

From the Experts: Librarian Testimonials

“Our Operation Warm events were a phenomenal success! We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from branch staff and customers. Volunteers also expressed that they had positive, “feel-good” experiences...This is a high-impact, low-commitment program.”

**Cornelia Beckett, Program Assistant, School and Student Services
Enoch Pratt Free Library Baltimore**

“I believe the Operation Warm program had a very positive impact on our community and it is clear to my coworkers at RMD and me that our patrons would like to attend more programs like this where the library is fulfilling their basic needs.”

Erica Gamble, Children’s Librarian, Richard M. Daley branch, Chicago

“Our event was fantastic! In fact, people are still coming to get coats...The coats are magic. Every time a child or adult puts one on, they start smiling and say how warm and cuddly they are... They really are the nicest coats, and we are so honored to have partnered with you to bring this happiness to the families of our area.

It is such a well thought out program to partner with libraries. Myself, the volunteers and the other librarian talked to every talked everyone who came in, told them about the services and programs the library has that might benefit them and gave the children the free books. I think they were all impressed and we will see over time how many come and take advantage of our services. I have heard that the community is talking favorably about the library because of the coats. Everyone who got the coats was very nice and appreciative. It was a pleasure to meet them and their children.”

Maggie Goodman, Library Director, Johnson City, TX

“Teaming up with libraries and service organizations across the country to give a brand new coat and two new books to each child who participates, Operation Warm is a unique service project. It not only provides children with necessities, but introduces them and their families to all that their neighborhood library branch has to offer beyond books. The collaboration with libraries will inspire literacy and a love of learning, while involving families in the many activities and programs available in their local libraries.

The Kennett Library is grateful to our wonderful sponsors and to Operation Warm. Through their generosity, each child went home with a warm coat to guard against the rigors of winter and two age-appropriate books...providing smiles, gratitude, and, most importantly, warmth of body and soul.”

Filomena Elliott, Director, Adult Literacy Program, Kennett Library

“Working with Operation Warm enabled us to build on an existing partnership with a neighborhood family shelter where the Children’s Librarian made weekly outreach visits to share interactive early literacy programs and information about library resources. The Operation Warm coat distribution event provided 300+ new winter coats and welcomed many of these families into the public library for the first time. We were grateful for the opportunity to fortify the connection between the library and local families and happy to see many of them making return visits to borrow books, use computers, and spend time in our Children’s Room.”

Maggie Craig, Senior Children’s Librarian, Hamilton Grange (New York Public Library)

“The opportunity to provide a new coat and free books to youth in our community as part of an event to introduce families to the Library grew into a larger event to celebrate this unexpected generosity to youth in our community,”

Lisa Kochik, Head of Youth Services, Newburgh NY

“Our circulation desk had a line at the end of January. In the summer, we always have a line. But in January, the staff was like, 'This is awesome.'...You should've seen their faces. Just the warmth and confidence the children showed through getting the gift of a winter coat was just really cool.”

Karen Mahar, Library Director, Ocean City NJ

Many families asked questions about resources and programming for children with autism after they had received their coats and books. They made it clear that they had waited to ask until they knew they were in a safe space, with people who could answer this sensitive question. Getting new coats and books from helpful, attentive volunteers created trust and the ability to serve these families better at the library after this event.

This year’s Operation Warm events truly provided “A Warm Welcome to the Library.” The flow of the event allowed families to take advantage of library resources. Children got to try hands-on science activities or create their own engineering masterpieces while they waited. Parents spent time with their children playing and learning. We distributed so many flyers for upcoming events that we ran out at nearly every event—and we saw that many of these were beneficial when families returned to the library to try new programs.

Alexa Hamilton, Special Projects Librarian, Children’s Services and Family Engagement, Chicago Public Library

The Operation WARM events that we held last year stand out as definite memorable and meaningful moments from last year. The recipients were incredibly grateful and still thank us. It was also amazing to build camaraderie with the team of volunteers that we formed. It was very special, all the way around and we are thankful that we had an opportunity to participate.

Susan Spivey, M.L.S. , Main Library Manager, Lorain (OH) Public Library System