

**NETA Kids Club Phone Conference
Notes by Mike McKenzie/APT**

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OVERVIEW

Lots of stations have kids clubs and lots more would like to. Kids clubs can be done in many different ways and for several different purposes. Kids clubs can

- 1) offer incentives to parents to become financial supporters of public television
- 2) provide promotional value to reinforce a station's mission and stimulate viewership
- 3) provide added services to children and extend the mission of children's programming
- 4) create partnerships with other non-profit institutions including libraries, museums, zoos, and science centers which serve the same market

We gathered a diverse panel to discuss several different approaches to kids clubs and share their ideas with phone conference participants. The panel included:

Bob Neese - Louisiana Public Broadcasting

LPB does kids events in a large market area - the whole state of Louisiana - by concentrating efforts for maximum impact. It's a lot of work, but LPB has developed some tactics to make it happen.

With the advent of the Local/National Zoom Initiative and the Share A Story Initiative, the Promotions Department's responsibilities in outreach have been expanded. However, it has also given us an opportunity to maximize our personnel and monetary resources in relation to our Kids Club Activities.

Because Louisiana Public Broadcasting is a statewide network, we try to schedule some kind of outreach event in all six of our major markets. Some of these events are handled by our Educational Services Department while others are handled by a combination of Promotions and Ed Services

What we try to do is to combine as many activities as possible into one road trip. For instance, when we went to Alexandria for a Zoom Into Action Book Drive at the local mall, we also held a Kids Club Breakfast with Clifford and Beesley the LPB Kids club mascot at 8 o'clock before the Mall opened. One of our board members got the building and the refreshments donated and provided volunteers to wear the mascot suits. Since we were there for a Zoom event, our stipend for Zoom paid for our travel and lodging. Our only real expense for the Kids Club Event was renting the Clifford suit and it was paid for with Ready to Learn money.

Not that this works every time. We were scheduled to go to Monroe in Northeast Louisiana for Zoobilation where we were going to do a ZOOM into Action Book Drive. Since this trip was scheduled for May 3, we decided that we should also do Share A Story Events on May 2 in the city. We scheduled events at a library and an elementary school and worked with one of our underwriters called Century Tel to get volunteers to help us read to the children. Using our Kids Club newsletter, we tried to set up a meet and greet

prior to Zoobilation for Kids club members. Unfortunately, we got very little response and we couldn't pull it off. However, we will continue to co-mingle these events in the future to maximize our resources and take care of our obligations at the same time.

Kim Rice - KERA, Dallas

Dallas has formed a partnership with the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas Zoo and The Science Place that includes three special annual events for members each year plus discounted admissions and other perks.

KERA in Dallas has formed a partnership with the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas Zoo and The Science Place that includes three special annual events for members each year plus discounted admissions and other perks. KERA asks \$120 for membership and has about 200 members. Children receive a goody bag with stickers, pencils and other items when they join. In addition to the three free events at the partner organizations, members receive discounted admission at other times. Members also receive the KERA Member Card which offers other great discounts.

For more information, check out KERA's Kids Club online at

<http://www.kera.org/kids/kidsclub/>

Tiffany Tyson - KRMA, Denver

Denver brands the afternoon programming itself as "Kids Club"! KRMA also does the birthday thing. Tiffany talked about doing an online kids club newsletter and annual parties at the station.

Rocky Mountain PBS Kids Club, currently about 3,000 members strong.

The Rocky Mountain PBS Kids Club is a multi-part branding strategy used to build membership and awareness with parents and children.

We incorporate the "Kids Club" into every aspect of our promotion, not just membership. We even use it for educational outreach activities.

On-air we have talent reinforcing the Kids Club message in every break. "You're watching the Kids Club on Rocky Mountain PBS," etc.

We do pitch around Children's Programming and we encourage parents to join and sign their kids up for the Kids Club. Membership is our basic \$40 level. Perks include on-air and online birthday mentions, birthday cards sent to each kid, invitations to special events and, if available, a special perk like passes to the Children's Museum. We also partner with local community organizations to offer discounts and incentives. For example, 10

percent off at the Butterfly Pavillion, or free passes to a soccer game. Pledge does result in membership spikes.

Every year, we host a special event called the “Rocky Mountain PBS Kids Club Birthday Bash.” It’s free and open to the public. We do send out special notices to our Kids Club members, but no one is excluded. We have pony rides, face painting, a magic show, balloon animals and a walk-around character such as Arthur or Clifford. Last year, we began hosting the event in conjunction with National Kids Day. We enlist the Girl Scouts, local libraries, bookstores, etc. as partners. Last year, we had about 400 in attendance.

We also participate in community events such as the annual Kids Expo (sponsored by Radio Disney, featuring retailers, amusement parks, educational services, etc.) We sponsor a booth, bring along a walk-around character and hand out goodies. We also have parents fill out forms and put them in an “enter-to-win” box. We use the information gathered to recruit new Kids Club members.

We do try to expand our Kids Club into areas of the state outside of Denver. Sometimes we have story time at libraries in smaller communities, Clifford participates in parades, etc.

Our goal with our kids club is to build a unique, trusted brand and to build membership.