

DOT'S PACK SAVE THE TOY LIBRARY

Our Brownie Leader is always trying to think of ways our unit can help people and a few weeks ago she told us about a special children's library that was going to have to shut down.

She said the library was special because it lent toys instead of books and it travelled round to visit nurseries and playschools all over the area. But the library's van had broken down and unless the money could be raised for repairs, it would have to close.

Our Leader introduced us to two ladies called Pat and Val who had been running the library for 15 years. 'Ever since our children got too big to play with toys,' Pat told us.

Pat explained that the library was important to lots of people in the town because not everyone could afford to buy all the latest expensive toys. Borrowing them from the library meant their children didn't have to miss out.

Our Leader asked if we'd like to help save the library. Of course we all shouted 'YES!' at the tops of our voices, but it was tricky to think of a way to raise all that money – and FAST!

Some of the parents had started to arrive to collect their children and Neelam's dad went over to speak to our Leader. A big smile spread across her face and she clapped her hands and said: 'Listen everyone, Mr Ruparel has a fantastic idea. He says

he'll help us to design a website for the library so we can ask people for help.'

The next week at Brownies Neelam's dad came along to talk to us about the website and what we'd need to do. He said first we should register a name for the site – and it had to be one no one else was using.

The library was called Pat and Val's Toy Share so we came up with six or seven names that Mr Ruparel said he'd check out. Then we talked about what should be on the website and how visitors would be able to navigate round it – that means how they'd find their way to different pages.

I never realised there was so much to think about! Mr Ruparel said we needed to plan what would be on each page and work out how it would link from the home page (that's the first page).

We'd also have to carefully choose the words we used so people could easily find the site from search engines like Google and Yahoo. He explained that words like 'toy' and 'library' would need to be high up on all the pages.

We also had to set up an email address so people could get in touch with Pat and Val. Mr Ruparel said it would be better than using a telephone number because you had to be careful about giving out personal information online.

It took three whole Brownie meetings to put the website together. Mr Ruparel brought along his laptop computer so we could see the site while it was 'under construction' – we thought

that was funny, it made it sound like a house or something!

We all drew pictures of toys and Mr Ruparel scanned them and put them on the site. Genie designed a really good logo with a teddy bear in the middle and 'Pat and Val's Toy Share' around the outside so that went at the top of the home page.

Once it was all finished we invited Pat and Val along to one of our Brownie meetings for a special launch party. Mr Ruparel came along too and he even gave Val a quick lesson on how to read the emails.

A photographer and reporter from the local paper came as well – our Leader had told them about the website – and they asked us lots of questions and took photos, including one of Genie holding up a picture of her logo.

A few weeks later our Leader said she had some fantastic news for us – the toy library had been SAVED! The big toy and book shop in town had seen the story in the paper and had offered to sponsor the library.

The shop paid for the repairs to the van and even gave Pat and Val a few new toys. Now there's a sign on the back that says 'Sponsored by Richardson's Books and Toys'.

Our Leader said lots of other people had contacted Pat and Val through the website to offer donations and help. So now they've got extra volunteers, lots more new toys and a van that works. SOO-PER work Brownies!



Did you know Dot has her own website that you can visit? It's www.missdorothy.com and you can find out all about her friends, read her daily diary and follow her adventure stories. You can also send Dot a personal email and she'll send a message back.

It's really important to follow Dot's special safety rules when using the internet...

- * I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.
- * I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- * I will never agree to get together with someone I 'meet' online without first checking with my parents. If they agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.
- * I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.
- * I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. If I receive a message like that, I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.
- * I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not break these rules or access other areas without their permission.
- * I will not download anything from anyone I don't know.



Web safe

(Our thanks to www.missingkids.co.uk for the use of these safety rules)