



James Johnson
City of Long Beach
Councilmember, Seventh District

Date: March 19, 2013
To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember James Johnson, Seventh District
Councilmember Patrick O'Donnell, Fourth District
Subject: B.A.R.K. Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Request the City Manager investigate the implementation of the B.A.R.K. reading program in libraries throughout the city.

DISCUSSION:

Beach Animals Reading with Kids (B.A.R.K.) is a program that encourages children to increase their reading skills and self-confidence by reading aloud to certified therapy dogs. Through the B.A.R.K. program, reading to certified therapy dogs helps children who may otherwise be intimidated by reading to adults to feel comfortable while practicing and increasing their reading skills.

For the last two years, B.A.R.K has been tested as a pilot program at the Bret Harte Library and has had great success. Additionally, the program has recently been successfully introduced at Los Altos Library in the 4th District. This program has also been implemented at libraries throughout California, including Signal Hill, Lakewood, and Bellflower. Therefore, the city manager is requested to investigate the implementation of this program at interested libraries throughout the city.

FISCAL IMPACT

The B.A.R.K. program is provided by volunteers without cost to the city. Therefore, implementing this program is one way we can enhance services to our residents within our existing fiscal constraints.