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THE LIBRARY WILL TAKE YOUR BOOKS

BACKGROUND

The Library is operated by Tulare County and has branch libraries in fifteen communities. The Tulare County Library is a member of the San Joaquin Valley Library System, a cooperative network of ten public library jurisdictions in seven counties of California's central valley. The Tulare County Library is also a member of the Heartland Regional Library Network of the Library of California.

Library Mission Statement

"The Tulare County Library strives to enrich the lives of all users by meeting the informational, recreational, self-educational and cultural needs of the community in a welcoming atmosphere. Through a trained, service-oriented staff, we provide organized collections of current-interest materials and access to additional resources through participation in cooperative library systems. We endeavor to fulfill our commitment to the future by providing stimulating materials and programs that encourage lifelong learning for all."

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2009-2010 Tulare County Grand Jury received a complaint alleging a branch of the Tulare County Library refused donated books based on the fact that they were not hard-bound and soft-bound books were too costly to catalog.

- d. Books are checked for content.
- e. All soft-bound books meeting gift book policy are accepted at all branches.

2. The Gift Book policy is as follows:
 - “Branch Managers may accept gifts of books, magazines, and audio and video materials in the name of the County Librarian. Once accepted, they become the property of the Tulare County Library. The Library will select from the materials those which are suitable for library purposes and discard or donate to charitable organizations the remainder of the items. No gift can be accepted under the condition that it be added to the collection or remain in any one branch forever. Books may be assigned or transferred to other branches as needed, or they may be discarded.
 - Gift items to be considered for adding to the collection must meet the following criteria:

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

1. Relevant witnesses were interviewed.
2. Relevant documents were reviewed.
3. Follow up interviews with relevant witnesses were conducted.

FINDINGS

1. Initial Interviews indicated:
 - a. Staff is helpful and polite.
 - b. Staff is trained when hired but receive no refresher training.
 - c. The decision to accept donated books is delegated to the branch library staff.

- They must be in like-new condition.
 - They must not be missing the dust jacket.
 - They must be free of stains, torn or loose pages, highlighting or underlining, personal names or bookplates, yellowed or yellowing pages.
 - They cannot be book club editions.
 - Gifts from Friends groups and other organizations must be cleared in advance with the County Librarian.
 - All gift subscriptions must be cleared in advance with the County Librarian. The County Librarian may approve the inclusion of bookplates in significant donations, including memorial gifts or materials especially selected or purchased for the library.”
3. Follow-up interviews indicated:
- a. Staff seemed to be more familiar with the gift book policy.
 - b. One branch indicated that staff or Friends of the Library check for content and make decisions on which books to keep.

CONCLUSIONS

The County Library System is a well run organization and the staff is generally courteous, knowledgeable and helpful. The book donation policy is sound. However on one occasion, because of confusion, the policy was not applied correctly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to train new hires on Library policies.
2. Develop a plan for refresher training to include all policies and procedures within the Library system.
3. Train all volunteers in Library Policies.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Tulare County Librarian