

**CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY  
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)  
FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018  
PITCH-AN-IDEA GRANT APPLICATION**

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**ELEMENT 1: BASIC INFORMATION (please see application instructions for additional information)**

**Applicant Information**

<b>1. Library/Organization</b>	<b>2. Library's DUNS Number</b>		
Contra Costa County Library	784736571		
<b>3. Legal Business Name</b> ( <i>must match name registered with Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)</i> )			
Contra Costa County			
<b>4. Project Coordinator Name</b>	<b>5. Project Coordinator Title</b>		
Patrick Remer	Sr. Community Library Manager		
<b>6. Email Address</b>	<b>7. Business Phone Number</b>		
premer@ccclib.org	925-927-3235		
<b>8. Mailing Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip</b>
777 Arnold Drive	Martinez	CA	94553

**Project Information**

**9. Project Title** The Idea Box: Kid-powered library programming

**10. LSTA Funds Requested** \$16,000

**11. Cash Match & In-Kind** \$44,556

**12. Total Project Cost** \$60,556

**13. California's LSTA Goals** (*Check one goal that best describes the project*)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literate California             | <input type="checkbox"/> Bridging the Digital Divide      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Connections          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22 <sup>nd</sup> Century Tools  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Content Creation/Preservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring Library Access for All  |

**14. Primary Audience for project** (*Select all that apply.*)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adults  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-School Children             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Families                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Populations               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrants/Refugees                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Age Children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intergenerational Groups (Excluding Families) | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizens                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff, Volunteers and/or Trustees     | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Public                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low Income                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non/Limited English Speaking Persons          | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with Disabilities                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Populations               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with Limited Functional Literacy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adults and Teens          |

## ELEMENT 2: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

**Describe how this project was identified as a need, how it relates to your library's strategic plan, what will be accomplished if this project is implemented, and how you will know whether your project is successful. Summary should relate to activities in the timeline (Element 4) and include statistical information to support the project.**

In 2012, the Pleasant Hill Library launched the original Idea Box, funded by a \$5,000 LSTA grant. Youth submitted their ideas to a Rube Goldberg-inspired idea collection contraption, and the library collaborated with the community to celebrate children's contributions by bringing their ideas to life ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpW5tryUDHA&t=1s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpW5tryUDHA&t=1s)). The Idea Box revolutionized the library's approach to programming as well as the community's relationship with the library, gathering over 2,000 ideas in the first 12 weeks and ushering in a wave of hugely successful programs including a Lego Club with robotics and an annual Night of 1,000 Inventions maker event. The success of this new engagement contributed to the passage of Measure K in 2016 to fund a new Pleasant Hill library facility. Although the physical Idea Box was retired, the approach to direct youth engagement and responsiveness has become a permanent part of the Pleasant Hill Library's culture of public service. (See attached 2012 LSTA Narrative Report for outcome measurements)

Contra Costa County Library is now seeking to relaunch and expand the Idea Box to all regions of the county, and refine its model of community engagement for California libraries and beyond. Our Library serves 1 million plus county residents (140,559 households with children) by championing "personal and community engagement in literacy and reading to enrich lives" as outlined in the current strategic plan. The plan also prioritizes efforts to optimize and develop program offerings with an eye toward the underserved. While family services have always been a focus, youth input has traditionally been represented by adult caregivers rather than gathered directly from the youths themselves.

This grant will involve all Supervisory Districts in the county: Pittsburg (District V), Oakley (District III), Danville (District II), El Cerrito (District I), and Pleasant Hill (District IV), where each community presents unique needs and opportunities for youth. Pleasant Hill, as the pilot library, is entering the design process for a new facility that will serve the changing needs of Pleasant Hill residents for generations to come. The Idea Box will add a playful and powerful tool for giving our youngest community members a voice in the planning process. Meanwhile, all the Idea Boxes will facilitate the assessment of evolving needs and interests of youth and the implementation of programs to address these needs. Staff will also be able to leverage this engagement to further influence public attitudes towards libraries and strengthen relationships with local stakeholders.

The potential impact of this project can reach libraries throughout California and beyond, by creating a simplified "open source" model of the Idea Box that can be replicated. The first prototype was built as a one-of-a-kind invention, while a redesigned machine will be fabricated with easy-to-follow instructions and widely-available parts for under \$500. With the assistance and consultation of local makers, such as carpenters, this new design will also be more durable, reliable, and customizable. Other libraries that run their own Idea Box will likely see equivalent transformations in youth and family engagement, as well as an improved recognition of the value of children's creativity as Pleasant Hill did years ago.

To pilot this open-source, low-cost model, Contra Costa County Library will construct and roll out a total of 5 Idea Boxes to the sites named above. Each community library will coordinate publicity and community engagement with their city partners, utilizing the combined web/social media presence and print publications of each organization, as well as the personal advocacy of city and library staff (See attached letters of city support). At least 5,000 ideas will be collected over a minimum of 8 weeks during the Spring of 2018 before actionable submissions are identified for programming. All submissions will be celebrated and potentially shared online. In rapid response to these submissions, one to three programs or projects will be developed at each of the locations over Spring and early Summer. This compressed timeline intentionally drives nimble action from libraries to underscore a tight feedback loop of demand and response. Additional community supporters (including existing partners in education) will be tapped during the program development phase in order to realize youths' ideas with broad based community involvement. Post-program surveys will be compared to surveys conducted prior to the Idea Box launch, and successful engagement will be measured by the number of submissions as well as feedback from Idea Box programs, pointing toward a change in youth empowerment and recognition of youths' imaginations by adults and families. (See attachment: Bringing An Idea To Life With The Idea Box)

Once this next chapter of the Idea Box is realized, Contra Costa County Library will share its process and results within the professional community at conferences (especially CLA), and in professional journals, such as Library Journal and Children & Libraries (estimated 2018 & 2019). As with Contra Costa County Library's other projects, such as Discover & Go and Enki Library, staff aims to provide professional peers with resources as freely as possible and lend ongoing support for the adoption of these tools and strategies.

### ELEMENT 3: PARTNERSHIPS

Please list all formal partners for your project here. Please attach (under Element 7) a copy of your signed agreement with each partner, which outlines the role the partner will play and the resources the partner will contribute.

Partner Name	Organization Type (see instructions for valid entries)	Legal Type (see instructions for valid entries)	Role on Project	Resources That Partner Will Contribute (materials/funds/staff)
TBD (see narrative for description of engagement with community supporters)				

## ELEMENT 4: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Please answer each area concisely and completely. For section A-F limit responses to four pages.

**A. Project Intent** (*Check only one that best describes the project*)

**Lifelong Learning**

- Improve users' formal education
- Improve users' general knowledge and skills

**Information Access**

- Improve users' ability to discover information
- Improve users' ability to obtain information resources

**Institutional Capacity**

- Improve the library workforce
- Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure
- Improve library's operations

**Economic & Employment Development**

- Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support
- Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources

**Human Services**

- Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family, or household finances
- Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health & wellness
- Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills

**Civic engagement**

- Improve users' ability to participate in their community
- Improve users' ability to participate in community conversation around topics of concern

**B. Project Purpose – Short statement which answers the questions: we will do what, for whom, for what expected benefit(s).**

The “Idea Box” engages elementary and middle school-aged children in a process of creating, sharing, and implementing original ideas – leading youth (as well as adults and families in the community) to recognize the value of their imaginations and their power to impact the world around them.

**C. Anticipated Project Outputs – Measures of services and/or products to be created/provided.**

5 Idea Boxes (Rube Goldberg-inspired idea-collection contraptions)

1 published parts list and assembly instructions (PDF and web videos)

5,000 idea submissions from youth across 5 locations throughout Spring and Summer 2018

10 new projects/programs implemented from submissions (1-3 per location) during Summer 2018, including 1 program at Pleasant Hill connected to the design and planning of a new library facility.

1 conference presentation on the Idea Box project (planned for 2018/19)

1 professional publication on the Idea Box project (planned for 2018/19)

**D. Anticipated Project Outcome(s) – What change is expected in the target audience's skills, knowledge, behavior, attitude, and/or status/life condition? How will you measure these outcomes? (for examples see attachment B of the application instructions)**

75% of participating elementary and middle school-aged children will gain improved recognition of the value of their ideas and their power to act on them. This outcome will be measured through surveys conducted before and after the program, and by the volume of youth participation in the Idea Box program, indicating their esteem for their own contributions.

75% of adult family members in the community will gain improved recognition of the creative assets of youth and the benefits of youth-directed programs and learning experiences. This outcome will be measured by pre- and post-surveys of parents and other adult participants and staff.

See Attachment: Sample Survey

**E. Briefly describe how this project will be financially supported in the future.**

With minor maintenance, each Idea Box can continue to function as a method for community engagement and "kid-sourcing" program and service recommendations throughout Contra Costa County. As Pleasant Hill has demonstrated, even after the obsolescence of the original Idea Box contraption, the plethora of ideas captured during the grant cycle continues to inform programming for years to come, and the approach to youth engagement remains embedded in library practices and required no supplemental funding to sustain. Library leadership are dedicated to sharing the Idea Box contraptions throughout the county at additional community libraries throughout the system where space and staff allow.

Furthermore, the Idea Box suggests new ways to better implement existing resources to respond to changing needs, but does not necessarily demand new or additional resources. The resources for sustaining this approach are present in the programming budgets of individual community libraries in Contra Costa, but also present in the capacities of our fellow service organizations: local governments, schools, and recreation districts. This model is exemplified by the upcoming 2017 Tinkers & Thinkers Innovation Faire in Pleasant Hill (a collaboration of the Library, Rec & Parks, The City, and the Foundation for Pleasant Hill Education) that is a direct outgrowth of the five successful Night of 1,000 Inventions Events that were spawned from the original Idea Box. The Idea Box project is as much about aligning the full array of community resources with the priorities of youth as it is about empowering those youth with a platform to express those priorities and ideate imaginatively around them.

Finally, the affordability of the revised Idea Box design, made available through a simple parts list and assembly instructions, will make this project very accessible and scalable to the California library community and beyond.

**F. Activity Information. Activities are action(s) through which the intent or objective of a project are accomplished. Four activity types have been identified, each with select methods to help you describe how you will carry out this project. Indicate activity types that require a significant commitment of resources to the project (representing 10% or more of total project resources).**

1.  **Instruction** - Involves an interaction for knowledge or skill transfer and how learning is delivered or experienced. (*Check all that apply and provide a description including whether the format will be in-person, virtual, or both*)
  - Program - Formal interaction and active user engagement (e.g., a class on computer skills).
  - Presentation - Formal interaction and passive user engagement (e.g., an author's talk),
  - Consultation - Informal interaction with an individual or group of individuals (library staff or other professional) who provide expert advice or reference services to individuals, units, or organizations.
  - Other

Description: 1-3 programs will be offered at each of the 5 Idea Box sites. Each will be inspired and informed by submissions to the Idea Box. Examples from the original Idea Box project include: The Night of 1,000 Inventions, a maker event showcasing innovative technology and fostering ideation and entrepreneurship among families; Lego Creator's Club with Robotics, a weekly Saturday program that invites youth and caregivers to a free build with STEAM challenges.

2.  **Content** - Involves the acquisition, development, or transfer of information and how information is made accessible. (*Check all that apply and provide a description including whether the format will be physical, digital, or both*)

- Acquisition - Selecting, ordering, and receiving materials for library or archival collections by purchase, exchange, or gift, which may include budgeting and negotiating with outside agencies (i.e. publishers, vendors) to obtain resources. May also include procuring software or hardware for the purposes of storing and/or retrieving information or enabling the act of experiencing, manipulating, or otherwise interacting with an information resource.
- Creation - Design or production of an information tool or resource (e.g., digital objects, curricula, manuals). Includes digitization or the process of converting data to digital format for processing by a computer.
- Description - Apply standardized descriptive information and/or apply such information in a standardized format to items or groups of items in a collection for purposes of intellectual control, organization, and retrieval.
- Lending - Provision of a library's resources and collections through the circulation of materials (general circulation, reserves). May also refer to the physical or electronic delivery of documents from a library collection to the residence or place of business of a library user, upon request.
- Preservation - Effort that extends the life or use life of a living or non-living collection, the individual items or entities included in a collection, or a structure, building or site by reducing the likelihood or speed of deterioration.
- Other

Description: Youth have tremendously imaginative contributions to make to their communities. This content consists of information about themselves (their interests and identities) as well as information about how they hope to engage the world and reshape their environment and experiences (especially learning experiences). Staff will collect this content through at least 5,000 individual submissions from youth, written on paper slips, encased in a plastic ball, and deposited in the collection contraption. By celebrating those ideas in the library (bulletin boards, signage, at programs) and online (facebook, instagram, twitter, or on webpages on the IdeaScale platform), staff will transfer and provide access to that content to the larger community. This content is framed by library facilitators as a call to action for the larger community to listen and dedicate resources to supporting youth in the realization of their ideas (See attached: Bringing An Idea To Life With The Idea Box).

For at least 8 weeks, all 5 libraries will collect "My Idea" slips as with the 2012 pilot. In this proposed round of the Idea Box at Pleasant Hill, an additional custom "My New Library Idea" submission slip will be created to drive ideation and content generation on that planning effort. These targeted submissions will be provided to the architectural and design team and Library Task Force to influence their work, and will inform at least one specialized event or workshop at Pleasant Hill to engage youth and showcase their contributions to the facility planning process.

3.  **Planning & Evaluation** - Involves design, development, or assessment of operations, services, or resources and when information is collected, analyzed, and/or disseminated. (*Check all that apply and provide a description including whether the format will be in-house or third-party*)
- Retrospective - Research effort that involves historical assessments of the condition of a project, program, service, operation, resource and/or user group.
  - Prospective - Research effort that projects or forecasts a future condition of a project, program, service, operation, resource, and/or user group.

Description: The Idea Box is a highly stylized way of formalizing a cycle of community assessment, program/service design, and evaluation. It becomes a tool for library staff and community partners to identify the needs and interests of youth and work with that target group to develop innovative and appropriate solutions to satisfy those needs and interests. Staff will explore opportunities to engage community organizations (such as schools and city partners) to continue to plan and act on Idea Box submissions beyond 2017. To foster further adoption of the Idea Box by third parties (such as libraries outside of Contra Costa), participating library managers will present at a library conference following the grant year and publish on the results, preferably in a professional journal.

4.  **Procurement** – May only be used for projects with an Institutional Capacity Intent. Acquiring or leasing facilities; purchasing equipment/supplies, hardware/software, or other materials (not content) that support general library infrastructure. *(Provide a description)*

Description:

## **ELEMENT 5: GRANT TIMELINE/ACTIVITIES**

Show each major project activity and when it will be started and/or completed throughout the project. The timeline should correspond to the activities described in Planning and Evaluation. Please put an X in each pertaining month.

## ELEMENT6: BUDGET

The budget should clearly identify the amounts requested and from what sources.

Budget Category	LSTA	Cash Match & In-Kind	Total
<b>Salaries/Wages/Benefits</b>			
1 Manager: Lead direction (200 hrs at \$66.53) 10% FTE	\$0	\$13,306	\$13,306
4 Community Library Managers (200 hrs @ \$66.53) 10% FTE	\$0	\$13,306	\$13,306
4 Librarians (200 hrs \$48.2) 10% FTE	\$0	\$9,640	\$9,640
4 Library Assistant (200 hrs @ \$38.88) 10% FTE	\$0	\$7,776	\$7,776
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$44,028</b>	<b>\$44,028</b>

**Description:** Estimated staff time to launch and promote the Idea Box program, collect and review youth submissions, and design/implement/evaluate 1-3 new programs inspired and informed by youth submission. Manager at Pleasant Hill will provide lead direction for the countywide implementation as well as supervising site level activities along with each of the 4 other managers for their corresponding locations. To see an example of project design, see attached: Bringing An Idea To Life With The Idea Box

Consultant Fees			
Maker community volunteer technical consultation (24 hrs)	\$0	\$528	\$528
Estimated presenter costs for minimum 10 "kid-sourced" programs	\$2,500	\$0	\$2,500
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$528</b>	<b>\$3,028</b>

**Description:** Technical assistance in the design of the new Idea Box prototype from local makers, carpenters, etc.

Budget Category	LSTA	Cash Match & In-Kind	Total
<b>Travel</b>			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Description:**

Supplies/Materials			
Hardware/materials for Idea Box redesign and new prototype	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Hardware/materials for construction of 4 additional Idea Box machine	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
Printing of promotional matter	\$500	\$0	\$500
Materials and equipment for a minimum of 10 "kid-sourced" programs	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$13,500	\$0	\$13,500

**Description:** The Idea Box is a kinetic idea-collection contraption that will be constructed for 5 libraries from a variety of wood, plexi, toys, and other materials with the assistance of skilled volunteers. A revised prototype based on the original design will be constructed with a budget of \$1000. Four additional Idea Boxes will be constructed for \$500 each, for a total of 5 machines.

Because the essential graphic materials have been designed in a previous Idea Box grant (see attached Idea Box postcard), a \$500 budget for printing costs is all that is required for print collateral (projected 5,000 postcards).

1-3 ideas (or idea themes) from youth will be indentified for implementation at each participating library (each site with a budget of \$2,500). This budget will cover the procurement of materials necessary to the realization of each idea.

Budget Category	LSTA	Cash Match & In-Kind	Total
<b>Equipment (\$5,000 or more per unit)</b>			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**Description:**

Services			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**Description:**

<b>Project Total</b>	\$16,000	\$44,556	\$60,556
<b>Indirect Cost Rate Applied</b> 0.0 % <b>Indirect Cost</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0
Check one:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Indirect	<input type="checkbox"/> Federally negotiated indirect cost rate *	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirect proposed cost rate *	
* please attach supporting documentation if required			

**Description:**

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>\$44,556</b>	<b>\$60,556</b>
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## **ELEMENT 7: ATTACHMENTS**

**If you have additional resources that support your grant, please attach after this page**

## **ELEMENT 8: INTERNET CERTIFICATION**

**Check the Appropriate Library Type**

**Public Library**       **Academic**       **K-12**       **Multi-Type**       **Special/Other**

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant public library, public elementary school library or public secondary school library applying for LSTA funding, I hereby certify that the library is (*check only one of the following boxes*)

**A.  An individual applicant that is CIPA compliant.**

The applicant library, as a public library, a public elementary school library or public secondary school library, has complied with the requirements of Section 9134(f)(1) of the Library Services and Technology Act.

**B.  Representing a group of applicants. Those applicants that are subject to CIPA requirements have certified they are CIPA compliant.**

All public libraries, public elementary school libraries, and public secondary school libraries, participating in the application have complied with the requirements of Section 9134(f)(1) of the Library Services and Technology Act. The library submitting this application has collected Internet Safety Certifications from all other applicants who are subject to CIPA requirements. The library will keep these certifications on file with other application materials, and if awarded funds, with other project records.

**C.  Not Subject to CIPA Requirements.**

The CIPA requirements do not apply because no funds made available under this LSTA grant program will be used to purchase computers used to access the Internet or to pay for direct costs associated with accessing the Internet.

## **SIGNATURE**

**I have read and support this LSTA Grant Application.**

Contra Costa County Library  
**Library/Organization**

Idea Box  
**Project Name**

Melinda Cervantes  
**Library Director Name**

County Librarian  
**Title**

Library Director Signature

Date

**CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY  
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT**

**FINAL PROGRAM NARRATIVE REPORT**

**Grant Information**

Library Jurisdiction	Contra Costa County Library
Project Title	Idea Box
Grant Award ID #	40-8003
Grant Period	2011-2012
Amount of Grant Award	\$5,000
Amount of Grant Expended	\$5,000
Local Match	
In-Kind	\$7,525
Total Amount of Project (amount expended + match + in-kind)	\$12,525
Number of Persons Served	1,000 children

**Project Director**

Name	Patrick Remer
Title	Youth Services Librarian
Library Address	1750 Oak Park Blvd. Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
Phone Number	925-927-3235
Fax Number	925-646-6460
E-mail Address	premer@ccclib.org

This report is due thirty (30) days after the completion of the grant period.

Email this report to [ista@library.ca.gov](mailto:ista@library.ca.gov) then mail ORIGINAL and 2 copies to:

California State Library  
P.O. Box 942837  
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001  
Attention: Fiscal Office - LSTA

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign in blue ink)

## Project Final Report

A final narrative report is required on the use of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds following the completion of a project during each project year. The information you report will be used to complete the California State Library report of how funds were expended. Excerpts from this report may be submitted to the Federal government in their evaluation, or may be published by the State Library or shared with other institutions. Please answer all of the questions thoroughly. Please attach any reproduction copies of photographs of project activities or media produced for the project.

### Project Purpose

Include your program purpose statement here

The Pleasant Hill Library's "Idea Box" engages elementary and middle school-aged children in a process of creating, sharing, and implementing original ideas – leading youth to recognize the value of their imaginations and their power to act on them.

### Project Activities and Methods

How did you accomplish the project? What were the steps involved? How did you engage the target audience?

The Idea Box collection contraption was installed in the library in early summer, and launched in conjunction with the online Idea Box website at [ccclib.org/ideabox](http://ccclib.org/ideabox). Participation was instant and overwhelming, as promotional visits to schools (in conjunction with Summer Reading promotion) brought new participants into the library. A video of the Idea Box in operation on opening night was posted to the web, and the program was further publicized through online channels including social media.

Ideas submitted in-library were transcribed to the online site by volunteers, and the submissions were reviewed and organized by staff throughout the summer, with clear "themes" and popular idea threads being identified rapidly, with the help of voting children and families.

The creativity and value of participant's ideas were celebrated in numerous ways. Firstly, the ideas were posted publicly to the site and shared with hundreds of visitors to the Idea Box website. Secondly, ideas were posted physically to a bulletin board as ideas were selected and implemented. Thirdly, colorful enlargements of hundreds of innovative science and technology-related submissions were strung decoratively throughout the library for the final weeks of the Idea Box, coinciding with Night of 1,000 Inventions. The Idea Box itself was an ongoing affirmation that children's ideas have value and that adults in their lives seek to listen and act on their children's imaginations.

Ultimately, 5 ideas were selected for implementation with grant funds. These ideas and their corresponding activities are outlined below. In some instances, library staff brought children's ideas to life by creating new environments in the library that support imaginative play. With the Lego Creators Club, and the Night of 1,000 inventions, staff instituted two programs that again positioned children in the role of creative agent - designing and building objects of their own imagining.

Children were involved in every stage of the Idea Box program, beginning with the development of the collection contraption itself and further input in pre-program focus groups. Children submitted all the ideas to the box, and tween volunteers helped monitor and promote the Idea Box throughout the Summer. Children and their families reviewed and voted for ideas to implement in the library and online, and youth were also active in preparing for those implementations, and running Idea Box events.

## **Project Outputs**

What was created for the project and how much? (For instance three promotional brochures were created and 75 copies distributed; or three training classes were designed; two sessions of each were held, and 80 people were trained)

One physical Idea Box "collection contraption" and one virtual Idea Box website were created to gather children's ideas over the course of the summer. 1,000 promotional cards were printed for distribution during school visits reaching 3,190 school-age children.

2,000 submissions including 1,155 actionable ideas were collected over 12 weeks. These submissions were viewed by 617 visitors to the public website, where at least 14 registered participants ranked the ideas with 1084 votes.

5 ideas were selected for implementation with grant funds, based on popularity and feasibility. In each case, the selected "idea" represented many similar submissions from numerous children:

One science-themed showcase event, "The Night of 1,000 Inventions" brought over 220 children and their families to the library for a night of playful innovation. The evening's interactive attractions included a rocket launcher, robots, a buttonmaker, self-driving cars, and an ipad, which was also used to document this event and other Idea Box activities throughout the summer. Child attendees also crafted their own inventions, filing 135 unique "patents" for works of their own imagination.

A Lego Creators Club was initiated with 45 attendees in its first monthly meeting, and a robust lego collection with 5,612 new legos.

82 new books were added to the collection, satisfying requests from readers of various ages and interests. These items are projected to circulate over 738 times in the first year.

A castle was constructed as a reading and play nook, which is in active use by the hundreds of daily visitors to the children's area.

Additional improvements were made to the children's area, including the introduction of 2 sets of colorful low tables and chairs, a new alphabet carpet, and a flexible tunnel. These furnishings see steady use from visitors, particularly after storytimes, which draw over 1,700 young children and caregivers to this area each month.

## **Project Outcomes (if applicable)**

Please state the outcomes and the results of your evaluation.

OUTCOME#1 "Elementary and middle school-aged children will recognize the value of their ideas and their power to act on them."

The impressive volume of submissions to the Idea Box clearly demonstrates a confidence and self-identified value in their ideation, and an enthusiasm for participating in activities to impact their environment. On the Night of 1,000 Inventions, where dozens of attractions competed for kids' attentions, children chose to create their own inventions, filing 135 "patents" in an hour and thirty minutes.

Post-program focus groups also revealed that youth saw the Idea Box as a "good idea" in itself that encouraged kids to "share ideas", even the "crazy stuff." While the Idea Box targeted every child's awareness of their own individual imaginative powers, the program also brought recognition of peers' ideas: "Lots of kids wanted an ice cream machine - that WOULD be awesome!" and "I still think about 'the cooking robot'...that sounds so cool."

Focus group participants unanimously agreed that the library had changed for the better over the Summer thanks to the Idea Box. Summer programs tied to the ideas from the Box, were especially praised by the group. The Night of 1,000 inventions was likened to the Tech Museum of San Jose, which is "my favorite museum in the whole world, and I've been to the Louvre."

Participants were aware that an entire city had gathered around their ideas and brought them to life. "The Idea Box brought the whole community together," said Caroline, a 5th grader. She elaborated that no matter how old you were, you got to be a part of the program. "Even parents."

**OUTCOME#2** "Adults in the community will recognize the creative assets of youth and the benefits of youth-directed programs and learning experiences."

Pre- and post-surveys of parents suggest an increase in the valuation of children's imaginations. 81% of pre-program respondents stated that their child was "very creative" or "exceptionally creative," while over 92% of post-program respondents declared those levels of creativity. The surveys also saw a 9% increase in responses agreeing or strongly agreeing that "My child is full of ideas that he/she shares with me," and a 10% increase in responses agreeing or strongly agreeing that "Adults listen to and act on my children's ideas." Moreover, 57% of parent respondents also stated that their child is "more likely" or "a lot more likely" to express and/or take action on his/her ideas after participating in the program.

Anecdotally, many adults that congregated around the collection contraption (while their children submitted ideas) had glowing compliments for the program. One grandparent and retired small business owner claimed that this was the kind of stuff that America needs to get children excited about "making things" again.

Submissions to the Idea Box have been requested by Contra Costa County Library administration as a key component in the needs assessment activities of the current strategic planning process.

Furthermore, these submissions have been distilled as a dataset that is being shared with principals and other leaders in the Pleasant Hill educational community, influencing their work.

#### **Additional Project Outcomes**

Please state any additional intended or unintended outcomes and what data sources you used.

The Idea Box collection contraption proved to be an engaging attraction to folks of all ages, especially our preschool storytime attendees. These young participants submitted many Idea Box cards with doodles or scribbles, eager to share in the activity and contribute in their own way, despite their limited awareness of the larger process and purpose behind the whirligig.

The Idea Box has also enabled staff to tie children's interests to improvements that are already being made and funded outside of the grant. Thus, the Idea Box has deepened and reinforced decision-making based on existing needs assessment.

Summer Reading participation increased nearly 18% over last year, potentially due to the buzz and appeal of the Rube Goldberg-like Idea Box in our library.

#### **Anecdotal Information**

Tell us a story. Give two or more examples of how the project has helped an individual or group in your community.

The Idea Box unlocked the imaginations of hundreds of local kids. The rube-goldberg-like collection contraption dazzled children of all ages by making the act of imagining, inventing, and innovating an special event: "This must be how Santa Claus gets his ideas," supposed one ideator. Even preschool participants deemed the act of submitting their ideas into the machine as a kind of play: "I want to play that game!" one toddler plaintively exclaimed to her mother.

But the most thrilling aspect of the box, was witnessing children relish and participate in the realization of their ideas. Brendan, age 7, proudly declared to his peers at the first Lego Creators Club event: "This Lego club was my idea! I'm the one who came up with it!" Even programs that were not directly funded by this grant were claimed by engaged participants. After a school visit, one student recognized staff in the library, and said "I saw you at Pleasant Hill Elementary!" A classmate, who had submitted a request for a librarian to come to his school, declared "That was my idea, you know! I put it in the Idea Box."

At the Night of 1,000 Inventions, an evening program inspired by dozens of submissions for robots, rockets, and other technologies, one 5<sup>th</sup> grader eagerly shared his own invention, made from packing materials, tin foil, popsicle sticks, and duct tape: "This is the time travel machine...You say the date and then you pop it [one of several air-filled pouches strung to the handle]...and you're there. Say you went back to 1983. Then you're there, but you want to get back, right? So you say '2012!' and you pop it [steps on another pouch]...and your back! That's my invention." The machine also included an emergency pouch in case the traveler is stuck in time, and one more that takes you "to the end of time."

**Exemplary Project**

If you feel your project was exemplary and others could learn from it and replicate it, please tell us why.

The Idea Box empowers children in the most direct way: by giving youth a voice, investing in the things they value, and giving them a platform to participate in the actualization of their ideas. Libraries traditionally offer collections and programs that feed children's imaginations, but our organizations have the potential to support youth in a deeper way by casting children as creators and "agents" of change and community involvement. Libraries can apply the Idea Box philosophy of direct action on children's declared interests, by opening the process of programming and inviting children to determine the experiences available at their library. In this way, libraries can demonstrate to children that they will shape the future, and that they need not wait to "grow up" before their ideas are taken seriously.

**FEEDBACK FOR THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY ON THE GRANT PROCESS**

We want to learn and improve our grant processes. Please let us know what worked and what we could do differently to make it a better experience. Thank you!

*Doc.#15606*



## IDEA BOX PARENT SURVEY

Please answer the following questions by circling one response, then bring the completed survey to the info desk.

**1. What is your child's grade level in school?**

Preschool

Pre-K

Kindergarten

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

High School

**2. My child is full of ideas that he/she shares with me.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**3. Adults listen to and act on my child's ideas.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

**4. My child is:**

Not Creative at All

Not Very Creative

Somewhat Creative

Very Creative

Exceptionally Creative

**5. How many ideas did your child submit to the Idea Box?**

None    1    2    3    4    5    More Than 5

**6. After participating in the Idea Box program, my child is \_\_\_\_\_ to express and/or take action on his/her ideas.**

Much Less Likely

Less Likely

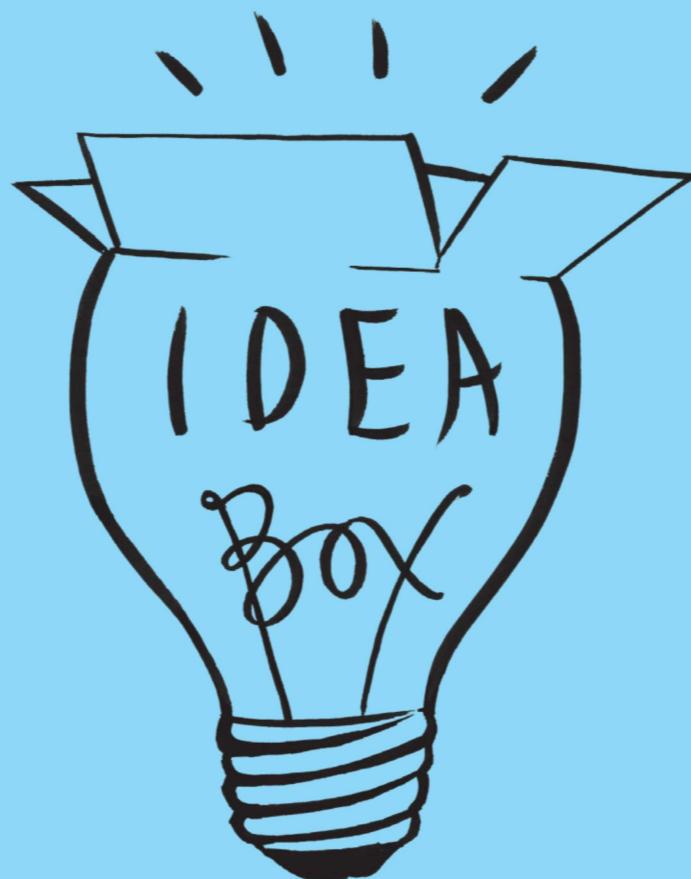
Neither More or Less Likely

More Likely

A Lot More Likely

**7. In one word, how would you describe a child's imagination?**

# BRINGING AN IDEA TO LIFE WITH THE



A CHILD  
BRINGS  
HER IDEAS  
TO THE  
LIBRARY





A RUBE GOLDBERG-LIKE IDEA  
COLLECTION CONTRAPTION AWAITS

THE CHILD WRITES DOWN THE IDEA AND DROPS IT INTO THE MACHINE



 I agree

PLEASANT HILL LIBRARY »

## Language Fest!

Kids can learn foreign languages, including: Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French, German, and Italian. Teachers/People who speak that fluent language can be stationed around the room can teach kids how to speak the different languages. Kids will love it!!!

 Add your comment

Submitted by caturner2001 3 months ago

**5**  
votes

 I disagree

BOOKS/STORYTELLING »

## Read Aloud

Children age of eight and up may read aloud to younger children in story hour.

 Add your comment

Submitted by Community Member 5 months ago

**5**  
votes

 I disagree

ROBOTS/INVENTIONS/TECH »

## Robot

Moving + talking robot  
(Owen, age 5)

 Add your comment

Submitted by idea.box 4 months ago

**5**  
votes

 I disagree

LEGOS/GAMES/TOYS »

## Marble machine

Have a marble machine  
(Sarah, age 11)

 Add your comment

Submitted by idea.box 4 months ago

**5**  
votes

 I disagree

PLEASANT HILL LIBRARY »

## movie night

movie night

 Add your comment

Submitted by idea.box 4 months ago

**5**  
votes

 I disagree

ANIMALS/DINOSAURS »

## Magic

Magic and magical animals  
(Josie, age 10)

 Add your comment

Submitted by idea.box 4 months ago

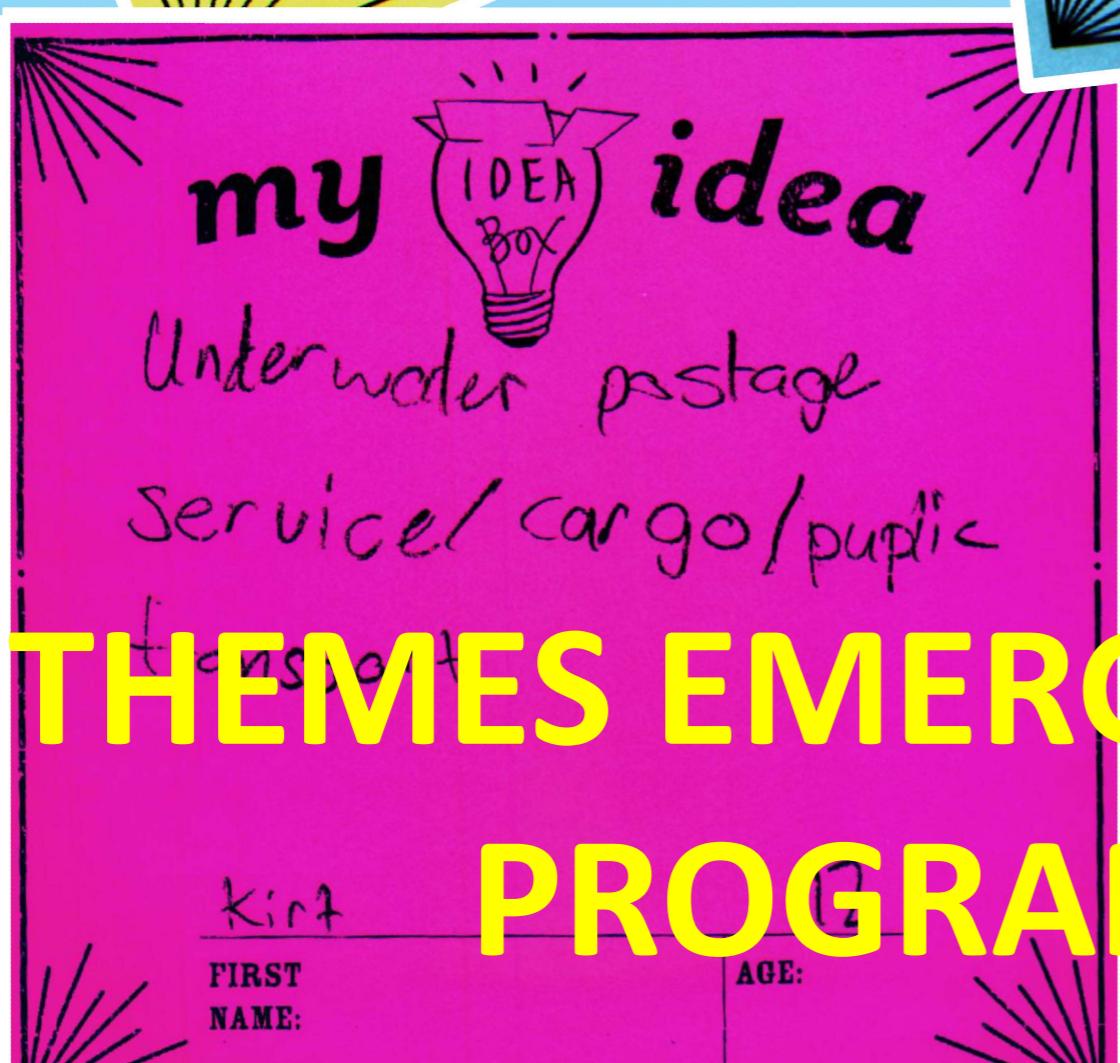
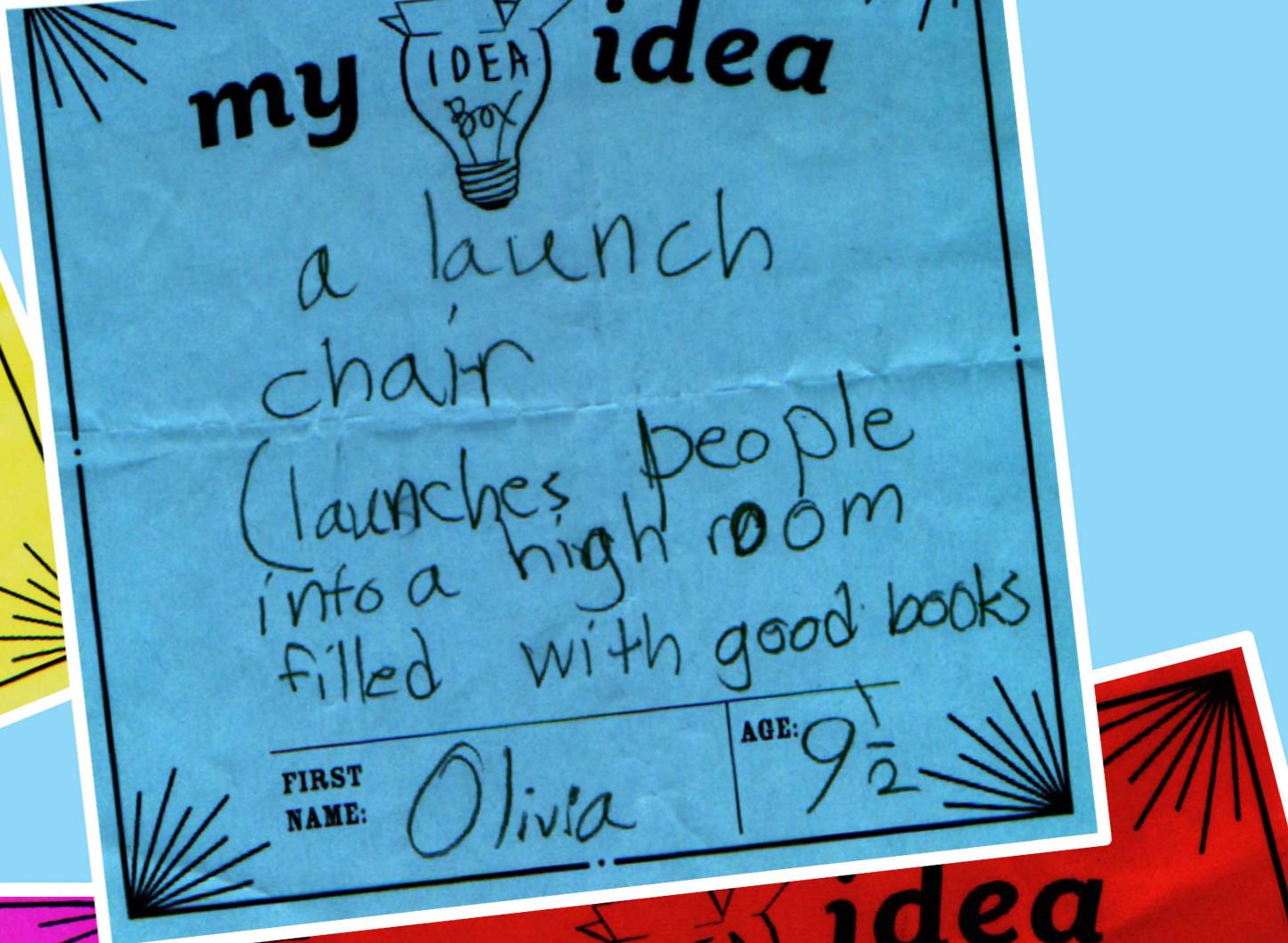
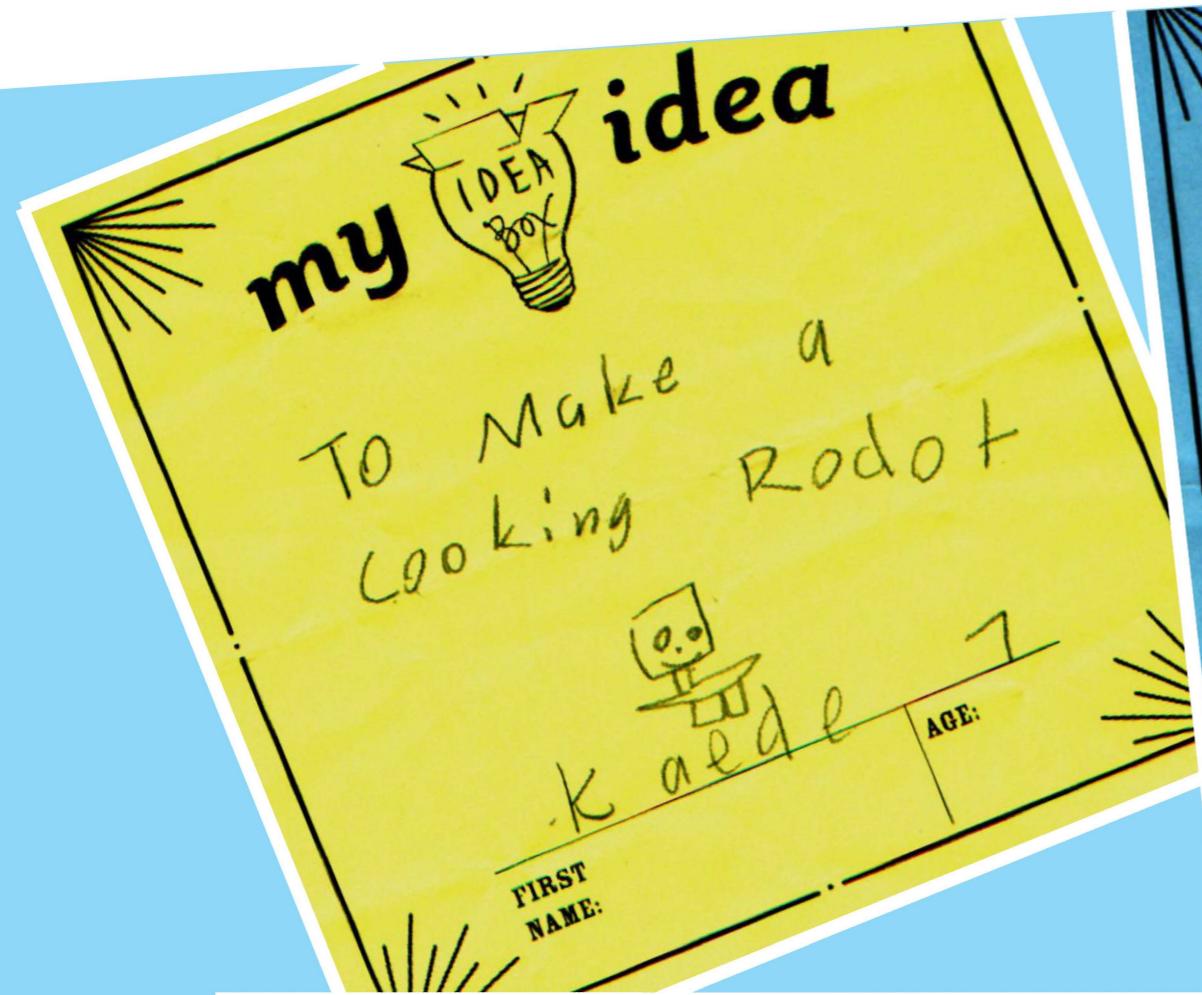
**5**  
votes

 I disagree

EACH IDEA IS  
REVIEWED  
AND SHARED  
WITH THE  
COMMUNITY

ACTIONABLE  
IDEAS ARE  
IDENTIFIED OR  
VOTED ON





THEMES EMERGE THAT INSPIRE  
PROGRAM DESIGN

**NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND MORE  
COMMUNITY INPUT LEAD TO  
PLANS FOR A “NIGHT OF 1,000  
INVENTIONS”**



INVENTOR'S LAB

THE EVENT FOSTERS MORE CREATIVITY.  
YOUTH SEE THEIR IDEAS BECOME REALITIES



10%

*My child is “very” or  
“exceptionally creative”*

AN EVALUATION PHASE SHOWS THAT  
PARTICIPATING FAMILIES INCREASINGLY  
RECOGNIZE THE POWER AND CREATIVITY OF  
CHILDREN’S IMAGINATIONS

57%

*My child is “more likely” or  
“much more likely” to express  
and act on ideas.*



# ***idea box***

AT THE PLEASANT HILL LIBRARY

MAY - JULY 2012

# KIDS!

## YOU HAVE AMAZING IDEAS

SHARE THEM WITH EVERYONE  
AT THE PLEASANT HILL LIBRARY

Just drop them in our crazy  
collection contraption...

THEN GO TO  
→ CCCLIB.ORG/IDEABOX ←  
TO PICK YOUR FAVORITES!

TOGETHER WE'RE GOING TO MAKE  
IDEAS COME TRUE THIS SUMMER

Pleasant Hill Library  
1750 Oak Park Blvd  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523  
(925) 646-6434

Tue: 1 – 8  
Wed / Thu : 11 – 6  
Fri / Sat: 10 – 5  
Sun / Mon: Closed



The Idea Box is supported in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.



*"Small Town Atmosphere  
Outstanding Quality of Life"*

May 23, 2017

**Subject: Idea Box**

Dear Contra Costa County Library:

On behalf of the Town of Danville, I would like to express our enthusiastic support for the proposed Idea Box program through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant. We share the library's goal of improving the quality of life for families in our community and promoting the growth and learning of its youngest residents. Having reviewed the County Library's activities around the prototype launched several years ago, we recognize the potential for using this creative approach to soliciting ideas directly from youth and collaborating with the community to bring those ideas to life.

We are excited to be an active partner with the Danville Community Library to encourage youth to create, share, and act on their original ideas through the Idea Box. The Danville Library has the largest Teen Advisory Board in the Contra Costa County Library, and we hope that the Idea Box will continue to engage youth and teens in the community in a fun and interactive way.

Starting at the end of this year and through Summer of 2018, the Town is dedicated to assisting in the promotion of the Idea Box. Utilizing our web presence, social media accounts, print publications, and other avenues of communication to drive family and community engagement in the program. As submissions roll in, we are also happy to explore further ways that we can support the library's process of realizing those submissions in the form of family programs.

We look forward to working with you to celebrate the imaginations of our local children.

Sincerely,

Renee S. Morgan  
Mayor

cc: Seng Lovan, Senior Community Library Manager, [slovan@ccclib.org](mailto:slovan@ccclib.org)  
Nat Rojanasathira, Assistant to the Town Manager, [nat@danville.ca.gov](mailto:nat@danville.ca.gov)

510 LA GONDA WAY, DANVILLE, CALIFORNIA 94526



# City of Pittsburg

65 Civic Avenue  
Pittsburg, CA 94565-3814

May 22, 2017

To Whom It May Concern  
Contra Costa County Library  
777 Arnold Drive, Suite 210  
Martinez CA 94553

**RE: Letter of Support for IDEA BOX program**

Dear Contra Costa County Library:

On behalf of the City of Pittsburg, I would like to express support for the proposed Idea Box program. The City and the Library share the goal of improving the quality of life for families in this community and promoting the growth and learning of its youngest residents. This program will advance this effort.

Having reviewed the County Library's activities around the prototype launched several years ago, we recognize the potential for using this creative approach to soliciting ideas directly from youth and collaborating with the community to bring those ideas to life.

The City looks forward to being an active partner with the Pittsburg Library to be an active partner with the Pittsburg Library to encourage youth to create, share, and act on their original ideas through the Idea Box.

Starting at the end of this year and through Summer 2018, the City is prepared to assist in the promotion of the Idea Box by utilizing the City's web site, social media accounts, print publications, and other avenues of communication to encourage family and community engagement in the program.

We look forward to working with you to celebrate the imaginations of local children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Sbranti'.

Joe Sbranti  
City Manager



**City of Pleasant Hill**

**Mayor**

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May 18, 2017

Ms. Melinda Cervantes  
Contra Costa County Librarian  
Contra Costa County Library  
1750 Oak Park Blvd.  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear Ms. Cervantes:

As Mayor of the City of Pleasant Hill, I am delighted to express enthusiastic support for the proposed Idea Box program at the Pleasant Hill Community Library. The City shares the Library's goal of improving the quality of life for families in our community and promoting the growth and learning of our youngest residents.

Having reviewed the County Library's activities around the prototype launched several years ago, I recognize the potential for using this creative approach to soliciting ideas directly from the youth in our community and collaborating with the entire community to bring those ideas to life. I am excited that the City will be an active partner with the Pleasant Hill Community Library in encouraging youth to create, share, and act on their original ideas through the Idea Box.

The City is dedicated to partnering in the promotion of the Idea Box from the end of 2017 through the summer of 2018. Utilizing the City's web presence, social media, print publications, and other avenues of communication will help drive family and community engagement in the program.

As submissions role in, the City will explore further ways to support the Library's process of turning those submissions into programs that can be enjoyed by the entire family. I look forward to working with you in celebrating the imaginations of our local children.

Sincerely,

*Michael G. Harris, Jr.*

Michael G. Harris, OD  
Mayor