



Beginning in 2012, the Fremont County Library System, in collaboration with the Fremont County Youth Services Division, is launching *Changing Lives Through Literature*. The Program is based on a model developed by the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth in 1991. This is a diversion program that is designed and managed by the library and Youth Services.



Why does this program work?

This program was begun by those who believe that bringing carefully selected works of literature and juvenile offenders together can help the youth gain insight into their lives and behavior, while learning that they are not alone with their problems.

- literature is empowering
- discussions enhance that power
- the process of reading leads to reflection
- reflection leads to change

Program Facts and Procedure

- Operates in 12 states and the United Kingdom
- Has involved more than 5,000 offenders with dramatic impact on reducing recidivism rates –more than 50%
- The Young Adult Librarian will choose one young adult book to be read and lead a 6-week series of discussions
- Each youth participant will receive their own copy of the book & writing journal to keep
- After completion of the six week program, the juvenile will receive a signed documentation of completion to submit to the court system

Testimonials

"Staff who have participated in this program have enjoyed watching the students, diverted juvenile offenders ages 12 to 18, grow throughout the 10-week group." - *Amy Sommer Keating, assistant director of Juvenile Intake Services, Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court*

"This book taught me to open up more instead of holding things in." - *Female student in Fairfax County, age 16*

"The girls begin each class with wariness and distrust, but as time goes on, the walls crumble and the group melds into a coherent whole, with each member willing to respond in real and unguarded ways." - *Wendi Kaufman, facilitator, Fairfax County*

These programs are very well established and demonstrate verifiable success. Their impact has altered lives in a positive fashion and proven to be extremely cost effective. The websites listed below can provide more detail and data on the success of *Changing Lives Through Literature* programs that have been initiated across the country.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/cltl/>

<http://cltl.umassd.edu/AboutHome.cfm>

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/VALib/v55n4/fessler.html>



FREMONT COUNTY
Libraries

Engaging Minds • Enriching Lives

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www.fclsonline.org

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