Defining Literacy

“When reading is not exhausted merely by decoding the written word or written language, but rather anticipated by and extending into the knowledge of their world.” (Friere, 1983)
Building Community Literacy Partnerships

Lakeya Omogun
Keys to Building Community Literacy Partnerships
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- Broaden idea of literacy
- Collaborate with other educators to exchange ideas
- Be proactive about reaching out to companies/businesses
- Strive to plan authentic literacy ideas
- Keep students’ interests and needs in mind
Gold Projects:
- Salisbury University – Rho Eta Chapter
- St. Joseph's University – Tau Omega Chapter
- The University of North Carolina at Charlotte – Omicron Pi Chapter
- Marian University, Indianapolis – Alpha Alpha Tau Chapter
- Niagara University – Alpha Alpha Beta Chapter

Silver Projects:
- Madonna University – Sigma Xi Chapter
- Central Connecticut State University – Epsilon Mu Chapter
- Waynesburg University – Upsilon Sigma Chapter
- University of North Texas – Alpha Iota Chapter
- Grove City College – Tau Alpha Chapter

Bronze Projects:
- University of Missouri, St. Louis – Mu Iota Chapter
- Elizabethtown College – Tau Iota Chapter
- Bethune-Cookman University – Pi Delta Chapter
- Liberty University – Pi Sigma Chapter
- Eastern Michigan University – Pi Chapter
- Washington University, St. Louis – Beta Upsilon Chapter
Gold Project Award Panelist’s Answers

1) *Literacy Alive!* seems like a lot of work, how did you break up tasks and where did you get started?

Our chapter has an executive board with five positions (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and historian) and about twenty other general members. Whenever we plan an event, we try to break up the tasks so that nobody feels overwhelmed or overburdened. We begin planning Literacy Alive! about two to three months prior to the event so that we have time to plan the activities and get the materials together.

First, the president asks our general members to suggest and then vote on a theme for the event at our meeting. Then, once a theme has been decided on, we have the general members work in groups to prepare different activities or stations for the event. Then, the vice-president contacts nearby schools that our Teacher Education Department has partnerships with to see if they are interested in having the event at their school. Once a date is confirmed with a school, our secretary publicizes the event on-campus and sends email reminders to our members. Meanwhile, our treasurer works with the vice-president to make a list of materials and then purchases them. On the day of the event, the vice-president manages the event and the historian takes pictures to document the event.

2) Have any of you had events fail? What did you learn from that?

When thinking of the Literacy Alive! Event last year, an instant event fail came to mind. One thing that I learned from this event was when the students are on the campus tour it was taking each tour group about five minutes to cross the street due to the traffic light. From this event fail I learned that going forward we should have a police controlling the cross walk and having them stop the traffic so that each group could go across without the light changing to green. This will keep the tours on time and the students will be able to stay with their group without getting broken up by the traffic light. Each year there will be some type of event fail, however it will be a moment to learn what does work and what does not work to better the event in the future.

3) How do I enhance our *LA!* event from a book drive into something more impactful on our community?

The book drive was just a really small portion of the LA! event that we did! We brought 100 first graders from title 1 schools onto our universities campus and gave them the chance to be a "college student" this included going to class, one to fit each content area, as well as having time to play sports in our gym, walk around the academic buildings and be a real college student. By doing this we were able to then provide them with a book that they read with a KDP member or volunteer at the end of the day! Each child left their one day of college with a book, which was just the icing on the cake for the event! We worked to make it more than a book drive by working with our community to see what their needs were and made sure that we fit them.

4) What kinds of organizations should I look to partner with? How do I start this partnership? What feedback have you had, as a result?

Our chapter has had success partnering with organizations on our college campus such as College Mentors for Kids. We started this partnership by looking for organizations that were in our community that work with children. This could be a program such as CMFK, a school, or a shelter nearby. Simply have one of your members get in contact with that organization and tell them what your vision is. Once organizations hear about your Literacy Alive! event they are going to be thrilled to partner with your chapter. When we have worked with CMFK in the past, we have had outstanding results and great success. We feel that by working with these organizations, such as CMFK, we are making a lasting impact in our community.
5) Do you change events from year-to-year? How much do you add/subtract?

Most of our events are changed/adjusted year-to-year based on reflections. It is extremely important to be able to learn from previous years experiences, in order to, enhance the event as much as possible. Whether it is working out the little kinks that can happen or how to communicate better with the schools that we are working with. We found that it is so important to be able to discuss and reflect on how the event went as a whole. As a chapter, we discuss what went well and what could have used some more work. This allows members to take this experience and use it to better the event for the next year. If an event seems too complicated and overwhelming, it's possible to reflect on that and come up with ways on how to make it go smoothly the next year.

6) How do I host a *Literacy Alive!* event with very little funding?

Our *Literacy Alive!* event is very inexpensive because everything we use is hand-made, borrowed, or donated. Some of the materials that we need are books, pencils, crafting materials, decorations, and worksheets. The books are borrowed from the library. The pencils and crafting materials are borrowed from (and then returned to) our members. The decorations are made out of banner paper and paint; we got them for free because we made them in the graphics room at our school. If you aren’t artistic or you don’t have art materials, you could partner with an art club at your university. The worksheets that we make for each station are made on the computer and copied at the university for no cost. Any additional materials that we need are borrowed from our advisors in the Teacher Education Department. Additionally, we save on costs by asking members to drive their personal cars rather than renting vans to go to the schools.

7) I'm from a small chapter, how can we implement such a big project?

Our Marian University Alpha Alpha Tau Chapter is also very small. When we start the planning process we do not think of it as a big project, we start small. It is important to have the whole chapter help out and everyone play a role. It is also important to know your own resources and limitations. Don’t try to plan a large event your small chapter has no way of implementing. Your *Literacy Alive!* event does not have to be large in order to have an impact. If your chapter works together & carefully plans out the event, you will have no problem implementing it & having a tremendous impact.

8) What impact have you seen in your community?

This year has taught the members of the Nu Zeta Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi along with our community partners so much. Our efforts showed us that we can do so much for our community if we pull together and meet established needs. We each had to look beyond ourselves and find some ounce of humility so that we could give back to those who are less fortunate. Our experiences have helped to make use all better leaders, better teachers, and better individuals. More than ever, we have learned that our community depends on us for support. Individually we can do a little, but together we can change the world.

9) What benefits have you seen from participating in *Literacy Alive!* as an individual? As a chapter?

In Niagara County, only 22.2% of persons age 25+ have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. To help expose the importance of higher education, Niagara University’s College of Education and KEP members pride themselves on community involvement. By providing community based activities we are able to promote learning/literacy in a fun and engaging way. A shocking 72% of adults in Niagara County read at a 4th grade functional literacy level. The lessons and activities created by our student volunteers for the Spooktacular event not only encouraged literacy in multiple formats but also exposed families to the importance of literacy integration. Lessons stressed the ease of incorporating literacy in our everyday lives while also promoting higher education.
**Literacy Alive!** is Kappa Delta Pi’s signature service initiative.

Chapters are encouraged to host *Literacy Alive!* programs and events that improve the literacy skills of participants in your local schools and surrounding communities, and provides recognition for participants’ service and dedication, all while advancing the mission of Kappa Delta Pi.

*As educators, we understand the impact literacy has on **all** facets of life; participate in Literacy Alive! this school year and enhance the literacy skills of your participants!*

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### Collegiate Chapter Division

To submit a *Literacy Alive!* project, chapters submit the *Literacy Alive!* Collegiate Achievement Form directly on the KDP website by May 1st each year.

**Benefits & Recognition:**
- Printed participation certificate presented to chapters through the Fall Mailing
- Individualized electronic participation certificate sent to each contributing chapter member
- Opportunities for *Literacy Alive!* awards
  - Recognition at biennial Convocation
  - Award Plaques
  - Registration discounts for any chapter member attending Convos
  - Ability to have chapter representation on a *Literacy Alive!* Panel at Convos
- Valuable experience that will enhance interviews and classroom teaching

**New Chapters:** New chapters can complete the New Chapter Stipend Request form to apply for $100 of funding from KDP to help facilitate their first *Literacy Alive!* event.

*This opportunity is available **once** during the first two years following the chapter’s installation.*

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Did you know there are **two** divisions of *Literacy Alive!*?

In addition to the *Collegiate Chapter Division*, we offer a *Professional Member Division*.

KDP can help you with quality literacy programming in your community as a professional educator after graduation so that you can continue your involvement.

For more information and examples of *Literacy Alive!* projects, visit [www.kdp.org/service/literacyalive.php](http://www.kdp.org/service/literacyalive.php)