inspirational and influential people of a wide range of backgrounds through biographies would be a welcome addition to the collection. Secondly, 75% of the books in the picture book collection were published before 2019, and about 25% are 15 years or older. There has been a seeming increase in the number of quality children's books published in the past few years, which may be beneficial to add to the collection to increase the collection's diversity to serve the community's needs. Lastly, increasing the number of non-English books in the picture book collection would be beneficial to increase children's exposure to diversity and support discussion on inclusion.

In addition to the mentioned collection development recommendations, two areas for growth will not be included in this collection plan. First, it would be helpful to allocate resources to increase participation in the *500 by Five* initiative. In 2022, there were only 313 participants in the *500 by Five* initiative in the entire Calvert Library system. One avenue for exploration could be to market the program to grandparents and caregivers rather than just to parents as it is currently marketed. It may be beneficial to test promoting the 500 by Five initiative using books showing racial and ethnic diversity. It would be a great initiative to partner with Calvert County Public Schools, daycares, community parenting groups, and other organizations and highlight racial and ethnic diversity in the picture book collection. Secondly, creating a more inviting children's area in the Fairview Branch would also be beneficial. The library is a former elementary school that was converted into a library in the 1980s and then renovated in the 1990s (L. Tassa, personal communication, February 3, 2023). The children's area has a large play kitchen, one large table, a maker space, a few chairs, and two beanbag chairs. It is a very cluttered area, and there aren't any obvious areas a parent/guardian could comfortably interact with their picture book child aside from the maker space and the play kitchen. Decluttering the area and providing more seating areas may encourage patrons to read some books with a child while at the library.

Alignment with Calvert Library Mission

The mission of Calvert Library is "to serve as the gateway to information, imagination, and inspiration" (Calvert Library, n.d.). The Calvert Library's Board of Trustees' equality policy statement says, in part, "All are welcome here and entitled to respect and civility" (Calvert Library, 2022). The three proposed collection development initiatives for the picture book collection at the Fairview Branch embrace the notion of the library serving as a gateway by

increasing the number of non-fiction books focused on diversity (information and inspiration), introducing quality children's books published in recent years highlighting diversity and inclusion (information, imagination, and inspiration), and including non-English books (information). The opportunity for information, imagination, and inspiration is within the library's walls. Although the Board of Trustees' equality policy encourages inclusion, the library's mission statement does not mention diversity or inclusion. This collection plan would serve as a tangible reminder that the gateway is available to all in the community.

Serving the Community's Needs

The three initiatives of this collection plan (increasing non-fiction picture books focused on diversity, increasing the average publication date of the picture books, and increasing the number of non-English picture books) work together to serve the needs of the diverse community and increase the inclusivity of the community as a whole. Johnson states, "the librarian's professional obligation is to develop balanced collections that reflect and meet the educational and recreational needs of these diverse user communities" (2020, p. 137). However, including racially and ethnically diverse books in a picture book collection (or any collection) doesn't just serve the need of the diverse user communities. For example, does a library need picture books written in Spanish only for Spanish-speaking patrons? No. Research shows many cognitive and developmental benefits to children being exposed to non-native languages, including being "the most effective tool for penetrating the barrier of a single language and a single culture" (Gimatdinova, 2018).

Literature Review

The overarching goal of the three collection plan initiatives is to increase the representation of racially and ethnically diverse books in the picture book collection at the

Fairview Branch of Calvert Library for underserved community members and the community at large. The benefits of multicultural literature have been well-established, including Martens (2015) stating that multicultural literature “encourages learners to respect and accept people who are different than themselves and break attitudes that are oppressive and prejudicial” (p. 610). Multicultural literature in children’s literature also promotes inclusivity ideals such as empathy, unity, critical thinking on cultural issues, and identity formation (Grasso, 2016). This notion is also supported by social psychology research finding that exposure to multicultural books helps children recognize different perspectives to better facilitate empathy and understanding (Moya & Hamedani, 2017). In an analysis of five qualities of social and emotional learning in picture books, diversity themes could be mapped to each of the qualities (Garces-Bacsal, 2022).

Since the importance of diversity in children’s literature is established, we can now examine the types of picture books depicting diversity. One area of importance in embracing diversity themes is including picture books where there is a wide range of places. This helps children to develop an understanding and appreciation of differences (Wasta, 2010). Another way to introduce children to different perspectives is with biographical picture books about people of color. Morgan (2009) summarized the importance of picture book biographies in the following manner:

Since people from different backgrounds are interacting more often today and will continue to do so in the near future, it will be more important than ever for Americans to understand the viewpoints of those who come from different cultures. If students do not learn the perspectives of people who are different than they are, problems in schools and the wider society are likely to arise.

Morgan concludes that learning about other people through picture book biographies can reduce prejudices in people later in life (Morgan, 2009).

From the analysis of 5,000 picture books more than 50 years ago (Larrick, 1965) to the annual diversity statistics from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2022), the lack of diversity in children's literature has been well-documented. The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) has collected data on diversity representation in children's literature since 1985. They began their data collection solely on Black authors and illustrators but expanded their research in 1994 to include indigenous people and other people of color. One of the flaws with their data collection is that they only track books sent to them by publishers. So, it is not a comprehensive list of all books' depictions of diversity, but their data provides a snapshot of the state of diversity in children's literature. However, the contrast is still effective in showing that books published more recently illustrate diversity. CCBC tracked about 9% of the received children's books by diverse authors or depicting diverse themes in 1994 (CCBC, 2022). In 2021, the percentage had increased to 34% (CCBC, 2022). After a comprehensive literature search, the CCBC data was the only data I could find referencing the quantitative description of diversity in children's books. Many articles referenced the CCBC data, but there was no opposing data or research on the number of books representing People of Color. The Diverse Book Finder aims to collect every picture book featuring Black and Indigenous people and People of Color (BIPOC) published since 2002. I could not find annual statistics on the Diverse Book Finder website (diversebookfinder.org) to help determine the percentage increase of BIPOC books over time. It should also be noted that the Diverse Book Finder collects all books with BIPOC characters regardless of the book's quality. However, search filters are provided to select only award winners, for example.

Kelly (2021) views two benefits of Spanish-speaking and Latinx children's picture books. First, it supports an individual's sense of culture if they are Latinx, and second, it helps all children to understand other cultures. However, just because a book is in Spanish or is in Spanish and English doesn't necessarily mean that it positively represents diversity themes. One study looked at 45 bilingual (English and Spanish) picture books published from 1995 to 2020 and noted that more than half of the books were published in the past ten years, and they were predominately English with some Spanish words, rather than the opposite (Benitez, Castellana, & Potter, 2022). Another study of 69 Spanish-English picture books published from 2013-2016 determined a wide range of quality in translations and cultural representation (Domke, 2018). One of the benefits that Domke highlights about Spanish-English picture books is that the books can aid Spanish-speaking children in learning English while also helping English-speaking children learn Spanish (2018).

Collection Plan Examples

The collection analysis used a comparison strategy of the current collection at the Fairview Branch with literary award winners. This comparison strategy was selected because of the advantages of being both a qualitative and quantitative approach. Johnson states, "List checking also can identify gaps – titles not held and areas with low coverage" (2018, p. 297). Using this approach, I was able to easily identify examples of books that could be added to the Fairview Branch to accomplish the overarching goal of increasing the racial and ethnic diversity represented in the collection. My initial analysis was limited to ten literary awards from 2020 to 2023; however, the examples listed below may also include award winners not previously analyzed. The Fairview Branch had commonly known award winners, like the Caldecott Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award for picture books. It also had most of the Pura Belpré Awards

for Youth Illustrators. However, the Fairview Branch did not have many award winners honoring diverse communities like the American Indian Youth Literature Awards, the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature, the NAACP Outstanding Literary Work for Children, the South Asia Book Award, and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award. What follows is the first step in improving the collection to include more diverse books. At the very least, the Fairview Branch should incorporate these books into its collection and focus on marketing the books to determine if there is a need in the community.

Collection Plan Initiative #1: Increase non-fiction picture books focused on diversity themes

Book Title	Author/Illustrator	Publisher (Year)	Award Name (Year)
Queen of Physics: How Wu Chien Shiung Helped Unlock the Secrets of the Atom	Author: Teresa Robeson Illustrator: Rebecca Huang	Union Square Kids (2019)	Asian/Pacific American Awards for Literature: Picture Book (2020)
Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist	Author: Julie Leung Illustrator: Chris Sasaki	Schwartz & Wade; Illustrated edition (2019)	Asian/Pacific American Award for Best Picture Book (2021)

Shirley Chisholm Dared: The Story of the First Black Woman in Congress	Author: Alicia D. Williams Illustrator: April Harrison	Anne Schwartz Books (2021)	Jane Addams Children's Book Award for Younger Children (2022)
Choosing Brave: How Mamie Till-Mobley and Emmett Till Sparked the Civil Rights Movement	Author: Angela Joy Illustrator: Janelle Washington	Roaring Brook Press, a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing (2022)	Jane Addams Children's Book Award for Younger Children (2023)

Collection Plan Initiative #2: Increase average publication date of picture books to include diverse themed books

Book Title	Author/Illustrator	Publisher (Year)	Award Name (Year)
Bowwow Powwow: Bagosenjige- niimi'idim	Author: Brenda J. Child (Red Lake Ojibwe) Translated into Ojibwe by Gordon Jourdain (Lac La Croix First Nation) Illustrator: Jonathan Thunder	Minnesota Historical Society Press (2018)	American Indian Youth Literature Award: Picture Book (2020)

Herizon	Author: Daniel W. Vandever (Diné) Illustrator: Corey Begay (Diné)	South of Sunrise Creative (2021)	American Indian Youth Literature Award: Picture Book (2022)
Stacey's Extraordinary Words	Author: Stacey Abrams Illustrator: Kitt Thomas	Balzer + Bray (2021)	NAACP Outstanding Literary Work-Children (2022)
Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story	Author: Kevin Noble Maillard Illustrator: Juana Martinez-Neal	Roaring Brook Press; Illustrated edition (2019)	Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award (2020)
A Gift for Amma: Market Day in India	Author: Meera Sriram Illustrator: Mariona Cabassa	Barefoot Books (2020)	South Asia Book Award (2021)

Collection Plan Initiative #3: Increase the number of non-English picture books

Book Title	Author/Illustrator	Publisher (Year)	Award Name (Year)
Mi papi tiene una moto	Author: Isabel Quintero Illustrator: Zeke Peña	Kokila (2019)	Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award (2020)

Serpiente emplumada y los cinco soles: Un Mito Mesoamericano	Author/Illustrator: Duncan Tonatiuh	Vista Higher Learning (2020)	Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award (2021)
Mis dos pueblos fronterizos	Author: David Bowles Illustrator: Erika Meza	Kokila (2021)	Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award (2022)
The Hummingbird Sings and Dances: Latin American Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes (Spanish Edition)	Author: Mariana Ruiz Johnson Illustrator: Grupo Cántaro	The Secret Mountain (2018)	International Latino Book Award (2019)

Three-Year Collection Program Plan

YEAR ONE	Initiative #1	Initiative #2	Initiative #3
Action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Collection Analysis Tool (CAT) of the Diverse Book Finder to better understand the BIPOC representation in the picture book collection and identify gaps. • Compare circulation statistics for award-winning picture books from Fairview Branch and other Calvert Library branches. • Review (and weed if necessary) the 126 picture books tagged with diversity terms in the catalog to determine the accuracy of the tagging and the content and condition of the books. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire the 14 books listed above. • Conduct two focus groups (one with adults and one with pre-K children and their parents/guardians). • Conduct a user observation study by placing award-winning picture books on an endcap.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine gaps in the collection from the CAT results to create a realistic future collection plan to increase diversity in the picture book collection. • Analyze the circulation date of the award-winning books featured during storytime, featured on social media posts, featured in prominent locations in the library, and shelved books. • Review the <i>500 by Five</i> initiative database to determine how many of the 126 “diverse books” plus the 14 new books were included on the book lists.
Marketing Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate posts for at least 12 days on the library’s social media calendar highlighting an award-winning picture book featuring diversity. • Use endcaps in children’s department to highlight books featuring diversity. • Feature one of the award-winning books during storytime every other week. • When available, load some of the award-winning books on the children’s e-readers available to be loaned.

YEAR TWO	Initiative #1	Initiative #2	Initiative #3
Action plan for all initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine the Year 2 and Year 3 plan based on findings of CAT, circulation statistics, focus groups, and the user observation study. • Create a diversity calendar (i.e., February 4 is Rosa Parks Day, March 1 is Zero Discrimination Day, May 26 is Buddha’s Birthday). • Create and manage a committee of community members representing racial and ethnic diversity, adults who participated in the <i>500 by 5</i> initiative, and pre-K teachers and caregivers. • Survey <i>500 by Five</i> initiative participants with a survey to determine if they have knowledge of the newly acquired books and if they have suggestions on other titles. • Review the <i>500 by Five</i> initiative database to determine how many of the 126 “diverse books” plus the 14 new books were included on the book lists 		
Action plan for individual initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and acquire nonfiction picture books from authors of previous year award winning picture books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and acquire newly awarded picture books. • Create an endcap display of newly awarded picture books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with local pre-K ESL teachers for feedback on Spanish-language and other language books.

Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase picture book biographies featuring racially and ethnically diverse individuals by 10%. • Review circulation statistics on non-fiction picture books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of picture books published in the past 5 years by 10%. • Review circulation statistics on newly published books within the past 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Spanish-language books by 15% and other language books by 5%. • Review circulation statistics on non-English picture books.
Marketing for all initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate posts for at least 12 days on the library’s social media calendar highlighting diversity holidays and a coordinating book. • Participate in Saturday morning Farmers Market with promotion of 500 by Five initiative and feature newly acquired books with a raffle book giveaway. • Feature one of newly acquired books during storytime every other week. • Promote the newly awarded books on social media when the award is announced. • Collaborate with public schools on their Book Fair to distribute a flyer about the 500 by Five initiative and feature diversity themed books. • Promote the newly acquired books when promoting the bookmobile. 		

YEAR THREE	Initiative #1	Initiative #2	Initiative #3
Action plan for all initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine the Year 3 plan based on recommendations from the committee, the survey from <i>500 by Five</i> participants, circulation statistics, and feedback from community members (schools and farmers market attendees). • Maintain diversity calendar for social media posts and library displays. • Continue committee meetings on a quarterly basis. • Review circulation statistics on diversity-themed picture books. • Continue to include diversity-themed books on pre-loaded e-readers. 		
Action plan for individual initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create curated bookbags with biographical picture books and other non-fiction books, including books featuring racially and ethnically diverse individuals. • Host a makerspace activity for children to decorate biography bottles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and acquire newly awarded picture books. • Weed books based on condition, content, and circulation data. • Create library of things bags with a picture book as the unifying item. For example, for <i>Fry Bread: A Native American Family</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create curated bookbags with non-English speaking books and audiobooks. • Host a Cinco de Mayo story book time featuring award-winning Spanish-language books.

	<p>(start with a bottle and add a head made from paper, yarn or other materials. Clothes can be made from construction paper or extra materials.)</p>	<p><i>Story</i>, the bag could include the book, recipes for Fry Bread, a SilPat, a pastry roller, and a cast iron pan.</p>	
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase picture book biographies featuring racially and ethnically diverse individuals by 15%. • Review circulation statistics on non-fiction picture books. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of picture books published in the past 5 years by 15%. • Review circulation statistics on newly published books within the past 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Spanish-language books by 15% and other language books by 5%. • Review circulation statistics on non-English picture books.
Three-year assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rerun the Collection Analysis Tool (CAT) of the Diverse Book Finder to compare the BIPOC representation in the picture book collection with the analysis conducted in Year One. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the number of diverse books included in the <i>500 by Five</i> initiative database to determine the change from the number of diverse books included in the initiative at the start of year two of this plan. • Review the social media engagement posts about the featured books in comparison with the circulation data to determine effectiveness of the social media posts.
Marketing for all initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote diversity holidays on social media, Farmers Market participation, story time book selection, promotion newly awarded books on social media, promotion of books on the bookmobile.

Conclusion

The Fairview Branch of Calvert Library has the opportunity to play a pivotal role in developing a more diverse and inclusive community. The *500 by Five* initiative provides an opportunity for diversity awareness and acceptance to be part of the fabric of the community. By enhancing the picture book collection at the Fairview Branch, more families may feel included in the community, which is beneficial for the entire community.

The most critical element of the proposed three-year collection plan is the constant and consistent evaluation based on community feedback through user assessments (focus groups, committee feedback, and surveys) and through collection-based assessment (circulation data and comparison with Diverse Book Finder). It is equally important to continue to market the new items in the collection as part of the overall marketing plan for the library and not in a silo by itself.

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