

# 2018 Jaffarian Award application – SC Tucker Elementary & Danville Middle School Library

## Narrative

**1. Describe the program or program series, and how the school library and librarian were involved. If the program is ongoing, use the information on programming and activities from the previous school year (2017-2018) only.**

- ***Include the title of the program or program series.***
- ***Explain the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.***
- ***Explain why you chose this program.***
- ***Describe in detail the program or program series.***
- ***Describe the planning process and collaborative relationships involved.***

The name of my program series is, Tales of the Crypt- Danville's Living History. It occurred to me that every community has a story to tell through its cemeteries, people, and the part it played within the American narrative. Our own community is rich in its own history - a history worth preserving. Our students needed to learn the importance of how they too shared a bond with the past and its role in their present and future as citizens of our community. Our cemetery known as the "Old Danville Cemetery" is located near the center of our community, it was found to be in an unkempt state. Monuments dating well back into the early 1800's, were broken and moss covered. Persons buried in the cemetery were of historical importance to our town and even our state, but most of their stories and significant importance were, "gone and forgotten". I knew that with some collaborative planning and hard work, our history could be brought back to life! A committee made up of retired teachers, librarians, and members of a club known as, The Sisters of the Revolution, was formed. This committee using services provided by our local county library was able to design a program that would help us remember and understand how our present culture was shaped and influenced by the history of our own local community by "adopting" this historical site and studying the people found within it. Our humanities theme is cultural and historical preservation focusing on bringing history to life using the stories of the people interred in the old cemetery. As facilitators, we guide students to learn/research about their community in a more real way vs a traditional setting. Students gather data and transform this information to share with a larger community of learners. Our program consist of the following:

- Research of historical persons and the history of our town of Danville, along with customs and clothing during the time periods 1840s-1940s.
- Writing Scripts
- Community Service at the "Old Danville Cemetery" of cleaning tombstones, trash pick up, and learning and helping to repair tombstones
- Media Production and Advertising

- The finale of the project is a candle lit dramatic performance on the fourth Tuesday night of October at the cemetery where each student or group of students enacts the life of a person or a family interred at the cemetery. Those in attendance are led in small groups by guides along paths lit by luminaries with stops at the selected grave sites for a dramatic recitation and performance.

**2. Describe the involvement of others in the program. Letters of support (to be uploaded below) should emphasize the humanities program and the impact the program had on students and the school community, not the library program or the librarian.**

- **Identify the number of student participants.**
- **Describe how the program features higher-order thinking skills through student involvement.**
- **Describe the benefits that ensued, including how you measured success.**
- **Describe the involvement and awareness of parents, administrators and community leaders.**
- **Explain why you feel the program is exemplary or goes beyond normal school library media programming activities.**

With this program, I offer, through the library, an extracurricular class for 30 students in our After School program, for students interested in becoming historians and working in the performing arts, while extending their class into a service project based learning one. I set up mini workshops with local historians, and genealogist experts along with field trips to our local city hall, public library, local courthouse, and local newspaper office. We know that all parts of cultural heritage is not just limited to see and touch but must also contain immaterial elements such as oral history performing arts, social practices, and craftsmanship, all which is included within our program. Our committee also understands that music is an intangible part of cultural heritage. Historical preservation is brought into the program through the repair and upkeep of the historical monuments, along with studying the photographs, books, documents, and interviews which concern the cemetery and its people buried there. As teachers and librarians we also guide and facilitate students to use higher level thinking skills by reflecting and evaluating the research they discover, making their own choice in how to develop their character's story line, and how to analyze records to look for epidemics, connections found to the city's history and/or themselves, and any other interesting facts they may find. We measure our success through the improvement of our students' knowledge by taking a pre/post test about genealogy, history of city, and how/where to research for needed information. When talking with regular classroom teachers, we find that most of these students are able to analysis and evaluate the research required in their classroom work much better or show improvement. The teachers state that these students can also put research facts into their own words, not copying them verbatim, as well as knowing how to give credit for works of materials used in research papers. We also measured its' success according to the number of people attending the program's night performance as well as when the superintendent thought it such a strong program he had the 7-12th graders this year bused over to the cemetery for a showing! Due to the interest piqued within the community, from the local newspaper running stories about the prominent people going to portrayed and students calling and interviewing older citizens to

find out more of the history, many volunteers also become part of our class in order to perform or assist in the culminating showcase of dramatic performances. Our local area community members and leaders such as our mayor as well as local businesses, have now volunteered to help with the maintenance and upkeep of grounds, monetary gifts given by families to repair ancestral monuments, donations given at the performance to buy a sign which shows dates and historical persons interred in the cemetery, along with plans to add an ornate front as well. Our parent volunteers also help in the sewing and gathering of costumes, listening to students as they practice their oral stories and even provide snacks during practices and the night of the performance. Danville Living History exceeds normal school library media programming by introducing an opportunity for students to experience a living history event while interweaving each story into the history of Danville-from the founding father and his family circa 1840 to the legislator who gained funding to pave Main Street in 1948. Each story reveals another aspect of the importance of cultural and historical preservation of our town. It provides an avenue for students to gain confidence and self-worth through dramatic expression. It is cross-curricular, and promotes global awareness as well as local community connections. The students also have an opportunity to work with our "senior seminar class" in learning how to manipulate and use technology and computer programs that they would normally not be exposed to until taking higher level senior classes - all material learned is used to promote advertising and making DVDs of the performance. The program is multi-faceted offering students opportunities for community service, project based curriculum, and creative expression that goes beyond normal school library media programming activities.

### **3. Provide evidence of a curriculum component.**

- ***Describe the relationship of the program or program series to the school's curricular goals and to the state's learning standards.***
- ***State how the American Association of School Librarians Standards for the 21st Century Learner were incorporated into the program.***
- ***Provide evidence of a curriculum component for classroom treatment of the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.***
- ***Explain how the program goes beyond the school's standard curriculum requirements and programs.***

Circulation reports from the library show that most of my patrons do not like to read nonfiction books about history or even biographies unless sports related! I have tried bringing in local authors who have written historical books about our town, we have researched prominent people in our city's history; even collaborated with classroom teachers to make biography bags to tell the story of these people to engage students in meeting our school goals as well as state standards. But according to a survey I gave in the library, many of the students were not enjoying or wanting to read these types of books or work on any related projects. Classroom teachers stated that grades given on these types of projects reflected the same message. Then I visited a renowned cemetery, where a performance by a high school drama class portrayed the history of prominent people found within their local cemetery. That is when the idea for my program was born! This type of program would engage students and give them a real life/hands on approach as well as a purpose for what was mandated for them to learn. This project

based, collaborative learning experience would align to the school's goals and met state standards across the curriculum. I then brought in a local author and had him present to the students in a different format than the ones before him. I had him to share more about his research methods for his nonfiction book. We also infused primary and secondary sources such as pictures, interviews, and written records of our town's history. Our local county librarian allotted a time each week for us to access genealogy records in order to better learn about members of our town and their part in history. A piece of our curriculum component(found in Chronology, Change Over Time, and Contextualization - Students will analyze chronology, patterns of continuity and change over time, and contextualization on historical events & Perspective, Historical Evidence, and Causation - Students will analyze ways people gather, view, construct, and interpret historical evidence) which matched our humanities theme was to help students compare how our city had changed over time and the effect that plays on our way of life now. Using AASL standards, students use inquiry and research skills to thrive in a complex informational environment, used technology to access research, write out scripts, share the production with their peers through the making of a DVD- flyers-programs, and to answer social media request/questions from people around the country; this is also where students use their verbal and non-verbal communication skills to share knowledge and learn collaboratively with peers and other community of learners alike. Students have to draw conclusions, connect learning to community issues and demonstrate leadership by presenting their ideas to others in formal and informal situations. Students practice digital citizenship skills while gathering and sharing information. Students critique and reflect upon themselves and peer by viewing the DVD of their performance. Students incorporate reading skills for learning, growth, and enjoyment in order to better understand various texts/genres and their formats. Our students go above their standard requirements with this program by meeting, collaborating, and working with community members, city leaders, and volunteers on a service project that helps to raise money for restoration and upkeep of our "old Danville cemetery". School, state, and AASL standards require students to use communication skills, but students do not have the opportunity very often to learn how or when they need to adapt to a changing audience and how to portray their own ideas in various forms of communication. Students are engaged and eager in researching beyond what is normally required of them in their library research skills. They not only expand their digital citizenship skills but learn how to also include and apply real world principles, purpose, and productivity as a citizen of their own community, thus encouraging ownership and inclusion of something broader than any curriculum requirement could do.

**4. Describe how this program might be replicated.**

- ***Provide examples of how this program or program series might serve as a model or springboard for humanities programming in other schools.***
- ***Identify key components of the program that were essential to the program's success.***
- ***Identify any key components that might need to be modified for use in other settings.***

As did the program I attended, this humanities program can serve as a model for other schools to easily implement and be modified to best suit any of their specific needs. This program has been shared with other schools already via their request. We have answered questions, sent copies of various items used, and even visited with school and community members of other places. Our success is found in encouraging and fostering students to creatively think outside the box/classroom walls. With this type of thinking, students are able to come up with completely different viewpoints when taking on the role of a citizen from the past, one where they view the world from the perspective eye of a person who has no clue about modern society. They are able to wander through an environment and a world to discover all the new things that they had never known or noticed before within their city. We also have a group of reliable and hard working volunteers which are made up of community members, parents, business owners, and our school administration. A suggestion has been made to modify the performance key components by telling the story of the interred people in a wax museum type setting that includes the set up of the town during the time period being portrayed or even holding a dramatic performance in the form of a play.

**5. Describe the expectations and outcomes of this program**

- ***What would you change about the program?***
- ***What were some unexpected benefits or reactions to the program?***
- ***How did this program take the library to the next level in terms of school and community collaboration, programming and student impact?***

Due to the overwhelming response, next year we are going to have auditions for new roles developed from the cemetery's records. Students from this year's performances will be the judges and will develop a rubric to determine who is selected. We are honored and pleased with the response received by the program. Unexpectedly many of the family members of people interred in the cemetery have written letters, sent Facebook messages, and even called our school thanking us for the respect and honor we have bestowed upon their ancestors through this program. With the making of the DVDs, this group has even been able to raise money for next year's project in the amount of \$100.00, not counting the \$5000.00 donated to the cemetery fund! The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program hosted a free lecture/workshop in conjunction with our project. The collaborative relationships formed through the program have helped the cemetery to be named to the Arkansas' roster of historical places and pending application to be included on the National Register of Historic Places. We also have been invited to perform cameo performances at local venues and organizations such as the Lions Club. By popular demand from community, administration, parents, and students we were also asked to do a Spring play this year with this same group of students. We experienced great success with this performance as well. We live in a rural poverty stricken area with few opportunities for exposure to any type of performing arts. With this program, many students and community members are able to express their talents and artistic abilities. The library sponsorship of Danville Living History project has provided another stream of programming by bringing together next-generation patrons who wish to learn from and collaborate with one another not only in their school but within the community of learners on the outside.