

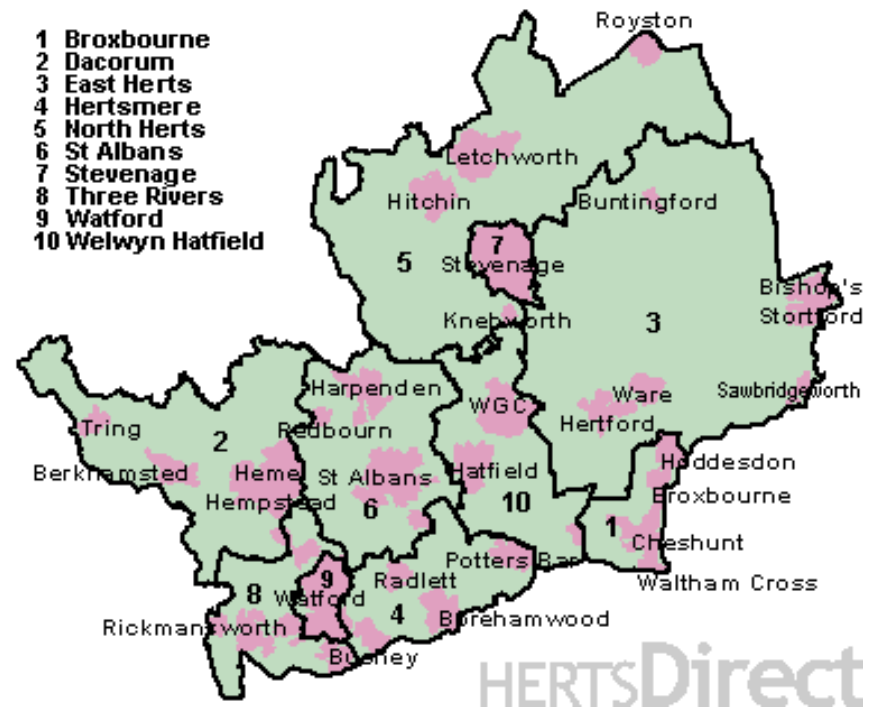
Delivering the Summer Reading Challenge in Hertfordshire

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The Local Context

- Two tier authority – covers 10 Districts.
- 1 million+ population.
- 49 libraries, plus 13 mobiles.
- 562 schools.
- Libraries, Culture & Learning is a portfolio within Children, Schools & Families department.



The Summer Reading Challenge



- Prior to 1999 Herts devised & delivered local Reading Challenges each summer.
- 1999 first national Summer Reading Challenge launched by The Reading Agency.
- Opportunity to benefit from economies of scale and high quality materials.
- National report “Inspiring Children: The impact of the summer reading challenge” 2003.

What we did



Identified opportunities to:

- Contribute to key national strategies and agendas.
- Incorporate into local strategic planning.
- Work in partnership.

How we did it

- Recruited young volunteers.
- Agreed mechanism for increasing participation of Children Looked After.
- Targeted articles for specialist publications e.g. Herts & Minds.
- Targeted promotion to schools according to need.
- Trained staff & volunteers.
- Celebrated achievement with certificate & medal presentations.



The difference made



2009

- 17,027 starters.
- 9,662 completers.
- 26% increase in boys completing.
- 706 children joined library for first time.

The difference made

- Improved relationship with Corporate Parenting leading to Reading Strategy.
- Increased staff confidence.
- Extended family participation in positive reading experiences.
- Young volunteers increased self esteem from making a positive contribution.



“My children think Quest Seekers is excellent and it has encouraged me as a mum to read, which I have really enjoyed and will carry on” Jason & Emily’s Mum

**“I enjoyed doing this with my grand daughter and hope to do it next year too.”
Grandparent**

**“It was rewarding listening to children talking about the books they had read and feeling their enthusiasm for them”
Volunteer**

„I looked forward to finishing each book and it gave me confidence to talk openly in front of people.’ - Chloe, 8

„It was very good because the reading helps you learn!’ – Freya, 6

„I think Quest Seekers is brilliant because when I’m upset I read a book and it makes my troubles go away.’ – Ella, 7

„It made me want to read more and made me proud when I completed it.’ – James, 10

Quest Seekers made me come to the library more and let me read some brilliant books.’ – Alex, 8

What we learnt

- Value of working in partnership.
- Crucial to maintain emphasis on reading for enjoyment not extension of homework.
- Bonuses & pitfalls of developing a young volunteer programme.
- Strengths of involving families in high profile presentation ceremonies.
- How to link SRC into our entire reader development and family learning programmes.
- To demonstrate how libraries contribute to national and local strategic objectives.

What Next?

- Strategy to resolve issues relating to capacity & resources.
- Building on Reading Strategy for Children Looked After.
- Linking SRC to family learning project working with Travellers.

What Next?



To infinity and beyond...