



# JLAMS

*A Peer-Reviewed Journal of the New York Library Association*

## **The Library as Living Space: How Glasgow, Scotland Defines Its Public Libraries**



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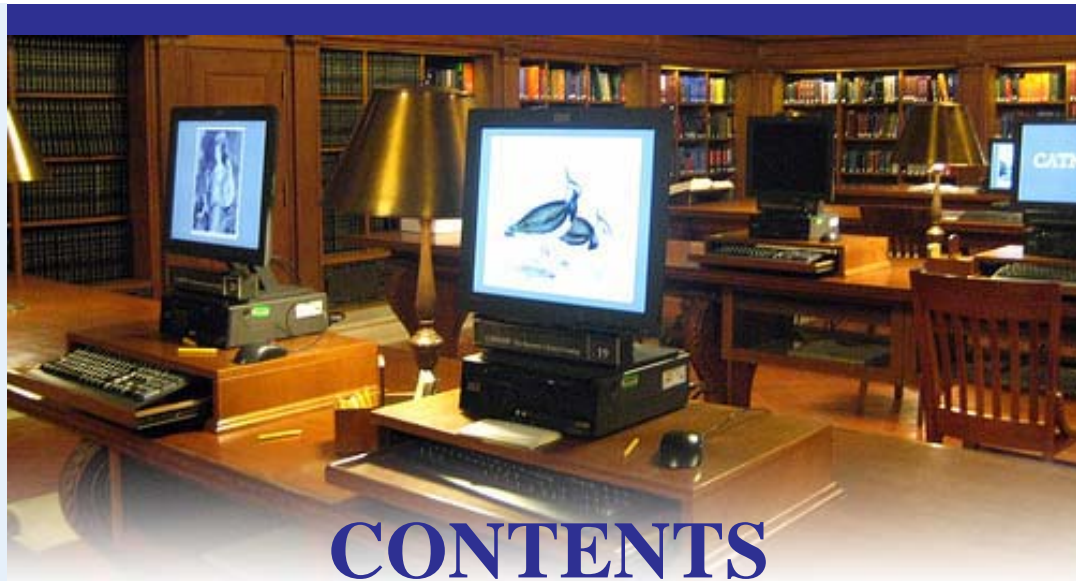
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## President's Message

*Edward Falcone, LAMS President.*

It is my pleasure to introduce this premier edition of JLAMS, the journal of the Library Administration and Management Section. Our peer-reviewed articles will cover a wide variety of topics of interest to school, academic, and public librarians.

Congratulations to our first group of authors and reviewers, and to editor Richard Naylor, for an outstanding effort! I encourage you to assist us by sending in your comments and suggestions, spreading the word about JLAMS, and perhaps even submitting an article for publication.



# Editor's Column

*Richard J. Naylor, LAMS Editor*

Welcome to the first issue of JLAMS. May it be the first of many. New York librarians have long made their marks in the field of Librarianship and played major roles in our national associations. So it seems only natural that NYLA, our state association, have its own professional journal, in whose pages, be they electronic or paper, we can share best practices and best thinking, provide a forum for conflicting and new ideas, and encourage research in library science within the state.

We must thank our authors for stepping up and giving us this beginning. Without them there could be no JLAMS. We are all very busy and they have responding to a request for even more effort.

We must also thank our referees who reviewed the articles and made suggestions for improvement. We have had the help of excellent people from throughout the state. The peer review process is an important part of the writing, as it enriches and improves the ideas put forth, and as it suggests areas for further research.

We invite all librarians and information science professionals in our state to help us build on this beginning by further advancing our work and submitting articles that help us improve library services throughout the state and nation. We can look upon this issue as a beginning. As we move forward we will encourage participation, ideas for columns, and input from members as to how we can make JLAMS more useful. If you are part of an important new service or project, won't you, dear reader, consider making your own contribution to our new journal?

## PEER REVIEWED ARTICLE

### **The Library as Living Space: How Glasgow, Scotland Defines Its Public Libraries**

*Deborah Lines Andersen*

The 33 public libraries of Glasgow, Scotland have defined their service delivery based upon a model of lifelong learning and library use as an integral part of daily life. Libraries are central to each city neighborhood, allowing patrons to walk in the door and feel at home in a space with relaxed atmosphere, comfortable furniture, food, and drinks. Glasgow libraries emphasize children, young adults, international populations, and cultural and athletic activities in their service plans. The research in this paper is based on a six-month qualitative study using participant-observer and grounded theory methodology.

There are 33 public libraries in Glasgow, Scotland. They are spread across the city of 750,000 people and accessible via the public bus system that connects the entire city and crosses over the Clyde River—a major waterway that flows east to west, dividing the city into districts north and south of the river. Many of the 33 libraries date from the days of Andrew Carnegie.<sup>1</sup> They are beautiful red stone buildings with pillars, entrance stairs, and rooms that are two stories tall, divided by dark wood paneling and stained glass windows, and lit by curved sky lights in each room. These libraries from the beginning of the 20th century are the essence of “library” that most people think of if asked to close their eyes and imagine a library.<sup>2</sup>

Glasgow has built additions to these libraries and created new ones since the days of Carnegie. The main research library for the city, the Mitchell Library, has a grand reading room with paneling and stained glass, but it also has a newer, six story wing that houses its archives, manuscripts, family history, business records, Glasgow architecture, Glasgow history, Clyde-built ships, newspapers, reference collections, and council records.<sup>3</sup> The Mitchell wing also houses a computer room with 46 high speed Internet stations. Collections do not circulate at the Mitchell and one must sign in to use the archives. Anyone in the city with a library card can come and use the computers here, or at any of the 32 branch libraries.

The Mitchell Library is a fine research library, the kind that one would find in major cities of the world. It is not so different from the New York State Library in Albany, New York, the New York Public Library in New York City, or many large university libraries that scholars visit each year. The 32 branch libraries are a different story—the focus of this paper. Entering these libraries and studying their collections, layout, and programs presents a picture of service delivery and service focus that is very different from public libraries in the United States. Observing the focus and function of these libraries elicits stories and surprising lessons that could be applied to service delivery in other public libraries.

#### **A Variety of Branches**

The Gallery of Modern Art, situated in the center of Glasgow, was the home of the first public library in Glasgow, the Stirling Library, and today houses not only the museum but a basement cybercafé that is also one of Glasgow’s public libraries.<sup>4</sup> The entrance to the library is a café with couches, coffee

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tables, tables and chairs. National and international magazines and newspapers are on display here along with new books, music CD-ROMs and headphones, and a coffee bar that sells espressos, lattes, hot cocoa, and a variety of sandwiches, soups, and snacks.

To the right of the café are four reading rooms. There are no study tables. Instead, each reading room has upholstered chairs and couches, and more coffee tables. Patrons bring their café snacks into these spaces, select books or newspapers from the shelves, and settle into reading. Two of the spaces house service stations where patrons can check books in or out, or ask questions of library staff. Based upon six months of observing patrons and staff, it appears that this library is well used by city inhabitants who come in to read a novel, listen to a piece of music, or scan a daily newspaper.

Behind the reading rooms are 40 high-speed Internet stations complete with headphones and scanners. One staff member assigns patrons to the computer stations and reminds them when their time is up. Staff provides technology assistance to patrons—from teenagers to senior citizens who are focusing on word processing, email, scanning, and World Wide Web connections. These computers are part of a citywide initiative to bring up-to-date computing into every library in the city. The final library to receive computer connections—Langside—was wired in spring 2003.

### **Library as Children's and Young Adults' Space**

All Glasgow branch libraries have children's and young adults' spaces. These vary in size and depth of collection, but have many common attributes.

- Toddler reading materials are housed in wooden book boxes built to look like brightly colored trains or creatures. There appears to be no attempt made to sort these books. Children can sit on the floor and pour through the books without parental concern for their order.
- Children's spaces have tables and chairs for little people as well as adult-sized seating. Children's spaces are defined by separate rooms, different shelving colors, posters on the wall, or furniture type.
- Many children's spaces have their own computers, on low tables, with notices to parents about Internet filtering and parental supervision. Young adult spaces do not uniformly have their own computers. It appears that teenagers did their computing in the same space as adults. The Anniesland Library does have two separate computing areas. One is a standard setup of computers around desk-height tables. The second, a bit less usual, puts computers against an outside glass window at bar height with bar stools for patrons. Passersby look in and watch people using the Internet. Teenagers appeared to be the primary users of these very public stations that look much more like commercial cybercafés than public library areas.
- Young adult spaces are almost uniformly separate from children's spaces. They are defined by couches, sometimes with extra pillows, coffee tables, shelves that divide them from the adult space, and signs that clearly indicate that these are teenage materials. Some libraries had additional spaces with chairs and tables that appear to have been taken over primarily by teenagers. Three or four teens might be sitting at a table quietly studying in these areas.

### **Library as Recreational Space**

The libraries of Glasgow use innovative pairings of activity centers to deliver services to citizens. Both Pollok and Springburn Libraries reside in the same building as their respective local indoor swimming pools. Recreational centers abound in Scotland so it is not uncommon to see signs to the local indoor swimming

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pool wherever one travels. Scottish weather is often wet and chilly so these indoor facilities allow for year-round fitness activities. It is nonetheless initially startling to walk into Pollok Library and be greeted by the receptionist who also collects fees for using the public swimming pool. The library entrance is a bit to the right. It has collections in fiction and nonfiction, children's and young adults' materials, large print books, magazines, daily newspapers, and multimedia shelving for DVDs, CD-ROMs, and videotapes. These collections appeared quite standard across the branch libraries. Additionally, at Pollok there are posters and shelves for materials on health, fitness, and sports—a collection proportionally larger than in other branch libraries throughout Glasgow.

Pollok Library also has high-speed Internet computers available to its patrons. What is unique about these computers and the library itself is that there is a glass wall between the library and the swimming area. One can sit in the library and view the World Wide Web while also watching children and their parents swim in the pool or play in the shallow toddlers' area. The library and swimming area are visually as well as architecturally integrated into one recreation center.

Springburn Library does not have glass walls integrating service functions, but it does have a central desk at the entrance, a library on the ground floor, an Internet room on the second floor, and swimming pool, gymnasiums, and fitness center in the same building. *There is no librarian in the library.* Instead, there is a self-checkout station for books and signs directing one to the central desk for help.<sup>5</sup> Patrons pick out materials themselves and then either check them out or settle into one of the comfortable couches or chairs for their reading. There is also a young adult space with couches and coffee table, a children's area with red shelving (as opposed to the grey shelving in the rest of the space), low chairs and tables, and computers that house educational games software.

### **Library as Community Space**

Among the hundreds of free brochures and pamphlets available in the Glasgow public libraries, one might find descriptions and contact information of such topics as:

- Health and physical well being
- Mental health and especially depression and anxiety
- Social services
- Sports including road races and exercise
- Legal services provided by the city
- Parliament and local government
- Glasgow museums
- Museums throughout Scotland
- Travel including local bus schedules
- Events such as opera, musicals, and concerts
- Other events such as expositions, and special exhibits around the city.

All of this information is ephemeral and needs to be changed, sorted, and discarded on a regular basis. Someone must pay attention to this community material at all libraries. It extends the informational service boundaries of the library system to include cultural events wherever they occur. Patrons can go to the library expecting to find newspapers, magazines, books, movie listings for that evening, health information, or a movie to take home. In one instance at Pollokshaws Library a library staff member counseled a young woman about how to obtain a passport.

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### **Library as Cultural and Museum Space**

Along with the Gallery of Modern Art and its cybercafé, there are other branch libraries that combine the more traditional roles of libraries with additional information services for patrons. Many of the libraries sell paper, pens, notebooks and other stationery items. Additionally, most sell historical materials. Paperbound books and maps tell the history of various districts in Glasgow. One might buy a reproduction ordnance survey map from the 1800s, a history of Queens Park in the Shawlands district, or general histories of other areas within the city.<sup>6</sup> Libraries often sell historic, black-and-white postcards of buildings or parks in their neighborhoods. The Mitchell Library, in fact, sold postcards of the original Springburn and Mitchell Libraries.

Other libraries are housed with museum collections or maintain a portion of their floor space for historic materials. Elderpark Library maintains a separate room for historic displays. Hillhead Library uses some of the wall space in its upstairs balcony for displays of black-and-white photographs of this western area of the city of Glasgow. Pollok Leisure Centre uses a corner between the library and the swimming pool to display local historic artifacts. Springburn Library has its historic and museum materials in the same room as its computer terminals.

Whiteinch Library is particularly rich in its historic displays. The main reading room houses this library's computer terminals as well as reading desks for the general public. These reading desks, seating four people each, are old library tables with glass tops. Under the glass on each table is an extraordinary display of photographs of old buildings, libraries, schools, and school pictures. Each table has a different set. It was hard to work on taking notes when fascinating people and buildings from the past were staring up from the past!

Some libraries take on the form of a museum or gallery space. The Langside Library children's room contains a mural, painted in 1920 by Maurice William Greiffenhagen, that depicts Mary Queen of Scots in the Battle of Langside, 1568.<sup>7</sup> The Whiteinch Library hosted an art exhibit of Dick Bruna's Miffy prints.<sup>8</sup> These are graphically simple with black outlines and solid primary colors for the rabbits and other animals that he draws. The Glasgow Arts Council provided the prints, which were not for sale. The prints were each several feet across and made quite a display in the children's portion of the library. A good example of interlibrary cooperation occurred in relation to the Miffy illustrations. At several other libraries in Glasgow there were promotional brochures left on tables and shelves that told about the Miffy exhibit. Given that it is easy to get from place to place on Glasgow buses, these promotional brochures were sure to attract parents interested in taking their children to this art exhibit at another local public library. There were numerous instances of one library promoting the activities of others, either in the form of booklets for special events or of fliers for individual exhibitions such as the Miffy display.

### **Library as Computing Space**

There is a strong program focused on learning and education in the form of collaboration among various cultural organizations in Glasgow. Titled "REAL: Lifelong Learning," this is a work in progress for Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Colleges Group, the University of Strathclyde, the University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, and Learning and Teaching Scotland.<sup>9</sup> Programs bring computing classes to the citizens of Glasgow and are promoted through educational posters such as the "REAL: Learning" poster that lists the following goals for participants:

- Gain computer knowledge
- Develop confidence
- Acquire new skills or simply develop existing ones

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- Improve career prospects
- Develop personal interests and hobbies.

Explicit in this list of goals is the notion that computing is not just an employment skill, or even just a skill for communication. In particular, the idea that learning computing will lead to developing self confidence is an ideal at the heart of Glasgow public libraries. They address human needs based upon a wide range of human concerns.

### **Library as International Space**

Glasgow is home to individuals from a variety of nations. Residents speak Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and Chinese among others. Glasgow libraries reflect this diversity. There are books and audiovisual materials available in various languages depending upon the makeup of a particular neighborhood. There are also posters in a variety of languages, including a poster displayed at most branch libraries in 16 languages that gives directions for asylum seekers.<sup>10</sup> Library staff provide a variety of services for foreign nationals, including instruction on completing passport applications.

### **Lessons from the Libraries of Glasgow**

For someone used to public libraries in the United States, the Glasgow, Scotland libraries were a bit of a surprise. It was clear that their mission is to provide lifelong learning opportunities, including up-to-date computing, and an atmosphere conducive to both studying and leisure activities. At the same time, the Glasgow branch libraries follow policies that make them seem more like living room or family room space than the relatively formal spaces one sees in the United States. In particular, the following are indicators of these policies.

- Glasgow branch libraries are not archives. Just like a typical family, the staff throws daily newspapers out at the end of the day. There is a lot of newspaper reading in all the branch libraries. The newspapers serve their purpose and the staff discards them.
- Books are often in paperback. The staff fits them with plastic dust jackets but they appear less durable than cloth-bound novels and nonfiction materials. Again, it appears that these books are not supposed to last forever, but are to be used and then discarded.
- Eating, drinking, and socializing are encouraged. People drink soda and eat food while reading books in the branch libraries. Soda machines are, in fact, available to patrons on the main floor of several libraries. This feels like a family living room, complete with sofas, comfortable chairs, and coffee tables throughout almost all the branch libraries.
- Patrons can rent videos and other digital media. All branch libraries have videotapes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, but they come at a price. Libraries charge rates that are comparable to rates in the United States, as much as four dollars per videotape, for patrons to take materials home. Libraries appear to be in competition with private sector vendors, and in many instances charge more than the video store down the street from the branch library.
- There are differentiated levels of staffing expertise. Glasgow public libraries have made personnel decisions that put librarians with master's degrees mostly in the Mitchell reference library and put other staff, without degrees, in the branch libraries. Patrons can always find someone to help with checking out a book or using the Internet, but they might not find a reference librarian who could answer complicated questions about information in a given field. For that the patron would go to the Mitchell.

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- Access is on foot or by public transportation. These city libraries all have the advantage of being within walking distance of their various neighborhoods and an easy bus ride from other neighborhoods. This is not so much a policy decision as a fact of city life, but it allows patrons to come into the library, easily, on a daily basis, using the library the way they would use their living room for leisure reading, catching up on the news, or doing their daily email before they walk home.
- Glasgow focuses on lifelong learning and information seeking. Every library is designed to meet the information needs of citizens on a daily basis. Daily newspapers, highspeed Internet connections, children's collections, sofas and coffee tables all make these information centers attractive and inviting. The walls of these libraries are covered with informational posters and announcements about classes and upcoming events at every library. In several of these libraries one can go for a swim, or view an historical exhibition, and then take out a book, browse on the World Wide Web, or take a class.

This broad skill set appeals to individuals of all ages and cultures. It cuts across gender and nationality. Any library or library system—anywhere in the world—could adopt these goals for itself. This is a service model that integrates the library into the fabric of citizens' daily lives—creating libraries that are living rooms.

### **Notes**

1. See Thomas Mason. *Public and Private Libraries of Glasgow*. Glasgow: Thomas D. Morison, 1885; and Joseph d. Hendry. *A Social History of Branch Library Development with Special Reference to the City of Glasgow*. Glasgow: Scottish Library Association, 1974 for a history of the part that Andrew Carnegie played in Scottish library development as well as discussions of the creation of the Glasgow public library system.
2. In spring 2003 this author was a visiting fellow at the University of Glasgow, writing and doing research about public libraries in this city. The methodology for this systematic study was a grounded theory approach (see Anselm Strauss & Juliet Corbin. 1990. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications). Using structured quantitative data collection and qualitative observation sheets, the author visited these libraries, looking at floor plans, watching patrons, talking to staff, counting computer stations, and generally getting information about the similarities and differences among the libraries in Glasgow. Furthermore, this grounded theory approach allowed for comparisons between these libraries in a major Scottish city and libraries in the United States.
3. The Glasgow City Council is the main management organization for the city, with powers to tax citizens. Council records are thus public, government records and archived at the Mitchell Library. Glasgow's *Budget Proposals 2003/2004* lists line items under Cultural and Leisure Services that include "develop cultural, leisure and learning programmes for 5-18 year olds (£165,000)" and "develop adult literacy and numeracy programmes (£1,011,000)." Glasgow public libraries thus report to and are funded by the city council in a structure that puts sports facilities and libraries under the same governing body. The "leisure studies" program promotes an all-services view that is not dominated by library-only interests. In fact, one librarian at the Mitchell Library said that she could be transferred to staff a swimming pool if there were a shift in need! This leisure studies management model puts libraries in a broad context of life activities, and requires all staff persons to think of themselves in that broad context.
4. Mason, op. cit., describes Walter Stirling's 1785 bequest of this house on Miller Street, Glasgow, "to the city of Glasgow for the purpose of forming and maintaining a public library for the use of the citizens" (p. 34). This library building today houses the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) upstairs, with the cybercafé in its basement space.

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5. Self-checkout stations are in most Glasgow branch libraries. The patron puts her library card in a holder and then passes the zebra coded side of each book in front of a code reader. The machine prints out a charge slip with author, title, patron name, and due date for the book. Books can be returned to any of the 32 branch libraries no matter where one originally checked out the book.
6. Some of the works produced by Glasgow libraries and Cultural and Leisure Services include: Rudolph Kenna. *Old Glasgow Shops*; Ronald Smith. *The Gorbals—Historical Guide and Heritage Walks*; and George Fairfull Smith. *Glasgow Illustrated*.
7. For information on Maurice William Greiffenhagen (1862-1931) see <http://www.artmagick.com/artists/greiffenhagen.asp>.
8. Examples of Dick Bruna's Miffy books include *Miffy Loves New York City* (Big Tent Entertainment Corporation, 2003), *What's at the Zoo, Miffy* (Big Tent Entertainment Corporation, 2002), and *Miffy Dances* (Big Tent Entertainment Corporation, 2002).
9. See [www.intoreal.com](http://www.intoreal.com) for information on this program on the website titled "Glasgow the Learning City."
10. These 16 languages, indicators of the diversity of Glasgow's citizens, are Albanian, Chinese (Cantonese), Farsi, French, Pashto, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Serbo-Croat, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Somali, Swahili, Tamil, Turkish and Urdu.

## PEER REVIEWED ARTICLE

### The “Jobs Librarian”: Challenges to Establishing Job Information Centers in Public Libraries

David Grimes

**Abstract:** Queens Borough Public Library opened its second Job Information Center (JIC) unit in its new state-of-the-art Flushing branch library in 2001 (1). The author became the Center’s “Jobs Librarian” in January 2003, and sees the potential of this non-traditional service to flourish in the upcoming decade. This article discusses the unique challenges that must be met by any advocate or manager, in policy, procedure, personnel and feasibility.

**Background:** What is a “Jobs Librarian?” He provides information on careers, jobs and workplace issues, with an eye toward job search preparation, using and maintaining a comprehensive collection. What differs from more traditional Librarianship is that the Jobs Librarian can help with more complex preparation questions on an appointment basis—for up to an entire hour.

These one-on-one sessions are free and confidential. The librarian provides job information and advises patrons on effective ways of organizing resumes, often by “critiquing” the patron’s current resume. If the patron is writing a resume for the first time, the librarian will show examples from the collection and advice on the best information for the patron to include. Help with devising cover letters, answering difficult interview questions, exploring careers, finding great websites and print sources for job listings, salary and company information, and local job skills training programs are subjects of many appointments. The Job Information Librarian contributes to the orientation of incoming immigrant populations regarding job-hunting in the United States, as procedures here are often very different than those of other countries.

Other subjects are also covered: networking, keywords, certification, on-line searching, curricula vitae, federal employment, personal assessment, etiquette, training, dressing for success, teamwork, to name a few. There is a young adult career exploration area. There are also effective collections for small business start-ups and college reference.

Twice a month at Flushing, the librarian proctors a program entitled *Discover Your Career Potential*. This program is designed for the patron who is not certain of an appropriate career path. *The Career Exploration Inventory* (CEI) is a self-directed personal survey that helps the patron pinpoint ideal job titles based primarily on his interest, secondarily on skill or experience (2). Since planning is the first step to successful job hunting, this inventory helps the patron begin his search heading in a specific direction. And since an employee is likelier to succeed at a job they enjoy, it makes sense perhaps to discover the job that would be satisfying. The CEI is useful for career-changers, younger patrons, workforce returnees, mid-life “downsizing” victims, employable elders, in fact, anyone seeking a new direction (3).

**Rules of Engagement:** There are important “rules of engagement” to follow. As with any area of Librarianship in which “advice” is given, the Librarian here must remember that he is not a counselor. Any advice in answer to a question must be verifiable in a library resource, which must be produced on request. He must be clear about the fact that he does not represent the library’s Human Resources department and therefore does not interview patrons for work at the library. The librarian does not have a “Rolodex” of employers with whom he is connected, and is not able to “send [the patron] out” on an interview in the manner of an employment agency or the local Department of Labor. He cannot “post” openings without

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expressed directive of library administration. He is forbidden from physically typing changes to any resume or cover letter (4), and from giving specific legal advice. Successful job hunts cannot be “guaranteed.”

These criteria should be standard for operating a Job Information Center. Within these guidelines, the Jobs Librarian aspires to put the patron in the best possible position to be hired.

**The Queens Library Advantage:** Queens Library serves a population of 2.2 million people (5). By extension it serves the other New York boroughs and outlying areas. Queens Borough is known to be the single most “culturally diverse” area on earth. It is so diverse, in fact, that the library employs a full-time demographer to track the appearance of new groups to maximize service in needed areas. It is home to appreciable immigrant populations from more than 120 countries, of more than 160 nationalities, with more than 100 different languages spoken (6). And that’s just what we know about (7)! Also, QBPL-Flushing is very likely the busiest public library branch in the United States (8). With so large a commitment to new American populations (and such large communities at that), it lends itself quite naturally to using a Job Center to connect with the needs of its public.

But a library of any size could consider a unit. What issues need to be considered by a manager when weighing the benefits of a JIC? Below are considerations that are best made beforehand.

- **Feasibility should be based upon the need for the service population to learn about workforce issues.**

Upon coming here, new American populations often apply methods of resume writing and job-hunting learned in their birth lands. These methods may be completely at odds with the tenets that govern successful job hunts here. Just one example of many: the author has encountered many “curricula vitae,” loaded down with extraneous information (age, marital status, number of children, political affiliations etc.) that not only add little to the presentation but often give answers to questions the prospective employer may not legally ask. This information is volunteered with the impression that it is “required” (foreign-born patrons very often ask what must be on a resume. Some of these patrons even sign their resumes!).

The Jobs Librarian must instruct these patrons that a good American resume works best as a directed sales pitch, a onepage billboard with the subject (patron) as the commodity, rather than as a legal form or comprehensive biography. Thus the JIC becomes another spoke in the wheel of assimilation and adjustment. Certainly, a population of this type as large as it is in Flushing becomes the unit’s justification. It should be remembered that the educational process in this field is hardly limited to immigrants. The young adult population, entering the workforce for the first time and unsure of their role here, also need this instruction.

One who takes on this unique library role will soon see that almost anyone at all who finds themselves at career crossroads will not know everything about what to do. When combined with the stress and intimidation one feels when one has reached this stage, the Jobs Librarian is not only an information provider but also takes on the role of cheerleader, pep-talker, and shoulder-to-cry-on. A sympathetic ear, in other words (9).

- **Feasibility should not be based on the state of the national or local economy.**

Don’t make the mistake of believing that a poor economy or high unemployment rate will drive patrons to the door in record numbers. It’s true what economists and job coaches say: the poor market often serves to make job hunters “give up.”

## The Jobs Librarian

Job hunters are at their most enthusiastic when they see a ray of hope. Economic health is, of course, subject to change. It can be convincingly argued that the best business here is done at the point where the economy is turning around. The center is most feasible if one believes that it will draw a steady crowd on a consistent basis.

- **Concerted community outreach efforts should be explored before making a firm commitment.**

Business improvement districts, high schools, colleges, community boards, organizations dealing with new Americans, organizations helping the unemployed, and social service agencies should all be targets to market a burgeoning unit. Managers are advised to acquaint themselves with these groups, if they haven't already.

- **Material for Job Centers must be allocated with the idea that this information will change frequently.**

Managers who take their chances on Job Centers need to provide regular funding or rely entirely on the Internet for this service. They need to remember that books are updated often, and the world of work often changes with the regularity of the weather. Managers who recommend implementing a unit need to weigh the merits carefully against the capabilities of both the budget and the personnel who will man the JIC.

## Personnel

- **Personnel in this area should be librarians as opposed to counselors.**

This is a librarian's position. It is built around the skills that make librarians what they are: providers of non-biased, nonjudgmental information. This is primarily why a librarian is eminently qualified to do this type of work.

The librarian must remember that his knowledge of where to find pertinent materials supersedes his facility at "job-coaching," a specialized process that would take more time and commitment than the librarian would have at his disposal to provide.

- **A contingency plan needs to be in place for staffing the center in the Jobs Librarian's absence.**

One of this area's more unusual problems is proper staffing. Many librarians consider this specialty "out of their league," though it could be argued that job-hunting is something every working person has to do, which means that one could draw from at least one of his own experiences (10).

But, since job information is a non-traditional form of Librarianship, and since librarians are loath to neglect their own already prodigious workloads, expect difficulty in getting "volunteers"—or happy assignees.

- **All professional staff needs to understand the goal, mission, and guidelines of the center.**

In a library that may have no dedicated space for a center, one of the Jobs Librarian's best advocates is an informed reference librarian. It is necessary not to assume that everybody on staff is "on the same page." It is necessary for the Jobs Librarian to conduct regular training sessions in procedure for all staff in this service.

## The Jobs Librarian

### Policy and Procedure

#### · **Firm and careful decisions must be made before suspending the “rules of engagement.**

Management must understand that suspending any of the aforementioned “rules of engagement” carries possible ramifications.

If a manager decides, for example, that a resume may be typed for one patron as an exception, it is going to follow that any other patron who learns of this exception may demand similar service. At which time, the library must follow its precedent. The results: a) the Job Center may end up becoming a “typing pool,” and b) resume typing, for librarians, is akin to letter-writing on behalf of a patron: it presents the real possibility of legal action if costly mistakes can be traced to the typist.

Management must be deliberate before making any changes to these rules, in order to avoid attracting all the wrong kind of attention to a new unit.

#### · **Guarantees of successful job-hunting should never be made.**

Ultimately, it is the patron who bears the responsibility for getting himself employed. The Jobs Librarian can only send him to the interview armed with a firm understanding of whatever advice he’s been given.

#### · **Standards of performance need to be written for the Jobs Librarian before the center opens.**

Job Information Librarians perform a service that differs from traditional reference work in several crucial respects. First, there are appointments. In order for first-class service to take place, one needs the time to be expansive and the privacy the patron needs. Second, there is a commitment to outreach services, and getting the word out about this unusual service to the local public. Third, there are other duties, such as scheduling, allocation of funds, possible supervision and training of staff. These may or may not describe a general assistant librarian, depending on the system. Fourth there are general duties that a Jobs Librarian may not perform, example, in Flushing the Jobs Librarian is not normally scheduled at Reference.

There is enough of a diversity of differences between this job and other library positions to justify that a Jobs Librarian needs his own set of standards, and these really should be set in place before the Center opens (11).

#### · **The Job Center and its management should provide a comfortable “simulation” of the “real life” aspects of the job hunt.**

This issue speaks to the concept of libraries in a teaching role. Should scheduled appointments that go unattended be made up later? Should time be taken off appointments that arrive late, or should one reschedule? Is “confirming” appointments a good idea, or should it be left to the patron to “remember” his appointment, which would be necessary in a real-life situation? How often should a patron be allowed to make “another” appointment?

In fact, how much “real life” would constitute good public service? How much criticism and “ruffling of feathers” would be appropriate? How does professional staff feel about being put in this position? Libraries considering units need to strike a comfortable balance between providing attentive quality service in a non-biased, non-judgmental environment, and addressing the more judgmental realities of the needs of employers and the obligations of prospective employees, in keeping with the library role as an educational entity.

## The Jobs Librarian

· **Specific criteria must be developed and agreed upon as a means of measuring statistical success.**

In Flushing, the statistics measured monthly are number of appointments with the Jobs Librarian scheduled and actually attended; “walk-ins,” or patrons who discuss job information with the librarian without a previously scheduled appointment; programs and attendance; reference questions answered by the Jobs Librarian (either JIC or not); and “in-house” usage, counted as books left on the assigned booktruck at the beginning of the following working day.

Should one use a form for patron “comments” or suggestions? Should the form have a line to indicate how the patron “learned” of the service? Are there other methods to measure “in-house” use? All of these questions should be decided upon contingent upon the need for the service to justify the means needed to subsidize it.

### Conclusion:

As long as it is measured against available funds, answers an educational need, and has a “comfort” zone which creates an acceptable air of reality, a Job Center can be a welcome addition to any library. Libraries, as always, are beholden to the sways of budgeting, personnel, and procedure.

But the Internet provides an enormous wealth of information to job-seekers. Some of the bibliography listed below can create a core for a useful reference collection. The imaginative librarian can use his own knowledge and insight to guide the patron’s way, as he always does.

The author hopes that the insights offered here can make a manager’s decision an easier one.

### Notes

1. The first Queens Library Job Information Center was established in 1994 in Central Library, Jamaica.
2. *Career Exploration Inventory: a guide for exploring work, leisure, and learning* is published by JIST Works, Inc., Indianapolis, Ind., a prominent publisher specializing in materials about careers.
3. Olver, Lynne. “Qualifications required for a library career center, your library already has what it takes to empower job hunters.” *American Libraries* 33:7, July 2002.
4. The procedure here closely follows procedures against typing or writing correspondence for patrons.
5. Durrance, Joan C. and Karen E. Fisher, “Determining how libraries and librarians help.” *Library Trends* 51:4, April 1, 2003
6. *Ibid.* (5).
7. Lacey Chan, who tracks demography for QBPL’s New Americans Program, says the estimated total of nations and territories Queens residents are originally from has climbed to 191, with 161 total languages and dialects, as per the NYC Dept. of City Planning.
8. It is the author’s opinion, and he has expressed it often. However, with a March 2004 branch circulation of nearly 170,000, and a staggering one-day branch total of 10,272 on June 26, 2004, one is hard-pressed to argue. Point is: it’s really busy here.

## Using your Library Media Program to Establish Instructional Equity and Close Student Achievement Gaps

*F. Georges*

**“a persistent, pervasive, and significant disparity in educational achievement and attainment among groups of students as determined by a standardized measure. When analyzed according to race and ethnicity achievement disparities negatively impact educational outcomes for poor and children of color on a consistent basis.”**

*A Student Achievement Gap*, Pearson, 2001

In 1992, Jonathan Kozol’s investigative work, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools*, revealed the stark economic disparities that exist in inner city schools vs. their suburban counterpart schools. What was true then still exists now. Impoverished neighborhood schools continue to lag behind affluent neighborhood schools in per capita spending, extracurricular programs, recruiting qualified teachers, standardized test scores. Current research indicate that the gap is widening as poorer schools fall further behind in their ability to provide effective and direct educational services. Stopping short of completely revamping the property tax structure and redistributing wealth and influence to the students and families who are in greatest need, what actions and strategies can a school principal employ to help stem this tide, remedy an unfair system, and provide their school children the competent level of educational services that they are entitled?

Ensuring that your school maintains a quality library media program will positively impact student achievement. When used in combination with tested school reform strategies, i.e., smaller classes, smaller schools and quality teachers, instructional inequities and achievement gaps begin to dissipate.

In 1963, the Gaver Study was the first meaningful piece of research produced that investigated the effectiveness of the school library and its impact on student learning. However, thirty years later (1993) the famed “First Colorado Study”, produced by Keith C. Lance, et. al. launched a firestorm of new research studies that resulted in evidence-based school library practices as a positive feature in student achievement rates. The findings currently serve as a driving force of information literacy and the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner’s movement in schools, colleges and universities worldwide. To view the list of all the pertinent research studies go to: <http://www.davidvl.org/research.html>.

The findings are largely irrefutable. Students in schools with strong library service programs and quality school library media specialists achieve to a greater measure on standardized tests. The findings stand the test across socioeconomic factors. The two governing organizations that continue to set the standards, guidelines and policies for effective school library service are the American Association of School Libraries (AASL) and the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL).

In recent years educators and researchers began to investigate the formal teaching and learning process in terms of K-16 instead of K-12. The standards and expectations of the college student and college instructor in terms of library service have uniquely trickled down to the K-12 learner. As elementary and secondary students work up the ladder to college academics, students are expected to be information literate and conduct research effectively. As a result college professors and instructors are expected to

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## **Using Your Library Media Program**

integrate information literacy skills and assessments with their teaching practices. The result is that students entering college are often expected to have core information literacy skills. Knowledge of the rigorous A.C.R.L. Information Literacy standards by school and district administrators will invariably help them better prepare their students for their academic college experiences.

Finally, it is impossible to reveal the phrases “21st century learner” and “Information Literacy” without paying homage to the significant contributions of Mike Eisenberg & Bob Berkowitz. These two men innovatively approached problem-solving, critical thinking and information skills development by creating and then educating us about the effectiveness of the “Big 6” Information Problem-Solving Process (<http://www.big6.com/>). Their work serves as the philosophical baseline for all effective information literacy practices in school and academic libraries.

## **PROFESSIONAL TOOLS**

The various professional tools for meaningfully reinventing your library media program through assessment, curriculum alignment and value-added library media services are available on the A.A.S.L. web page - <http://ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/aaslprofessional.htm>

In 1998, the NYS Education Department saw fit to address library funding and service gap concerns between urban/rural schools vs. their suburban counterparts. They convened the Regents Commission on Library Services to develop and recommend to the New York State Board of Regents a vision for library services in the 21st century and a plan for ensuring the greatest access to information for all New Yorkers.

Under the direction of the Board of Regents, the State Education Department’s Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education (E.M.S.C.) assumed direct responsibility for improving the quality of education programs and services statewide (NY). They also aggressively addressed the issue of library service deficits among urban and rural school districts.

The E.M.S.C. developed a tool kit for school-based leaders to properly assess the status of their library programs and the corrective action required to meet minimum standards of service. This tool kit includes curriculum integration practices, standards for effective teacher/librarian collaboration, creative fund-raising, library management practices, school library surveys, library legislation/advocacy, and information literacy standards for learning.

### **The Tool Kit**

- No Child Left Behind - Improving Literacy through School Libraries Grant Program

Two of the “crown jewels” of the tool kit are documents entitled, The Principal’s Manual For Your Library Media Program, published by the American Association of School Librarians and The School Library Media Program Evaluation. The AASL created these documents as school leadership guidance devices for properly assessing and planning for your school library media program. Also in the tool kit is the No Child Left Behind - Improving Literacy through School Libraries Grant Program.

### **The Principal’s Manual For Your Library Media Program.**

The highlights of the Principal’s Manual lay in its insistence that a school library that operates in an “optimal” learning environment must:

- Uphold a mission statement that puts into action the belief system that library media programs support and strengthen curriculum and bridges the digital divide.

### **Using Your Library Media Program**

- Build and maintain district administrative support.
- Ensure time-structured collaboration around teaching and learning practices within the school day, no less than once weekly.
- Participate in school wide curriculum design/maintenance.
- Establish a leadership role in professional development activities that focus on information literacy & technology instruction to students.
- The library media program is the learning hub of the school community.

The Principal's Manual is an excellent starting point for effective goal sharing and vision development while meeting with your school library media specialist. The manual is most effective at the beginning of every school year. It sets a tone and expectation for students, faculty and of course your library media specialist. However, experienced and effective administrators revisit the manual periodically throughout the school year to retool and reassess their progress.

### **School Library Media Program Evaluation**

“The School Library Media Program Evaluation” form is a rubric for reviewing and assessing school library media programs based upon a set of target indicators. There are 15 target indicators in total:

- Scheduling
- Collaborative Planning
- Collaborative Teaching & Learning
- Library Automation
- Technology for Instruction & Access
- Resource Sharing/Networking
- Budget
- Administrative Support
- Professional Development
- Library Media Program Advisory Committee

The rubric's continuum stretches from a status/description of “exemplary” to “non-existent”. The intended use of the evaluation form goes beyond its apparent value as an assessment tool. Most importantly, it should serve as a data driven guide for school decision-makers in determining where they should be directing their resources.

In combination both documents thoroughly address the key aspects of school Librarianship. Further, their ability to provide the necessary tools to logistically and strategically provide the highest level of library services possible to all students without regard to socioeconomic status. Both documents are available in their entirety at the New York State Education Department's Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education (E.M.S.C.) -website: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nyc/library.html>.

### **N.C.L.B. - FUNDING STREAMS**

Attempts to “close the gap” may force you to look beyond state and local support for your library

## **Using Your Library Media Program**

media program. In January 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the federal No Child Left Behind Act (N.C.L.B.). One of the resonating ideals of this educational reform program was that it believed that schools must place a special emphasis on instituting educational programs and practices that have been proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research.

The groundbreaking research studies on school libraries, students and high academic achievement live up to this ideal of N.C.L.B. As a consequence, N.C.L.B has authorized a discretionary federal grant entitled, Improving Literacy through School Libraries Program. The program's purpose is to: "improve student literacy skills and academic achievement by providing increased access to up-to-date library materials, a well-equipped, technologically advanced school library media center, and welltrained, professionally certified school library media specialists."

The grants are only awarded to local educational agencies with at least 20% of their students from families below the poverty line. School district family poverty rates are posted on the web at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl/eligibility.html>. Individual schools are not eligible to apply for a grant. This is an excellent opportunity to build and maintain district administrative support for your library media program.

An uncomfortable number of school leaders do not believe that all children can learn at high levels regardless of their ethnicity, ability, gender, socioeconomic status, native language, or whether they have a disability. The unfortunate result is a failure to recognize achievement gaps in student learning and a deficit in fair and equitable educational services. If any student in any class in any local education agency is not performing according to their state's standards and expectations, an achievement gap exists. It is incumbent upon school leaders to first recognize the problem and systematically reverse the wave of educational inequity and disparity. Given the necessary tools, a great place to start is with your library media program.

### **Notes**

1. American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. "Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning: Standards and Indicators." 1998. American Library Association. 08 Aug 2004 <[http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/informationpower/InformationLiteracyStandards\\_final.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/informationpower/InformationLiteracyStandards_final.pdf)>.
2. Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Board of Directors. "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education ." 08 Jan 2000. American Library Association. 08 Aug 2004 <<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standards.pdf>>.
3. Page, Rod. U.S. Secretary of Education. "No Child Left Behind." 08 Jan 2002. US Department of Education. 08 Aug 2004 <<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>>.

## Family Place Libraries: Building Strong Families, Strong Libraries

*By Lisa G. Kropp*

One of the first things patrons see upon entering the tranquil and expansive lobby of the Middle Country Public Library (MCPL) in Centereach, NY, is the large “welcome” sign featuring seven different languages above the welcome desk. Next there is a table off the lobby, near the circulation desk, describing services offered to Spanish speaking patrons through a part time bilingual outreach worker.

Walking into the Hagedorn Family Place area in the Children’s Department, one is taken aback by the steady sounds of children playing with trains, building with legos and oversized foam blocks, constructing large puzzles on the carpeted floor, sharing stories with their parent at the writing station, or busily playing on an early childhood computer. An attentive observer will then hear parents reading to their children or talking to other parents about child development and parenting issues.

While some of the conversations are in English, they may also be heard in Spanish, Chinese, or Urdu. Indeed, conversations in other languages and services targeting nontraditional patrons are taking place in libraries across Long Island, as the highly successful Family Place Long Island (FPLI) Project, a cluster of the National Family Place Initiative, targets culturally diverse families who previously were not using local libraries with their families.

**The National Family Place Project began in 1980 at MCPL** and has spread to over 185 sites in 22 states. Family Place focuses on helping libraries transform themselves into centers for early childhood information, parent education, emergent literacy issues, and family support. Expanding the traditional role of children’s services, Family Place builds on the knowledge that good health, early learning, parent involvement and supportive communities play a critical role in young children’s growth and development (Feinberg and Schull, p. 5).

Key features of the project include:

- developmentally appropriate programming for young children and their parents/caregivers (The Parent/Child Workshop is the core program at each Family Place Library);
- a specially designed space for families with young children;
- collections of books, toys, audiovisuals and other materials for babies, toddlers, parents and family service professionals;
- access to electronic resources that emphasize emergent literacy, reading readiness, and parent education; and,
- networking and coalition building with community agencies that also target families with young children, such as Departments of Health, Head Start/Even Start centers, cooperative extensions, and other human service agencies. (For more information about the National Family Place Project, contact Marci Byrne at [byrnemarcellina@mcpl.lib.ny.us](mailto:byrnemarcellina@mcpl.lib.ny.us) or at 631-585-9393 x263.)

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## **Family Place Libraries**

In her book *A Place at the Table: Participating in Community Building*, Kathleen de Pena McCook notes that there is a great deal of discussion in the United States today about the loss of a traditional sense of place, which is what most people conceptualize as ‘community’ (p.6). FPLI, a regional network of 23 (soon to be 31) Nassau and Suffolk libraries, began in 2001 and focuses on serving diverse and underserved audiences, particularly immigrant families, by striving to create this sense of place and community for its patrons.

MCPL, which serves as the national model for Family Place Libraries, received a New York State Parent/Child Services Grant to implement Family Place Long Island as well as its own Family Place program. A poster session regarding the outcomes and rewards of FPLI conducted at the November 2003 NYLA Conference held in Saratoga Springs, NY, revealed the enormous need for a project such as this.

The demographics of Long Island have changed dramatically in the past decade. According to the last census, this region, which encompasses a population of 2.75 million people, has become so diverse that 1 in 4 residents is a person of color; 10% of the population is Hispanic; there has been a 57% increase in the Asian population; and, perhaps most significant, 1 in every 8 or 9 residents is an immigrant. These changing Long Island demographics are reflected nationally as well. “Latinos will become the largest minority group in the United States by 2010” (Quoted in Bertot, p.9).

Libraries, which serve as one of democracy’s portals to literacy, learning, and community “belonging”, are hungering for effective ways to meet the challenge of reaching and serving these individuals and families. However, traditional strategies are often not successful in engaging populations unfamiliar with public libraries, including those who speak languages other than English. Indeed, when looking at successful case studies of librarians contributing to community building, McCook noted the following five factors: community involvement, awareness of community issues, connection to the community seen as a job responsibility; integration of services, and community building as a value (p.68). These five factors were all evident in the plans and outreach services undertaken by the librarians participating in Family Place Long Island.

Working with a coalition of local agencies and organizations in each community, the 23 Long Island libraries developed individualized Family Place Plans for each area. The plans detailed new programs, collections, services, publicity and outreach strategies that were then implemented to better meet the needs of their diverse target audiences. These audiences included new- immigrant and non-English speaking families, teen parents, and family caregivers.

FPLI libraries participated in training sessions (see table below) to increase skills and sensitivities and worked in close collaboration with their community partners, becoming the link that connected families with the resources and services of the public library and other community organizations. They expanded foreign language collections for parents and young children, developed multilingual signage and other communication pieces that are effective in reaching diverse audiences, and instituted new programs and services for young children and their parents and caregivers. Some of the programs are in off-site locations, often using the services of a translator, and always in close collaboration with other agencies. Learning activities for parents and children were expanded, and all 23 libraries participated in an evaluation process that looked at the impact of project activities on both families and community partners.

### **Family Place Long Island Training and Workshops**

The following five libraries received funding from the NYS Parent/ Child Services Grant to implement their Family Place Plans:

## Family Place Libraries

Evaluation Strategies	Carol Gagliano, Professional Evaluator, National Family Place Libraries Project
Linking Play and Emergent Literacy	education and early childhood development and former Senior Extension Associate, Department of Human Development, Cornell University
Introducing Islamic Culture and Family Dynamics	Faroque Khan, Professor of Medicine, SUNY Stony Brook and Spokesperson, Islamic Center of Long Island
Music and Movement: Developing Language and Literacy	David Hirsch and Esther Nelson, early childhood authors, educators and founders of Granny Press
Child Parent Partner: The Link Between Early Attachments and Later Relationships	Gretchen Owen, Professor, Child Study Department, St. Joseph's College
Sharing Multicultural Resources and Marketing Strategies	Family Place Long Island Librarians Network
Space and Environment to Support Children's Early Learning	Joan Kuchner, Professor, Child Studies, SUNY Stony Brook
Working With Parents: Integrating Family Support Principles	Nancy Olsen Harbich, Human Development Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Suffolk County
Developing Collections for Immigrant Populations	Adriana Tandler, New American Program, Queens Borough Public Library

- Central Islip Public Library, where 33% of the community are of Hispanic/Latino descent;
- Freeport Memorial Library, whose culturally and ethnically diverse population has seen a 20% increase in the number of Hispanic/Latino residents in the last ten years, to 33.5% of the last census data;
- Rockville Centre Public Library, where there is a significant population of residents who are non-English speaking and with limited education;
- South Huntington Public Library, where nearly 40% of the students attending the South Huntington School District are African American or Hispanic, with 21% enrolled as limited English proficient students;
- MCPL, which has seen an increasingly large percentage of new immigrant families from India, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, China, and a variety of Central and South American countries.

Individual activities of the five participating libraries funded through the NYS Parent/Child Services Grant were impressive.

- Central Islip was able to offer a special session of the Parent/Child Workshop for teen parents, and implemented bilingual storytime programs.
- Freeport implemented a Spanish language Parent/Child Workshop, in addition to a Spanish language “Baby and Me” class for mothers with babies birth through eight months of age.

### *Family Place Libraries*

- Rockville Centre was able to implement evening workshops for caregivers on early literacy activities and opened the Parent/Child Workshop up to caregivers watching young children. Most significantly, because of the increased usage of the collections and department services, Rockville Centre was able to hire an additional full time librarian for the children's department.
- In South Huntington, where the Parent/Child Workshop was being implemented for the first time ever, they conducted a library information outreach campaign via ethnic food stores, laundromats, churches, and health clinics to increase library awareness among their non-English speaking patrons.
- MCPL was able to develop a library-based Family Center, in conjunction with Family Service League of Suffolk. A social worker, provided by Family Service League, was housed in the Selden branch of MCPL approximately ten hours a week. The social worker was able to make contact with over 500 early childhood families through weekly parent discussion groups and early childhood programs. Families with needs beyond those the library could meet in the past are now obtaining a deeper level of support, information, referral, and case management. Many of the families taking advantage of the Family Center also began to avail themselves of the programs and services offered by the library.

MCPL, Freeport, and Central Islip were also able to reach out to Spanish speaking families by utilizing existing staff members (at Freeport and Central Islip) and by hiring a Spanish Outreach Literacy Worker (at MCPL) to be at the libraries during set hours to assist Spanish speaking patrons navigate library services and programs. Similar programs, such as the LIBROS program in Multnomah County, Oregon, have proven the success of specific outreach services to immigrant populations, such as those reported above (Villagran, p.224).

Since FPLI began, librarians from all 23 libraries report a significant increase in the number of diverse families using their libraries. After the first year of the project, more than 10% of families with young children were from culturally diverse backgrounds. The second year saw this average increase to almost 20%, with some libraries reporting that up to 33% of their program registrants were from culturally diverse families. It is also estimated that diverse families now comprise 25% of families utilizing the drop-in family spaces at each library.

For immigrant families, Family Place is often their first venture into the library. Many libraries report that families with some English skills are bringing family and friends who speak no English and serve as translators. Once comfortable, they take advantage of other library programs, services, and referrals, making Family Place Libraries truly a gateway to lifelong learning for diverse families on Long Island and across the country.

## Family Place Libraries

### Notes

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## EDITOR'S LITERATURE REVIEW

### Information Literacy

Perhaps no subject in Librarianship is as hot as Information Literacy (IL). A search of Ebsco's Academic Search Premier turned up 108 articles during the first 8 ½ months of 2004. While some of the popularity may be the result of "me too" research, IL is, and should be, a foundation topic in Librarianship. But what aspects of Information Literacy is attracting attention?

Frances Roscello, AASL President, writing in *Knowledge Quest* in March 2004 stressed that IL skills need to be addressed in the context of standards and for all students, from K through 20. I would add that, in the context of the public library, we need to teach IL skills early on but that there is no upper limit.

Since many of our fields articles come from the academic area, it is not surprising that they deal with academic issues. **Edward Owusu-Ansah** wrote an interesting article on information literacy for the January 2004 issue of the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, entitled, "***Information Literacy and Higher Education: Placing the Academic Library in the Center of a Comprehensive Solution***". In this article Owusu-Ansah, an Assistant Professor at the College of Staten Island, recommends that academic libraries develop a teaching component, wherein universities and colleges include a require credit course of Information Literacy as part of each undergraduate degree. In addition, each academic library would also provide a system of supply-on-demand" training sessions for locally recognized information literacy needs. The author provides an overview of the development of Information Literacy (IL) efforts, going back to 1877 with Dewey's work at Columbia. The article does a great job of bringing to life the needs and opportunities we have to develop our field and improve the standing of our profession while responding to real needs in the context of Information Literacy.

Barbara D'Angelo writes in the may issue of the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* an article entitled, "***Moving Beyond Definitions: Implementing Information Literacy Across the Curriculum***". While Owusu-Ansah stressed the credit course taught by librarians, D'Angelo suggests that librarians need to continue to work with all departments to try to integrate IL "throughout the institution". She described the projects at Arizona State University East that links IL with Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC). At ASU they describe their program as "*a traditional, rhetorically based technical communication program that prepares students to work in a myriad of electronic environments and to prepare documents in multiple media*". Perhaps an important implication is that rather than see IL as an attempt to get students to realize that the Internet is a poor substitute for the professional journal and the edited volume, IL needs to help students and patrons learn how to use all their information sources most effectively.

Finally, Rolf Norgaard, writes in *Reference and User Services Quarterly* an article entitled "***Writing Information Literacy in the Classroom***". He says, "*work in rhetoric and composition can help situate information literacy in social and disciplinary practice, so that we might focus not just on simple "look-up" skills, but on the integration and evaluation of information in complex communicative acts*". Certainly we can use such courses to train students in IL skills. And, such articles are important so that we build our repertoire of tools and skills for teaching IL. On the other hand, we need to be careful not to be satisfied with traditional means of teaching IL. While there is a great need for what the French have long called analysis and synthesis, and rhetoric and composition, we need to expand our skills with the knowledge gained from such areas as information science, multimedia, and organization and retrieval. And, we need to tailor our offerings to the basic needs of our customers.

## Information Libraries

### **Branding**

Branding comes of course from the field of management and while it was generally only related to physical products, this relationship has been extended both to individuals, services, and just about anything that can be conceptualized and marketed. In terms of libraries, spending some time considering branding issues can be a very helpful part of a marketing program. Just as organization culture makes us focus on developing values that support our goals, branding focuses on our image. According to Kotler<sup>1</sup>, a brand is an offering from a known source. This means it distinguishes a company's products from other similar products. Kotler goes on to say, "a brand is essentially a seller's promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits, and services consistently to the buyers", or in our case to our patrons. So we need to understand how we, as libraries, fit into the information landscape, and develop an attractive brand image that helps our users and potential users understand what kinds of value we bring to the table.

While the number of articles on branding does not match the number of articles on Information Literacy, it still garnered an impressive 34 over the same 8½ months. Three articles, especially caught my eye. First, Rajesh Singh, wrote for Information Services & Use an article entitled, "***Branding in Library and Information Context: The Role of Marketing Culture***". Singh suggests that we apply the business principles of branding to our libraries. He tells us however, that to do so we must meet a lot of challenging issues with our staffs and their relationship with customers in order to match our promised service to the image we seek to project. The message is seemingly that we have some work to do with our organizational culture before we can have a successful branding campaign.

Jennifer Rowley, also writing for Information Services & Use, in an article entitled "***What a Tangled Information Brand Web We Weave***" focuses on web sites and finds that while some libraries provide some basic information about their products much more could be done to distinguish institutions and communicate their values and what they do.

Sejan Yun's article, "***Branding Helped Promote Our Library and Its Technology***", in Computers In Libraries, May 2004 issue describes a very in depth and professional approach to branding at the Saint Paul Public Library. The project included significant funding and human resources and was part of a capital campaign. They even utilized the services of a professional design firm. The process is described in some detail and the end result was an 18% increase in circulation.

### **Space Planning (Largely Missing)**

While Information Literacy garnered over 100 articles in the first 8.5 months of 2004, a similar search of the Ebsco Academic Premiere data base turned up two on space planning. This is unfortunate especially considering the interest in space planning programs at PLA in Seattle this year. One small article in Library Media Connection is worth mentioning. Mary Moyer and Rosalie Baker from Delsea Regional High School in Franklinville, New Jersey reported on their well planned space planning project in which they set explicit goals and developed a plan to achieve them. In the end they had better visibility, meeting space, and a more attractive and inviting atmosphere.

### **Miscellaneous**

An interesting project is described by Sandra Wong and Anne O'Shea in the Canadian Library Association journal Feliciter, Issue #3, 2004. Their article is entitled, "***Librarians Have Left the Building***", and they describe sending librarians to various places on the Simon Fraser University Campus in B.C. with a wireless laptop. The majority of the questions they got were true reference questions. They found that the majority of students who used the service were already library users but used reference

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services infrequently. At issue here may be more that librarians reached out to patrons and offered reference services — not that they went to new places. We might be able to find the same thing by added new signage to our reference departments or walking around and looking for “customers”.

R. Naylor

### **(Footnotes)**

1 Kotler, Philip. Marketing Management. Prentice Hall, 2000. P. 404.

## LAMS Publications Proposal Worksheet

(Editorial Policies can be found at [http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page\\_id=813](http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=813))

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