

OLAQ

Volume 23 , Number 4 *Sushi, STEM, or Goat Yoga: Successful Library Programming* | Pages 1 - 40

4-6-2018

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(2018). Sushi, STEM, or Goat Yoga: Successful Library Programming. *OLA Quarterly*, 23(4), 1-40. <https://doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.23.04>

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OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

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Winter 2017

Vol 23 • No 4

OLAQ

OLA Quarterly
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Oregon Library Association
<http://www.olaweb.org>
ISSN 1093-7374

The *OLA Quarterly* is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association.

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Upcoming Issue

Spring 2018

The Specialness of Special Libraries

Sushi, STEM, or Goat Yoga: Successful Library Programming



ON THE COVER

Royal princesses are introduced to the “Queen” at the Downtown Bend Library’s Royal Tea Party. (Photo by Tina Davis)

From the Guest Editor



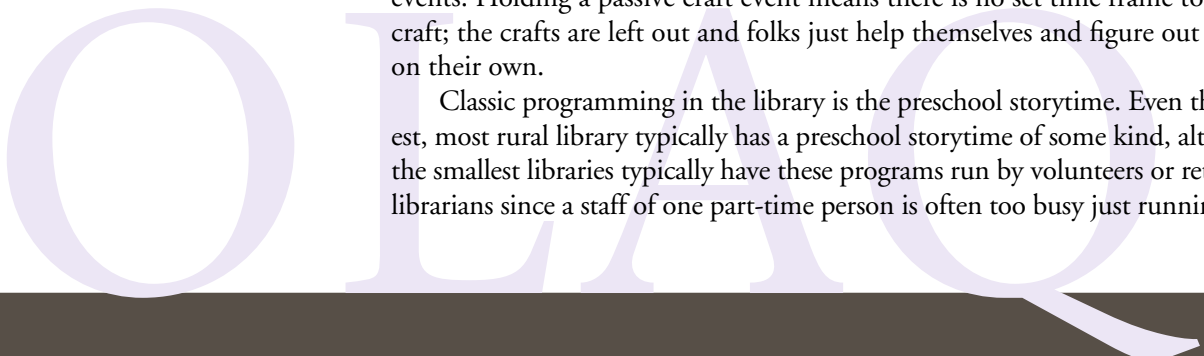
ESTHER MOBERG is the current vice president/president-elect of the Oregon Library Association. Esther is the Director of the Seaside Public Library and serves on the Clatsop Community College Board. She is the current chair of the Oregon Digital Library Consortium and the past chair of the board for Libraries Reading Outreach in Clatsop County. She earned her MLS from Emporia State University and her BS in Organization Administration from Northwestern University (St. Paul, MN). She has worked in public libraries, academic libraries, and an elementary school library. Her work in libraries has spanned over 19 years. She is a member of ALA and OLA, and she is also a public information officer for the City of Seaside.

Llamas, Adulting 101, Henna Art, Raptors, and Trivia. Most people in Oregon typically would not think of these words in connection with their local library. Yet, all of these are programs that have been served up in our local libraries just in the past year alone. With hundreds of programs covering even more diverse topics than these, perhaps the more typical things people think about when it comes to programs are an author talk, storytime, or book talk in the library. These are still staple library programs, but with this *Oregon Library Association Quarterly* issue we will be sharing some unique ideas that you can replicate at your library. From coffee and conversations to build community relationships to llamas (yes, llamas!) to encouraging upcycling, the common thread of all of the programs in this edition of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly* is that they are replicable and they come with “Here’s what worked, here’s what didn’t work,” feedback from your colleagues to hopefully help you jump-start your own ideas of what is possible at your library. Each community is unique, and most librarians typically know their own community and what may or may not work well.

The library as a community center has been a widespread concept for libraries in Oregon as well as on the national and international front for decades, and it is one of the myriad of reasons libraries are simply not going away. Most programs are tied to literacy while others serve to fit a niche or gap in the community served. Programming in libraries today includes a literacy aspect that fits the core tenet of the library as a place where learning and developing literacy take place side by side and most libraries also include STEM, art, and other cultural programs that are important for the community both educationally and holistically. More often than not, programs fill a gap that the community may not have an option for otherwise. In my small town, the library often acts as a hub for cultural community experiences. Last year we had 8,000 attendees at our programs, which included diverse programs such as author talks, trivia nights, storytimes, and environmental events from the local Necanicum Watershed Council and North Coast Land Conservancy about our unique watershed and wildlife areas to teens learning to cook to building Raspberry Pi computers.

The American Library Association (ALA) has a branch called the Public Programs Office devoted specifically to public library programs. The ALA considers cultural and community programming an essential part of library services, and nowadays any library one enters has some level of programs on display, whether a preschool storytime, a trivia night, or passive crafts such as adult coloring page events. Holding a passive craft event means there is no set time frame to the craft; the crafts are left out and folks just help themselves and figure out the craft on their own.

Classic programming in the library is the preschool storytime. Even the smallest, most rural library typically has a preschool storytime of some kind, although the smallest libraries typically have these programs run by volunteers or retired librarians since a staff of one part-time person is often too busy just running the



general library services to do any programs. Storytimes in the library began as early as 1896, according to an article titled “The History of Preschool Storytimes” (Gerber, 2014). According to this article, the Pratt Institute Free Library started a story hour in 1896, and in 1900 the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh also started a weekly story hour. From there, many programs were developed over the next 60 to 80 years that catered specifically to the preschool or teen demographic. Perhaps the biggest push for programs began in the late 1990s to early 2000s. During this time, adult and tween programs were developed as libraries realized that the cradle-to-the-grave viewpoint in library services couldn’t just focus on collection and reference but must also include programs for all ages.

While a few may view programs in the library as a “fluffy” addition to reading without much substance, many would agree that library programs are here to stay, filling a hole left where arts and crafts programs have been cut due to budgetary constraints in other areas of educational and community life. Programs serve many concrete educational purposes including learning, engagement, social connection, and the ability to try many things in a safe environment. They also may engage community members who otherwise do not fit the traditional reader mold. Programs are almost “pop-up” resources, if you will, adding more resources with a stand-alone or series of programs to complement what is typically already a full complement of services. Libraries offer everything from job resource centers, tax forms, small business centers, homework helpers, reference questions, and more.

We hope you enjoy the sampling of programs in this *Quarterly*. Keep in mind that the Children’s Services Division of the Oregon Library Association does an excellent job of sharing its programming ideas both at their annual meetings and the Oregon Library Association annual conference. Oregon Young Adult Network also does the same. For adults, programs may be a little harder to come across, but don’t be afraid to borrow creative ideas that pubs, nursing homes, parks and rec, and other community centers across the United States use, tweaking them to fit the library mold. The American Library Association’s programming and exhibitions page also does a good job of sharing some great programming ideas.

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www.pinterest.com



Adulting 101: Know Your Audience

by **Teresa Lucas**

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TERESA LUCAS

Teresa grew up in the Willamette Valley, then moved to Southeast Alaska and raised a family. She began her library career in a small high school library on Prince of Wales Island. Realizing there had to be more to libraries than shelving books, Teresa began the journey to earn her Master's in Library and Information Services degree. After fourteen years and several life-changing events, this non-traditional student graduated from the University of North Texas and landed her first professional library job as the branch manager in Dubois, Wyoming. With family still living in Sweet Home, Teresa was happy to return to Oregon, where she accepted the Assistant Director position at the North Bend Public Library. Teresa lives with her husband, son, daughter-in-law, three grandchildren, a dog, and a cat. They enjoy family, friends, road trips, the beach and gardening.

Beautiful Coos Bay County on the southern Oregon coast covers 1,600 square miles and is home to 63,000 people. North Bend is the second largest city on the south coast, with bragging rights to some of the best sand dunes on the continent. Tourism, agriculture, fishing and service industries are quickly replacing the once dominant forest products industry.

Located on the coast highway, the North Bend Public Library is a popular place for locals and tourists alike. The library has been an integral part of the community since its humble beginnings in 1914. The past century has witnessed the small collection of about 100 books and magazines, located in the home of a local community member, grow into the modern collection of almost 200,000 physical and electronic items accessible from the 20,000-square foot stately facility proudly waving the banner of North Bend Public Library (NBPL) today.

During the winter of 2017, I began to see a common topic on library programming group threads centering around ideas such as teaching basic life skills to young and new adults that may not have been taught at home or school. Around the same time, Clara Piazzola, the library's young adult assistant, came to me to share an idea that was buzzing around her library school discussion boards. She told me about a program idea that would teach young people necessary skills to help them survive in the grownup world. Talk about a coincidence! I gave her the go ahead, and she began planning.

Clara came up with the name, *Adulting 101*, and a six-month program outline. Planning each session, we chose to invite local speakers for a few of the topics that warranted professional facilitators. Flyers were displayed in the library and mailed to local bulletin boards and radio stations. *Adulting 101* was posted to the library website, social media, and electronic calendars. We reserved the room, bought snacks, and were ready to launch.



Librarians should be doing things to induce gasps of amazement!

—ELI NEIBURGER

The event post on our library's Facebook page started a ripple effect that took us by surprise. We had Facebook likes and shares from tens of thousands of viewers. People were emailing and phoning our City Administrator, Library Director, and the library for more information. The local television station saw the post, called for an interview, and covered the first program. There were radio interviews. We had electronic inquiries and phone calls from across the country and then some. The American Library Association's *Programming Librarian* asked for an article (Lucas, 2017). *Adulting 101* was even mentioned on the morning talk show *LiveKellyandRyan* (*Adulting 101 for Millennials [sic]*, 2017)!

The first program covered cooking tips; Clara shared creative dorm-room cooking hacks, such as how to cook quesadillas with an iron, a bath towel and aluminum foil! Yes! Ramen can be cooked in a coffee pot. We shared a presentation with cost comparison photos from the local grocery and dollar stores, demonstrating valuable ways to shop on a budget while getting the most out of grocery dollars.

A local banker agreed to go over basic financial know-how, including how to balance a checkbook and build credit.

We covered the basics of seeking, applying and interviewing for jobs.

The political climate warranted a class on how to discern fake news and consider the news sources.

Moving was an appropriate topic to start the summer; Clara went over working with property owners and how to live with roommates.

Finally, some odds and ends—changing the oil, using a breaker box, sewing on a button and more.

The North Bend Public Library service district reaches approximately 17,000 people. In addition to two public school systems within ten miles, we also have a community college. You would think we had hit the programming jackpot, right? Not even close. The cooking program brought twenty-four attendees, finances fifteen, zero came for jobs or odds and ends, six for fake news and one for moving out. With so much global interest, it was disheartening to have practically zero local interest.


On paper, *Adulting 101* was a sure thing, but when you get down to it, you can never tell what will or will not draw people to library programs. We spoke to parents and educators who were very supportive of *Adulting 101*, but the targeted audience did not see the benefit in the multifaceted skill set we were offering. The programs were offered on Saturday afternoons, which may have conflicted with the free day students claim for themselves; they may not want to “learn” anything over the weekend.

In retrospect, we could have spent more energy talking to high school administrators, who could have encouraged students to attend, or even offer them the bribe of extra credit. *Adulting 101* might draw a better audience in alternative high school or college prep environments.

Programming that does work in our library includes hands-on, drop-in programs. The most successful program recently was our rock-painting group, which met Saturday afternoons during the summer. NBPL Rocks met in our small conference room; we had a few regulars, but most painters were new people each week. Other successful programs included *Inside the Lines*, our adult coloring club, and cupcake decorating, the end of the summer reading program event.



Author, poetry, and music events may or may not draw a crowd. It depends on the weather, day of the week, and the artist or author. Events co-sponsored with the City also bring a crowd; these events have included glitter tattoos and a free lunch with the local July Jubilee Festival's princesses. Title Wave, our annual countywide reads author visit, is a big success with full-house attendance at four of the eight county libraries.

It is most important to know what works and what does not work for your community. Don't be afraid to take your programs outside or your library to meet your intended audience; they might not come to you, but you can go to them. Continue to plan new programs and try new things. Never stop reminding people that libraries are the place to be! 

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Adulting 101

Basic How-Tos for Ages 16-25



February 25: Bare Essential Cooking

How to cook easy recipes, and how to creatively cook in dorm rooms (ironed grilled cheese, anyone?)

March 18: Financial Know-how

How to balance a checkbook, set a budget, file your own taxes, and build credit



April 22: Getting a Job

How to write a resume and cover letter, and how to interview

May 20: News and the like

How to find and understand real news on the Internet



June 17: Moving out?

How to live with roommates, find an apartment, and talk to your landlord

July 22: Odds and ends

How to check and refill your oil, use a breaker box, reset an outlet, clean an oven, and anything else you want to know how to do!



Unlock the Box at Your Library

by Amanda Puetz
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AMANDA PUETZ was raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she developed a love for green chile, hot air balloons, and making books. She has a bachelor's degree in Biology and a master's degree in Library Science. At the library, she delights in teaching others to make books by hand and exploring our world with families through STEAM programming. In her spare time, she amuses her dog by picking out tunes on the ukulele.

Are you fascinated by the escape room craze sweeping the nation but unsure how to bring it to your library? An escape room is an immersive experience in which a group works through a series of themed clues and puzzles to solve a mystery and “escape” a room within a given amount of time, usually an hour. Libraries can provide a similar experience by having patrons open a series of locks on a hasp closing a single box. Patrons race the clock to open the box. Holding an Unlock the Box program at your library is more achievable than you might think. You need a few reusable supplies, a set of clues and puzzles around a central story, a space to convert, and an enjoyment of puzzles.



able than you might think. You need a few reusable supplies, a set of clues and puzzles around a central story, a space to convert, and an enjoyment of puzzles.

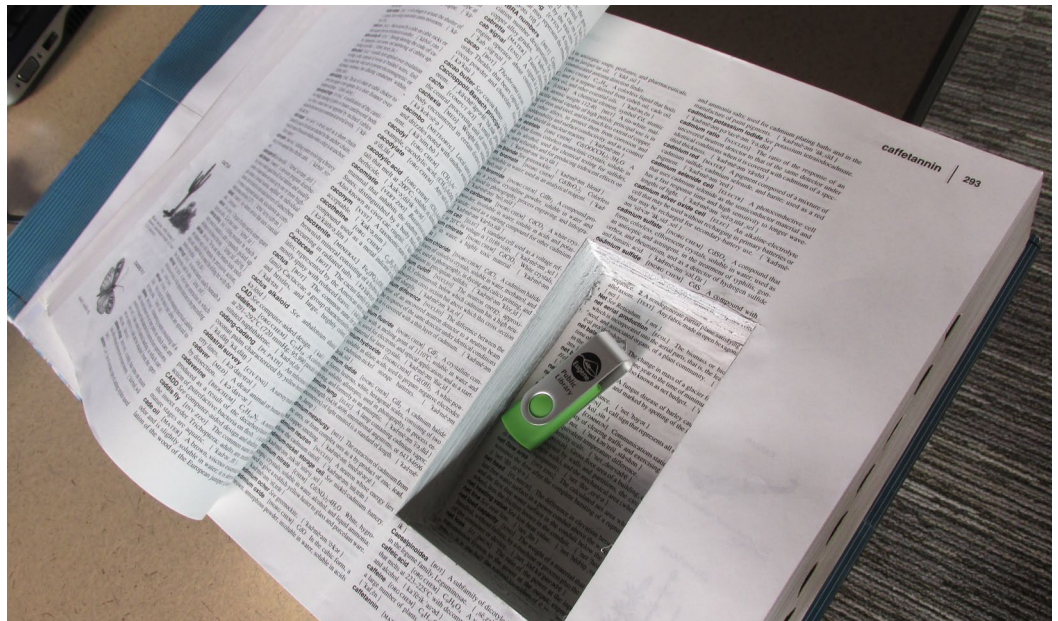
Cultivating critical thinking skills, building teamwork, encouraging creativity, and exercising good communication skills are just a few of the intangible benefits Unlock the Box programs offer patrons. And on top of all that, these programs are *fun!* Patrons will be excited to attend, and, if you post pics of the successful (or not!) groups on your library's social media sites,

Without a dedicated programming space, Sheldon Branch Library transforms its teen area into an astronomer's lab for a wormhole-themed Unlock the Box program.



you can build interest in the programs. Unlock the Box programs work for almost any age group. Adults and teens love challenging, topical puzzles. You can even create programs for elementary and preschoolers based on favorite picture book characters.

Having a single basic kit on hand will enable you to hold countless puzzle programs for all ages. An example of a solid starter-kit includes: a large box that can be locked, a small lock box, a USB flash drive, an invisible ink marker, a UV flashlight, letter locks (2), number locks (2), a key lock, a directional lock, and a hasp so you can use multiple locks on the large box. All the locks except for the key lock are reprogrammable, so switching between programs is as easy as resetting the locks. Each program will also require a set of unique clues and props centered on a theme or situation you've created. These can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. A favorite prop at our library is a repurposed dictionary with a secret hole cut in the middle. Writing in invisible ink is always a hit. Explore spy craft books in your library's juvenile non-fiction section for inventive ideas on writing in codes and passing secret messages.



We stash the UV flashlight or USB flash drive inside the repurposed dictionary for participants to find during the program.

A great way to get a feel for how the pieces come together to form a game is through viewing puzzles that others have created. One site I found helpful and inspiring is www.BreakoutEDU.com. Breakout EDU provides tools and support for puzzle programs in classrooms and libraries across the country. You can sign up for a free account to access the plans for dozens of puzzle programs—you just have to set your locks, print out the clues, and go! You can pay for a premium account to access more game plans. Not every game uses all the locks, and you can remove or change any of the clues to fit the time or age restraints of your program.



Logistics for Unlock the Box programs you may want to consider include required materials and props, the size of group your space can comfortably accommodate, the need for a sign-up sheet, the time needed to set up (and re-set) the scene, and what will be inside your locked box. You will monitor the group's progress and keep them informed of how much time they have left; you can also offer hints if they get stuck along the way. This support keeps the stress level down and encourages the group to keep moving to the end of the game. Before you let your group into the room to play, tell them the story behind your game and remind them of a few helpful tips: communication is key, take notes, and don't force anything—you don't need to break anything to find clues. When the final lock is sprung, and the box opens, your group can find any small giveaway item you can imagine: bookmarks, candy, stickers, etc. They can also find the object of the puzzle: the vial of antidote serum that will save the world from the impending epidemic, or the nuts and bolts an imp took from your car so you'd miss starring in the school ballgame!

Looking at the programs held at the Eugene Public Library, we reach multiple ages by hosting programs for both teens and families. The themes for our teen Unlock the Box programs were Houdini Mysteries and Wormhole Time Travel. A group of co-workers and I came up with each theme and created the puzzles and clues patrons used in the games. For the Wormhole Time Travel program, we listed constellations and stars from a star chart in a specific order. Participants had to connect pieces of the star chart, then follow the constellation/star list to get the code to the directional lock. For example, the Big Dipper to the Cancer constellation is "down." For the Houdini program, we created a poster cipher translating a series of symbols into letters. Then we wrote symbols corresponding to the word "feats" in invisible ink on playing cards. Participants had to find the invisible ink clues with the UV flashlight, put the symbols in order according to the cards, and then decipher the letters to get the word to unlock one of the locks on the box.




A group works through the star chart puzzle.



Extra steps were taken to ensure the Unlock the Box programs ran smoothly. We ran all-staff playtests of the programs at each location. Having staff members play the games before the public served many purposes. It worked as a quality check, helping the “game masters” ensure that there were no mistakes in the clues and that the games were not too easy or too difficult. It gave staff a hands-on demonstration of how the kit works to jump-start inspiration for future programs. Participating staff came away from the playtests excited about the programs and eager to promote them to patrons. And last but not least, staff got the benefits of working out puzzles in a collaborative environment, strengthening the work team and building communication skills.

Namely, familiar picture books are the foundation of Unlock the Box programs for families. Since these programs are aimed at a range of ages, puzzles included tasks such as sorting by color, adding two primary colors to get a secondary color, and unscrambling letters to reveal a word. I used one program straight from the Breakout EDU website (*Froggy Gets Dressed*). The second program was created based on characters from the *Pete the Cat* books. I read a Froggy or Pete story to get the group in the right mood before introducing the puzzles. The *Pete the Cat* program found Pete adventuring in a different picture book. There were a series of boxes to unlock, each containing a few puzzle pieces. After all the boxes were opened, participants put the puzzle together to discover which book Pete had visited. Parents and children work together to count, sort, decode, and open locks. Families enjoy the challenge and come away from the programs with a shared sense of accomplishment.

Glee and satisfaction are the most common responses from participants of our Unlock the Box programs. Patrons and staff have been equally animated in their responses. One participant enthused, “That was the most fun I’ve ever had at the library!” You can capitalize on this zeal and sneak in plugs for library services. If you’ve got a maker-space, you can use 3D-printed objects as clues or use the UV light bit from your littleBits collection to find an invisible ink message. Have your LEGO club build themed props for your Unlock the Box programs. If your library loans novel objects, tie those into the puzzles. Patrons will remember the unique characteristics of the program and return to the library looking for more.

Excited and ready to hold your own Unlock the Box program? Start browsing puzzle ideas on the Breakout EDU website, brainstorm favorite themes, and write some clues in invisible ink. Be on the lookout for inventive ways to encode lock combinations. Mock up mini puzzles for co-workers to unravel. Or stop by a branch of the Eugene Public Library in May or June to try your hand at unlocking a box in a program for adults. Did you notice the acrostic in this article? You are all set to Unlock the Box! 



The Art of the Trade:

A New/Old Take on Resource Sharing

by **Ann Scheppke**
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ANN SCHEPPKE has worked at Salem Public Library since 1986, primarily as a reference librarian, but more recently in Adult Services programming. Prior to that, she was a Documents Librarian at the Texas State Library.

Kids like me who grew up in mid-century rural Minnesota knew this for certain: winter playtime was all about ice. Ice hockey or speed skating or figure skating, children claimed their affinity early on. The kids who were serious about their chosen winter sport spent most of their time in the barn-like indoor rink at the county fairgrounds, but the city accommodated the recreational skaters by scraping snowfall from the municipal parks' softball fields into makeshift retaining walls, then opening up fire hydrants to flood the area. The rinks were resurfaced periodically throughout the winter by repeated glazings, no fancy Zamboni required. Year-round use of city parks was guaranteed, and families were able to avert cabin fever by heading out to the rink on frosty evenings and weekends. Skating was as much a part of my community's culture as lutefisk and lefse.

As sports go, skating doesn't require a lot of fancy gear, but it's hard to do it without, well, skates. Although most kids outgrew their skates from one year to the next, skates rarely wore out. To help families deal with this perennial challenge, the local hardware store opened up a skate exchange every fall. The concept was straightforward: outgrown skates could be traded for used skates that fit, and the store charged a small sum for sharpening blades, replacing laces, and running the program. Of course, it also stocked new skates, just in case.

I was reminded of my youth in the frozen north as I was planning, of all things, programs related to financial literacy.

The Salem Public Library had been awarded a grant from the American Library Association and FINRA, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. The award included a six-week installation of a traveling exhibit called *Thinking Money*, designed to introduce basic concepts of financial literacy to teens, tweens, and young adults. The 50 libraries that received the *Thinking Money* grant were charged with partnering with community organizations to create at least four programs based on the exhibit's theme.

Four copies of the *Thinking Money* exhibit were created, and Salem Public Library, along with three other libraries across the country, made up the very first set of libraries to host it. The exhibit consisted of four large free-standing displays decorated with a riot of comic-book-style characters illustrating lessons about money, two dedicated iPads, a variety of games, and even a couple of custom-made rugs that led users down the paths to financial independence or financial ruin.



The timing of the exhibit's stay at the Library proved to be a challenge. Scheduled for August 29 through October 6, it coincided with kids going back to school, a time of year when program attendance statistics are always low. Convincing teachers to bring classes to the library to view the exhibit turned out to be a hard sell. The budget for field trips in our school district is very small, and teachers were unwilling to use their funds right at the beginning of the school year. Add all this to the fact that, even though the exhibit's designers had put an incredible amount of creative energy into the high-octane display, it was still about money management—a topic that's hard to get people excited about.

Finding community partners was not at all difficult. Credit unions and financial planners were only too happy to conduct classes and give presentations, but I wanted to have at least one program that approached the topic a bit more obliquely, something that would soft-sell the benefits of good money management skills. Marion County Environmental Services turned out to be the perfect partner for this endeavor. MCES's basic charge is to keep materials out of the waste stream. Through their innovative outreach activities, they challenge residents to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Their program director, Jessica Ramey, and I hatched a plan for a back-to-school blue jeans swap, reasoning that conservation of resources applies as much to the environment as it does to families' wardrobes and bank accounts, and that people who would come to the library for free back-to-school clothes might not be the same people who would sign themselves up for a class on budgets or investments. Our

theory was that if we could get people into the building for free jeans, they would discover the fabulous *Thinking Money* exhibit and perhaps learn something new.

Our program plan was simple: encourage people to, ahem, drop their pants at the Library. Donors received a voucher for every pair donated that they could exchange for a new-to-them pair of jeans at the event. We started collecting jeans on the day of our Summer Reading Club's end-of-summer celebration in early August and accepted them right up to the time the event began two weeks later. The vouchers were transferrable, and several of our generous donors told us they planned to give them to other families who needed them more.



Happy patron. (Photo by Ean Perkins.)



We sorted the jeans by size as they were received, and by the day of the event we had collected hundreds of pairs. When the doors opened to the swap at 1:00 p.m., there were dozens of families waiting to swarm the merchandise to find the best deals, and within an hour, just over 150 families had claimed their “new” blue jeans. At 2:00 p.m., we opened the doors to those without vouchers and encouraged them to help themselves to the jeans that remained. We closed up shop at 3:00 and hauled the leftovers to Goodwill.

Throughout the process, Marion County Environmental Services helped us in many ways. Most importantly, they designed marketing materials and paid for an advertisement for the event in our local newspaper. Their Master Recyclers helped us sort the blue jeans and also provided a blue jean upcycling craft for kids to do while their parents shopped.

Since then, Salem Public Library has reprised the blue jean swap, again as a back-to-school program, and it has met with equal success. The program was recently awarded the Money Smart Week Bright Ideas award, and will be featured on the <https://www.moneysmartweek.org> website as a turn-key program.

After our success with blue jeans, the Library, along with our partners at Marion County Environmental Services, decided to try an arts and crafts supply swap. Patrons were asked to clean out their craft closets and trade their no-longer-needed supplies with other crafters. It was obvious that the one-item-donated=one-item-claimed formula that was used for blue jeans wouldn't work this time. Does a paint brush equal a box of crayons, and how much is a sheet of scrapbook paper or a skein of yarn “worth”? We decided to keep things simple. Anyone who brought in anything to trade could take home anything they wanted.

We started collecting art supplies two weeks before the event. This time, donors received a ticket that gave them access to the loot at 1:00 p.m. Donations were initially slow to come in, but the pace quickened as the word got out, and by the time the event began, our meeting room looked like the aftermath of an explosion at a Hobby Lobby. We had worried that some greedy soul would donate a dried-up marker, then swoop in to grab all the good stuff, but the sheer quantity of items on offer nullified that concern. Like the blue jean swap, at the end of the day, people who did not donate were welcome to cart away whatever they wanted. After a few hours of fast and furious trading, we were left with just a few boxes of materials to dispose of, and most of those were recyclable.

Those who are interested in trying something similar at their libraries should consider the following:

- What swappable commodity would your community members be willing to trade? School uniforms? Halloween costumes? Board games? Books? Sports equipment?
- Where will inventory be stored and sorted prior to the event? Fortunately, our library has meeting rooms that we were able to reserve for this purpose. If space is not available, libraries could consider a less ambitious event where items are not collected prior to the program.
- Will there be enough inventory to ensure that your swappers don't feel let down? Local thrift stores may be willing to “seed” the inventory with goods.



- What will happen to the leftovers? Those same thrift stores may be willing to take the leftovers. Or items could be saved for the next swap, or perhaps used for other library programs.
- Are there limits to what you want to accept for trade? Unfortunately, some people will see events like these as ways to get rid of their trash without putting it in the dumpster. Some of the jeans that were brought in were too holey to be accepted. And in retrospect, I wish we had opted to not accept any liquids or aerosols for the art supply swap. For liability reasons, some materials, such as bicycle helmets or child car seats, should never be traded.
- Is your staff up to the challenge? Although this is a fairly easy program to plan and execute, sorting materials before the event and day-of-event staffing was surprisingly tiring. One of our volunteers clocked more than five miles on her pedometer in her three-hour shift during the craft supply swap. For all of our swaps we used one volunteer to help us sort materials as they were donated. At the events, we employed one staff member plus four volunteers to do sorting and setup, assist swappers during the event, and clean up afterwards.

By their very nature, libraries are all about reuse; it's part of our DNA. By expanding our definition of "reuse" from items loaned to materials traded, we can provide a way for our patrons to save money, use fewer resources, and save the planet. ♻️



Arts and Crafts Supply Swap. (Photo by Jessica Ramey.)



Pierce Library's Night Against Procrastination

by **Sarah Ralston**
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There is a reason we are probably all familiar with the term “all-nighter,” whether we work in academia or elsewhere. The tendency to procrastinate is so common; most of us are likely to have had the experience of writing a paper late into the night before it is due or making a last-ditch attempt to learn concepts the night before a final exam. There are many strategies for dealing with, preventing, or avoiding procrastination, but a group of students and tutors at the European University Viadrina (EUV) in Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, came up with a novel twist on the traditional all-nighter, turning it into a strategy instead of a last resort (Datig & Herkner, 2014).

Suggested by these students, the “Long Night Against Procrastination” originated through a Writing Center-Library collaboration at EUV, and many libraries in the U.S. and abroad have adopted the model (Landgraf, 2014). The general philosophy is that students pull the all-nighter before the last minute, getting on top of assignments and out in front of exams. The events are filled with organized study breaks, activities, food, and other incentives to participate, and they present an opportunity to build goodwill between students and library staff.

Eastern Oregon University’s Writing Center planned and held EOU’s first Night Against Procrastination, or NAP, in collaboration with the Learning Center (tutor services) in Winter 2016. The event ran from 5:00 p.m. on a Friday until 2:00 a.m. on Saturday, and it featured games and activities organized by tutors every 45 minutes, pizza at 6:00 p.m., and pancakes at midnight. When the second NAP event was held in the Learning Center the following year, librarians asked to participate, and two reference librarians from Pierce Library offered research assistance alongside tutors.



Planning

Being involved in the event planning gave library staff valuable information for planning our own NAP event in the Spring term of 2017, which we considered our pilot program. Running the pilot during Spring when our workload is lighter and when we have fewer students on campus and in the library set us up nicely to hold a larger NAP event in the Fall. We were able to work out some kinks to make the Fall event highly successful.

EOU is a small rural, public university in La Grande, Oregon, with about 1,300 on-campus students. Pierce Library has a staff of 13. We kept our planning committee relatively small for greater efficiency, with three librarians and two classified staff members from Public Services. Because of the information that the Writing Center and Learning Center had shared with us from running their NAP event and our own pilot, we were able to keep planning meetings to a minimum. We divided the labor so that one person was responsible for marketing, another for shopping for supplies, and so forth. I handled liaising with outside entities and coordinating the planning committee. We had a budget of \$300 for food and supplies.

We held the NAP in Pierce Library on the Sunday preceding Week 5 (of a ten-week term) which is when midterms are commonly held. Sundays tend to be busier nights for us, so we could be assured students would already be in the building even if few came intentionally for the event. We decided to run the event from 5:00 p.m. to midnight in consideration of Monday morning classes and our own work schedules.

We printed programs and left them around the library in various student work areas before the library opened. The programs described the event, explained how prize drawings would be conducted, and listed the activities that would occur throughout the night. We also had a host at the door, our evening circulation supervisor Mackenzie Trotter, who passed out programs as students entered. This role was essential, as she directed students to enter their names for prize drawings and to fill out feedback forms before leaving in addition to explaining the event. Though we had promoted the event, there were students who had just come to use the library as usual, unaware that anything special was going on. A friendly face at the door with information and signage helped defuse any awkwardness.

Mackenzie also coordinated collection of the door prizes by contacting local businesses via letter. She then followed up by phone and was able to collect around 30 gift certificates from 11 local businesses. Eighty students entered their names for prizes.

The Night Against Procrastination

The library building is three stories tall with the top floor being a lounge area with a coffee bar and a conference room. This is an inviting, open area, and because there are no book stacks or study areas on this floor, it was a good place to hold activities that could be disruptive to studiers. We partnered with EOU's 1-Up Game club, whose members brought a Wii, a PlayStation, and several card and board games and hosted gaming in the lounge and conference room. The local movie theater donated a 55-gallon bag of freshly made movie theater popcorn, which we placed in the gaming area with paper bowls for students to serve themselves. This was a surprise hit! We later noted popcorn bowls in trash cans in study rooms around the building, indicating that students had gone up to get popcorn and then returned to studying.



We had pizza delivered at 6:00 p.m. and held prize drawings each hour. Though our intent was to bring students to the third floor for prize drawings and study breaks on the hour, the third-floor room was packed throughout the night with students playing games, eating, and socializing.

On the main floor of the library, The Learning Center held drop-in tutoring, a Chemistry faculty member held a study session, and a Writing faculty member held office hours. The faculty participation was an unplanned bonus that resulted from our marketing the event to faculty as well as students.

One of the most popular features of both the pilot and the Fall NAP was a free hot drinks table, also on the main floor. We brought two Keurig coffee makers and a hot water dispenser and provided coffee pods, packets of hot cocoa and apple cider, and tea bags. More than 100 cups were used, and the table was constantly busy. We knew from our Spring pilot that the drinks would be popular, so we designated a staff member and a student worker to keep the table stocked.

At 7:00 p.m., the Triple B Foundation for Pet Therapy brought a miniature horse to visit with students. This was our busiest time of the night, with 60–70 students gathered in the main floor reading room to meet her. We had publicized her visit, and many students had come specifically to see the horse. As a specially trained therapy horse, she was accustomed to greeting and being petted by strangers. After she was done with the crowd, her handler led her around the main floor to visit with students who were studying. According to reports from students the next day, this was probably the most Snapchatted moment of the night.

Our final organized activity of the night was a meal of waffles prepared by library staff at 10:00 p.m. Having done this twice now, we feel that preparing and serving food to our students is a wonderful way to connect. It demonstrates for students the genuine friendliness and service orientation of our staff. Our waffle cooks served over 50 waffles, and many students who had left the event earlier came back for a late-night waffle snack.

Outcomes

We are a small enough community that we recognize our regulars, and many of the students who attended had not been seen in the library before. Our evening supervisor has reported that some have since become regular evening patrons, which is an outcome that we had hoped for. Altogether, we recorded 155 students over the course of the night, which was a 158 percent increase over the pilot we held in Spring term. Our patron count for the night was double the count for the same night (Sunday before Week 5) in both 2016 and 2015.

We offered a special prize drawing for students who filled out feedback forms before leaving, and we got 39 forms back. Students commented that we should hold such events more often: twice a term or even once a month. Several commented that they had fun *and* got work done. There was some constructive feedback about food options, specifically, offering more healthy snack options. There was also some disappointment that there were no dogs. During the Spring pilot, staff members brought their dogs for students to pet and play with, and we had planned on doing this again. After arranging for a trained therapy horse, however, it was decided that our rambunctious dogs might not mix well with a professional, so we canceled them at the last minute. I personally heard complaints in my classes about



the lack of dogs throughout the following day and concluded that next time dogs should be an essential feature.

We did note that some students just came for the food or the horse, but many of those stayed to chat over a hot drink or to play games. Even if they had not come to study, we still considered this a success as it brought students into the library who had not been there before. They were comfortable and engaged, and events like this reflect positively on the library as a space.

Considerations for Next Time and Advice

While having one person to do high-level coordination is important, it was key to also empower the planning committee members to make decisions and use their own judgment. We all have day jobs, and putting on an evening event did require some extra work during a busy time of year. Pre-planning when we were less busy was essential. Dividing the labor and keeping meetings to a minimum was also hugely helpful. We used a shared Google Doc to keep track of responsibilities, which we kept from the Spring event so we didn't have to start from scratch in the Fall.

At a public university, there is a certain amount of bureaucracy involved with putting on events, especially when they involve food (EOU has a food service contract with an outside vendor). Several of us had to obtain food handlers' licenses in order to make waffles, and we were required to order pizza from our vendor. There are also restrictions on how library funds can be spent, and though we handled these temporary roadblocks as they came up, it would have been less stressful if we had known and dealt with them earlier. Having an administrator review the planning early on would help predict potential issues. We will also be working with a risk management officer on considerations for having animals at the library.

Marketing can be challenging on our campus. There are restrictions on mass-emailing students, and there are so many posters and flyers up on public boards that we are not sure they all get read. We put out posters and table tents and got flyers into student mailboxes in the residence halls. We also sent posters to faculty and encouraged them to put them up on their office doors. Librarians at EOU teach in the First Year Experience course, so we marketed heavily in class. This worked well, but we have yet to figure out how to best reach students who live off campus.

Nonetheless, doubling our numbers from an average Sunday night meant that the night was a success. If you have the staff who want to do it, campus partners, and students to help with the planning and running the event, the possibilities for activities are numerous. A similar program could easily be adapted in a public or high school library. A Night Against Procrastination can be an inexpensive way of getting students into the library and making new connections and is great fun for everyone involved. 🐾

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Building Community at the Library With Coffee and Conversation

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As communities and individuals struggle with houselessness and housing insecurity, library staff must adapt in order to help our patrons fulfill needs. In 2013, Multnomah County Library (MCL) and the Multnomah County Department of County Human Services surveyed library patrons about library use. The survey identified that about 18.6 percent of visitors to Central Library—the county system's main branch, located in downtown Portland—are people experiencing houselessness. These patrons visit the library more frequently than patrons who are not experiencing houselessness, and they tend to stay at the library longer than the latter group.



Because patrons experiencing houselessness may have negative experiences interacting with staff in businesses, government offices, and other public institutions like libraries, it's important to start any engagement by building relationships. Staff members need to help these patrons find resources and library materials, assist them with account issues, and show them that the library is the right place for them by making them feel welcome. In order to address this need, staff looked for a way to build relationships between staff and patrons and to create a welcoming environment in the library.

The Shared Problem

A 2016 survey of MCL staff found that more than half of the staff members who responded did not feel they had enough knowledge or resources to be truly helpful to patrons experiencing houselessness. More than 75 percent of respondents wanted ongoing training on issues related to serving people experiencing houselessness.

In April 2016, after working with a cohort of librarians at the Kettering Foundation and learning from several other public libraries that are making efforts to serve patrons experiencing houselessness and poverty, we began offering a program called “Coffee and Conversation” to engage this patron group and to give library staff the chance to interact with patrons experiencing houselessness in a safe and social environment. Coffee and Conversation is based on a program started in 2013 by the Dallas Public Library in Texas (Africawala, 2014) and adapted by several other libraries.

Kettering Foundation—Learning to Work *with Our Community*

In 2015, two librarians from Multnomah County Library were invited to the Kettering Foundation campus in Dayton, Ohio, to discuss ways that libraries can work with individuals in the community to address shared problems. The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit organization focused on researching democracy. Its core insights include that a robust democracy requires “citizens who can make sound decisions,” “a community that can work together to solve common problems,” and “institutions with public legitimacy that contribute to strengthening society.” The Foundation convenes learning exchanges during which people come together to discuss how to solve specific problems. This is a time for people who have an interest in solving a problem to come together to talk about their experiences and ideas and decide how to move forward. These learning exchanges may then develop into a cohort that continues meeting to exchange what they have learned over the course of some time.

The Kettering Foundation focuses on working with “citizens,” or members of the community, rather than for or on those citizens, positing: “democracy requires a community, or a society of citizens, that can work together to address common problems” (“Core insights: Communities,” n.d., para. 1).

Getting Started

Before starting a new kind of program, particularly one with a goal of supporting staff in engaging with patrons in a new way, we wanted to make sure we had staff and management buy-in. In addition to proposing the project to senior and middle managers we spent time visiting various staff group meetings at Central Library to explain the program and to specifically ask staff for support. Support might mean attending a program session or



promoting the session to patrons and to other staff members. After the program began we continued visiting staff meetings to promote the program and to report on our progress. Direct communication with staff whom we hoped would support the program was helpful in gaining that support.

The target audience for this program is people experiencing houselessness and library staff. In order to avoid attracting patrons who are not in that demographic we did not initially promote the program through typical library promotional channels, such as the library website. Instead we placed handbill style flyers on tables in the room in which the program would be hosted. Staff invited patrons verbally, and Kate Schwab, the librarian at Central Library focused on serving patrons experiencing houselessness, promoted the program during outreach sessions to shelters and other service providers.

Implementation

Starting the program at the beginning of the day proved to make the most sense, as patrons are moving into the library and into the Community Room, where the program takes place. This room is often used by people experiencing houselessness to charge their devices, read or study, and spend time with friends. Since we are already set up when patrons come in, there is no need to ask people to move if they are not participating, and we are able to welcome people as they arrive.

We provide a generous supply of coffee along with cookies, fruit, and soft breakfast bars. We place easel pad-sized sticky notes on the tables, on which we write conversation prompts and a drawing prompt for the shy or artistic. Staff welcome patrons into the room and invite them to grab a cup of coffee and some snacks. Because the ability to charge their electronics is so important to these patrons, we let them plug in during the program but ask them to engage in conversation rather than using their technology.

For each sheet of questions, we usually write three questions on a theme. Staff often act as the recorders for the question prompts. Sometimes people respond to the questions, and sometimes they talk about whatever they feel like discussing that day.

Our questions have ranged over a variety of topics, from questions about the library and the community to questions about hobbies and favorite activities.

What change would you like to see in your community?

*Free garden; Everyone knows each other; Spirit of fun, friendly, sharing;
Can't buy hot food with food stamps, but I have nowhere to cook.*

What kind of things do you make?

*Paintings; Online memes; Bracelets or necklaces out of beads/yarn;
Karaoke (memories are made); Cards; Friends; Food and pastries*

What does it mean to make something yourself?

*It's cool to see others enjoy my work; Joy; Help find answers;
Promote self awareness; A sense of accomplishment; Sense of peace.*





One of the responses to the drawing prompt, “Draw what health means to you.”

As patrons become familiar with the program they become its ambassadors, letting new participants know how the sessions work.

It can be uncomfortable for some staff to begin to interact with patrons in new ways. To prepare staff for the session, the organizers share the conversation prompts in advance, as well as meeting with participating staff a few minutes before the session begins to talk about how the sessions usually unfold. Once the sessions begin, those who have participated before lead by example, demonstrating that a little discomfort is normal and should not be seen as a roadblock. Once people have settled into conversations of mutual interest, they find themselves relaxing and enjoying the experience. When we surveyed staff after the pilot, 47 percent of survey participants said that the program helped them feel more comfortable talking with patrons (50 percent said that they were pretty comfortable to begin with). In the same survey, 100 percent said they felt this session helped build community in the library.

The program provides opportunities to talk about behavior—both by staff and by patrons—in a way that is less hierarchical and more open than conversations intended to correct or modify patron behavior. Since Coffee and Conversation began, MCL enacted changes in the library rules. We deliberately chose not to use the sessions as forums about the rules. However, as conversations naturally arose between staff and patrons, they provided a way for staff to discuss the background and reasoning behind the rules and for patrons to discuss their feelings about how the rules were explained and enforced. One patron shared that the only time any staff person had ever spoken to them before this program was to tell them that they were disobeying a rule. These conversations, and many like them, are much more comfortable and convivial with a little coffee and without any in-the-moment need for behavior modification.



As patrons adapted to the program, we saw attendance grow, and we saw some regular attendees. We used the program to get input from the community on a variety of issues, from health care access to what kinds of programs we should offer at the library.

Lessons Learned


When we began hosting Coffee and Conversation, we started half an hour after the library opened for the day. We quickly realized that it was much better to start the program right at opening so that people could smoothly enter the program as they arrived.

Organizers need to be prepared for the program to change—we make connections with individuals, but people move on for many reasons, and it can be hard to let them go. Two of the regular participants in our group found housing and are no longer joining us for our monthly meetings.

Interest in and awareness of the program among the general staff waxes and wanes. It is necessary to regularly talk to staff about the program, at staff meetings and more informal gatherings, to invite them to take part and remind them that this program exists and serves both patrons and staff.

As shared above, we did have conversations in which we attempted to solicit information to help us make changes or decisions. Generally, these focused conversations did not stay on track; it was much better to be relaxed and respond to where the conversation went rather than attempting to facilitate. The goal of this program is trust building—for both patrons and staff—not information gathering.

Conclusions

Valuable relationships develop when working with patrons, rather than simply for them. Even if the model described in this article is not feasible for your library, the experience of engaging with patrons in different ways, letting people know you are happy they are here, and building trust between library staff and patrons benefits everyone involved. Patrons who feel that library staff welcome them into the library and view them as individuals, rather than needs or behaviors, will feel more confident approaching library staff with information needs. Library staff who have practice talking to marginalized patrons will have more confidence helping a patron meet those information needs. Approaching the relationship in a way that demonstrates that we are not only providing a service but also meeting each other as individual people, makes the library more welcoming and allows us to provide relevant programming and services. 

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Staff and patrons enjoying Coffee and Conversation.



A New Use for the Makerspace

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DIANA WIDDOWS is in her second year as a K-8 Library Media Specialist at Warrenton Grade School. She has taught third grade and elementary technology classes and has run summer library programs as well as makerspace camps. She helps coach two ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicles) teams who design, build, and compete with their underwater robots. When not working she loves to hike, garden, draw, and, of course, read.

If you want to elicit a groan and an eye roll from almost anyone in the field of education, you need only whisper two words: test prep. Standardized testing is a reality across the country, but even for those who can see its value, the testing is time consuming and can be soul-crushing for teachers and students.

As a former third grade teacher, I witnessed students' first experience with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests. I watched a struggling reader stare at the same performance task for two hours, typing about two sentences over that time. I saw a similar scenario with one of my highest performing math students. Math was his strength and pride, so when he came to a question that he was not sure of, he tried it over and over again until I could see tears streaming down his face. Often this frustration stems from the student having no experience with this type of content. When a student asks for help, the only allowed response is "It is important that you do your best. Do you need to pause the test and take a break?" Every teacher who proctors SBAC tests has experienced these exhausting and emotionally draining days. We don't want to spend our days teaching to a test, but we want students to feel prepared and confident when facing new challenges, including testing.

At Warrenton Grade School, a Makerspace was established at the end of last year as a way to create opportunities for hands-on learning. It is housed in the art room, and teachers can bring their classes to work on projects. With this space available, we decided to bundle SBAC Test Prep with fun projects that keep the curriculum hands-on and simultaneously help students build background knowledge for performance tasks they will face.



We focused on Math Performance Tasks for these projects, because they are multi-step problems that include a combination of different math operations and skills using the same data. A sample performance task requires third graders to read and interpret a scaled bar graph about the number of cups of lemonade a person sold in July, manipulate this data set by adding and subtracting to find the amount sold in August, and choose an appropriate scale and create a pictograph with this new information (Sample items, 2018). We wanted to give students practice in solving these kinds of multi-step problems as well as collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and manipulating data in a way that was fun and engaging. We started with the lemonade stand item and adapted it to be about balloon cars, since this was something that we could design, build, and test easily in the Makerspace.

Our first students who experienced the Performance Task practice were third graders. Since the entire third grade participated, about 75 students, we had a diverse group at different levels of background knowledge, needs, and strengths. All four classes started by building balloon-powered cars. We provided the required materials along with modified directions from the Smithsonian Maker Lab book, but after that we provided very little input or direction. Students were responsible for the design of their car as well as its construction. Intentionally not helping the students can be hard for teachers, but encouraging students to think critically and to solve their own problems is what we strive for in the Makerspace. When a student expresses frustration that “My wheels won’t turn!” or “My car is broken!” our response is simply, “Fix it.” And usually they do. But they always, whether through success or failure, learn from their own experience. Once students finished building, they



Kyle and Sadie work on using balloons as power for their cars.



went to the testing area to see how their cars drove. When they saw that their car would only drive in a circle, or was tipping over, or not going anywhere, they had to identify the problem and attempt to fix it. Students often helped one another with this part, pointing out cardboard bases that were rubbing on wheels, or balloons that were not taped all the way down to their straw. It became a cycle of testing, identifying problems, making improvements, and then testing again. In itself, the Makerspace is a place that allows students to solve new problems without the help of an adult, thus giving them the opportunity to gain confidence in their own abilities.

After spending a class building, testing, and modifying their balloon cars, students then did official distance tests, measuring how far their cars would travel in the hallway and graphing the information over four separate trials of their car. This gave them practice with measurement and data collection that would be relevant to their upcoming SBAC sample items.

The next step was to present performance task items where students already had some background knowledge. We used our adapted sample questions about balloon cars and included measurements in inches, since that was how they measured distance in their own trials. Students completed this practice in class and were given immediate feedback by their teachers, something that they do not receive when practicing SBAC questions online. Some teachers also combined this practice with the original online sample items about the lemonade stand. Third-grade teacher Angie Horton noted that with this type of SBAC practice, her students were more prepared and positive than they had been without it. “The physical hands-on aspect of it was highly engaging,” she stated, “and the creation of the cars helped build prior knowledge that they were able to draw from in the math practice questions.”




Kylie and Jayce design and build the bases and bodies for their cars.



Following the third grade, fourth graders came through the Makerspace to create holiday ornaments out of clay, and some of the fourth-grade teachers also followed through with accompanying modified SBAC sample questions. Teacher Julie Thoma stated, “It was really helpful to my students because having done the hands-on piece of making the ornaments helped them make connections more than just reading about it.” She followed up the modified sample questions with an online practice test completed together as a class.

As teachers, we are responsible to our students to help them feel confident and prepared when facing challenges, including testing. Joining SBAC prep with Makerspace projects helps students to be more engaged in their practice and is a fun way for them to tackle new problems with confidence and resilience. I think it is also helpful practice for us as teachers—to allow students to struggle with the material rather than giving them help right away, and to be confident that they will make their own decisions and learn from them. In some ways, it seems as if Makerspace projects and SBAC testing prep could not be further apart, but we think they can be complementary and hope to continue doing more projects like these in the future.

The outcomes we are aiming for are not based as much on increasing student standardized test scores as they are on giving students the confidence and resilience to face difficult questions without giving up or feeling overwhelmed. The aim is to keep it both rigorous and fun. After testing starts this year, we will be able to get a feel from teachers and students about whether classes who practiced these strategies seemed more relaxed and prepared than previous classes. As we receive feedback, the Makerspace will continue to evolve to suit the needs of our students and our school. 

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What Did We Learn?

Youth and Family Programs at Deschutes Public Library

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HEATHER MCNEIL has been the Youth Services Manager at Deschutes Public Library for 19 years. She is the recipient of OLA's 2014 Librarian of the Year and the 2017 Evelyn Sibley Lampman Award, and she served on the 2005 Newbery and 2018 Caldecott Committees. She says that the best part of her week is Toddlin' Tales, when she sings, reads, and acts silly with a room full of curious and adorable toddlers. Heather lives in Bend with two very weird cats and looks forward to visits from her daughter, who is at Pacific Lutheran University. She just finished reading *Wild Beauty* by Anna-Marie McLemore and thought it was absolutely gorgeous!

A four-year-old in a sparkly dress and tiara. Patrons loudly hammering on leather strips. Sleepy faces peering up from sleeping bags. Teens geeking out over Sherlock and anime characters. Llamas peeing on the carpet.

Wait. What? Llamas in the library? Surely not. Who would bring llamas in the library?

That would be me. And it's just one of the many things I've learned over the years about youth programs, good, bad, and ugly. Let's start with the good.

Probably number one on the adorable scale is our annual *Royal Tea Party*. We invite children to dress in their finest and have the chance to meet the "Queen." The first year we did this, my mother played that part, and she relished every one of the curtsies and bows she received as the children walked down the royal red carpet. Now we have library staff who volunteer to play the part. After the greeting, everyone sits at linen-covered tables and is served juice, cheese cubes, and cookies. The cutlery is plastic, but the serving dishes are silver and china, donated by library staff for the event. There is brief entertainment: a story at the beginning and gentle recorded harp music in the background during tea. Patrons must pre-register, and we're always full.

What did we learn? Keep everything simple. The first year we did a reader's theater, a read aloud, and a song, but so much entertainment is not necessary. Now we do just one story or a participation song. The children are excited to be dressed up, they totally believe in the Queen, who, along with the librarians, is dressed in Renaissance costume, and they love the fancy tables with flowered centerpieces and linens. They just want to have their picture taken with the Queen and do a lot of twirling. They don't need anything more.

Our annual *How-To Fest* at the Redmond Library brings in a wide variety of activity, with members of the community demonstrating everything from how to get organized to how to garden in the High Desert. Josie Hanneman, the librarian who began this annual event, overheard supportive comments such as, "We drove all the way from Bend to learn





Two adorable llamas leave behind more than expected for enthralled audience members at the Downtown Bend Library. (Photo by Heather McNeil.)

about worms!” and, “We need more of this in our community.” Twenty-six sessions ran simultaneously in and out of the library. Participants learned how to build a trebuchet, how to upgrade a lawn mower into a parade vehicle, and how to use essential oils. Bend’s DIY Cave (www.diycafe.com) taught how to make leather bracelets (thus the loud hammering), and the Youth Empowerment Bike Program taught bike repairs. There were simple crafts available for the young, such as seed bombs and card making. Two of the most popular sessions were on raising honeybees, and another on raising guinea pigs. Squeaking, chirping Lil’ Yeller and Snowburst were the stars!

What did we learn? Have plenty of volunteers helping with directions, supplies, surveys, etc. Everyone who presented volunteered their time, so cost was minimal. The more time spent planning, the smoother everything will go. Plan details that seem insignificant; doing so will help you on the day-of. We did the *How-To Fest* on the first day of summer reading, which definitely brought in attendees but added perhaps too much to the chaos. A champagne problem!

An ongoing challenge for many libraries is how to appeal to teens. What will bring them to the library? Although nothing is guaranteed, we had great success with a *Fandom Halloween Party*. Participants came dressed as their favorite character, enjoyed fandom crafts and trivia, and snacked on fandom-themed food, such as Wookiee Cookies. April Witteveen, teen librarian, heard, “We don’t have any place where we can cosplay, so this is great!”

What did we learn? Stay in tune with pop culture. What series are popular? What are teens binge-watching? Make sure it’s not a “has been.”

We began doing *Overnight at the Library* as part of the summer reading program about ten years ago, and it has become an annual favorite for many families. Registration is required, and we limit it to 40 children, each with at least one parent. Librarians provide a variety of activities and entertainment from 7:30–9:30 p.m., including crafts, games, and storytelling. Every activity involves everyone, not just the kids, which has not been a prob-



lem—any parent who would agree to spend the night on the floor of the library is a pretty involved parent. There are breaks for snacks and quiet time for reading to calm down the energy. At 10:00 p.m., everyone gets into their sleeping bags around the room; flashlights are allowed for more reading. We provide coffee, doughnuts, and juice the next morning, and everyone is out of the building by 9:00 a.m.

What did we learn? There have been parents who wanted to send their child with someone else’s parent, or just drop off their child for the night. We have adhered to our rule, explaining that this is a family-based activity designed to create lasting memories about the library. One of my favorites is the 7-year-old girl who came racing in, threw down her sleeping bag, and yelled, “I’m going to sleep with the fairies!” She staked her claim on the floor below all the Rainbow Fairies books. Her mother smiled and said, “She has been planning this ever since she heard about it at a school assembly.”

La Pine is a rural community, and it’s sometimes tough to get attendance at programs, but the annual *Gingerbread House Workshop* never lacks for popularity. All ages are welcome. We provide the building materials, they provide the creativity. Roxanne Renteria, the librarian, recorded more than 100 participants this year and said, “They all seemed to have fun.”

What did we learn? This is another one that requires help from plenty of volunteers for prep and clean up. Also, be sure to add meringue to the icing recipe, so it dries quickly and holds the graham crackers together.

Chandra VanEijnsbergen, community librarian at the East Bend Library, said that one of her most successful STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) programs was when she didn’t tell the participants what to do. She simply laid out supplies, some useful,



Family members of all ages work together on gingerbread houses at the La Pine Library. (Photo by Tina Davis.)



some not so much, for building a windmill, but gave no instructions. “I showed them a brief video that showed how windmills work, then I just let them go at it with no help from me, no more explaining or showing them anything, just you figure it out. And they all did! They all came up with working windmills that lifted a weight.”

What did we learn? Chandra says, “Sometimes NOT explaining things to the kids is just as powerful. They can figure it out themselves, and perhaps they even learn more that way.”

Spanish language storytimes were getting sparse attendance at the Redmond Library. We tried renaming the series, to emphasize learning, but that didn’t help. Then Gaby Hernandez, our Latino Services Specialist, made a big change. It became *Leer/Crear/Jugar!* (*Read/ Create/Play*). It meets monthly in the early evening, and the entire family is invited. She offers storytime, crafts, STEM activities, and simple snacks. The result? Great attendance and a strong following!

What did we learn? Consider the audience. Coming to the library during the morning was obviously difficult or unappealing for this population, but family fun at 5:30 was just right.

Have all our programs been this successful? In a word, no. There are times when no one shows up, or, even worse, there’s only one overwhelmed child getting way too much attention. Here are some examples of programs too memorable to forget, though we’d really like to:

- Llamas in the Library was part of a pet-themed summer reading program years ago. The owner of the llamas assured me that they only pee and poop if they smell it from other llamas, so we could bring them inside and putting plastic covers on the floor was not necessary. Programs at the first two libraries went just fine. At the Downtown Bend Library, she brought two adorable, long-lashed llamas who gazed out at the filled-to-capacity room. After about five minutes, while the owner was giving all the best details about her pets, the elder male peed. Which made the younger one pee. Which made the older one poop. Which made ... me ask her to please remove the llamas! She removed one, and the other settled down. The Facilities Department was not happy with me, and for months after, kids would come to storytime in that room and announce, “Mommy, this is where those llamas peed!”
- Speaking of peeing (can’t believe I wrote that), I not-so-fondly remember the parent who, during storytime, whipped out a potty chair from her bag, stood up her toddler, pulled down his pants, and said, “OK, sweetie. Go ahead. You can do it. You’re a big boy ...” And so on. I was gobsmacked and all I could think of was to bring storytime to a halt. Which I did, confusing everyone with the early ending. I approached the mother and said, “Perhaps you didn’t realize there is a bathroom at the back of the room?” To which she replied, “Oh, he doesn’t do well with bathrooms, and this is THE WEEK he gets potty trained.”
- Another STEM program from Chandra focused on building air-powered cars out of empty water bottles and balloons. On the day of the program, she had bottles of hard plastic, rather than the soft plastic she had used as a model. “We couldn’t cut into the bottles to attach wheels and balloons, so we spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to make it work with what we had. I learned to always make your model out of the actual materials you will use in the program!”



- Similarly, I led potato rolling races on St. Patrick's Day, without ever actually practicing rolling the potatoes—with noses. Within less than a minute, three kids had bloody noses. Bad idea!

Every program is a learning experience. Finding the right day, time, topic, format, approach, design—it's not easy. We have to think about the community—transportation issues, rural vs. urban, other competing activities. Deschutes Public Library serves five very different communities, so what works in one might not work in another. We have struggled with getting regular attendance at a Sensory Storytime, but so far have not been able to achieve that. Is it the marketing? The day? The time? The name? All of that is under consideration, plus we talk with others who have established a successful series. We had minimal attendance with one-off after-school programs until we started calling them “camps” that continued for three weeks on subjects such as poetry writing, music or art. Bingo! That made all the difference, and registration is often full.

If a program is less than successful, we assess what could be improved the next time, or whether to let the whole idea go. We “keep on keepin’ on,” because it’s all worth it when we get it right. 🌀



Twirling your tutu is essential at the Royal Tea Party. (Photo by Tina Davis.)



Even superheroes come to the Royal Tea Party. (Photo by Tina Davis.)



Library Takeovers:

After Hours Nerf Games and More at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

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ELIZABETH JOHNSON is a Youth Reference Librarian at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library. She received her MLS from Emporia State University in 2012 with an emphasis on children and youth services. When Elizabeth is not organizing the chaos of Tween Nerf, she spends most of her time planning programs for tweens, leading baby storytimes, and managing the juvenile non-fiction collection. She loves middle grade fantasy fiction, knitting, and the Great British Baking Show. She lives with her husband of ten years and two young children.



KRISTY KEMPER HODGE is the Teen Services Librarian at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, where she's approaching her fourth anniversary. She discovered a love and passion for working with teens while employed at a hospital as a volunteer and career development coordinator, and, to this day, teens remain some of her most favorite people (especially middle schoolers). She serves on the YALSA Great Graphic Novels for Teens Selection Committee and loves to talk books, bake, visit the beach, unabashedly read YA lit, and dabble in arts and crafts.

Photos by Lindy Brown of the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library.

The Corvallis-Benton County Public Library (CBCPL) has been hosting action-packed after-hours events for all ages since July 2017. Referred to as Takeovers, these events involve crafts, video games, Nerf games, and more—all while the library is closed. Each Takeover event is tailored to a specific age group (either tweens, teens, or adults) and people from



outside that age group are not permitted in the library during the event. Takeovers are all about having fun and connecting with others and have proven to be incredibly popular; for example, registration and attendance caps are necessary for the Tween Takeovers to be sure the library can accommodate all that want to attend. This article will discuss the origin of the idea for CBCPL's Takeovers, how these events are planned and coordinated, tips for any library interested in hosting their own Takeovers, and the ways in which these events tie into the CBCPL mission.

The first Takeover event was offered in October 2016 to teens. Kristy Kemper Hodge, Teen Services Librarian, found that teens were eager for events that allowed them to be the only ones in the building. She had also heard from teens that they wanted to try Nerf games in the library, an activity that would only work when the building was closed to the general public. The initial popularity of the after-hours Nerf games led to the development of a monthly Teen Takeover on Friday nights. Each Takeover involves playing games (not always Nerf), watching a movie, and arts and crafts. Many Takeovers are themed, such as Games After Dark, featuring hide-n-seek, and a Winter Party featuring a movie, cookie decorating, and gift-making. An average of 35 teens attend Teen Takeover but, when Nerf games are featured, attendance doubles.

At the end of 2016, Youth Services staff recognized a gap in services offered to fourth through sixth graders, so a tween advisory group was formed in January 2017. During the first meeting, tween advisors enthusiastically asked for an after-hours Nerf night modeled after the teen Nerf events. The first Tween Takeover featuring Nerf games was in May 2017 with more than 100 fourth through sixth graders. Subsequent Tween Takeovers have been just as well attended. Due to the enormous popularity of Nerf games with this age group, Tween Takeovers have only featured Nerf; a separate monthly event (Be-tween) involves a meetup for games, a movie, and crafts for only tweens during the library's regular hours.



Adults pose with their Nerf blasters at the end of a Library Takeover for Adults. (Photo by Bonnie Brzozowski.)



The success of the Teen and Tween Takeovers had many adults asking when it would be their turn for Nerf games in the library. In July 2017, just over 50 people attended the first Library Takeover for Adults. The event included Nerf games, video games, and arts and crafts. Library Takeovers for Adults are now offered quarterly and have had up to 60 people in attendance. These events have also featured the Vive, a virtual reality headset the Friends of the CBC Library purchased for our Maker Club events.

For teens and tweens, Nerf Takeovers begin with a participant check-in period where it is verified that a permission form has been signed and received in advance from participants and their guardians. For adults, Nerf Takeovers begin with all participants signing a waiver. The permission form/waiver includes the library's code of conduct and waives the library of any liability relating to risks taken or injuries incurred during the event. The form also requests an emergency contact or parent/guardian contact. By signing the permission form, teens and tweens and their guardians are also agreeing that teens and tweens will not leave the building until the guardian who signed the form comes inside and checks in with staff or volunteers at the end of the event.

Once a permission slip or waiver has been verified or obtained, participants are invited to choose a library-owned Nerf blaster and some Nerf darts. If participants brought their own equipment, it may not be modified in any way or shoot any ammunition other than Nerf darts, and the participant is asked to label it. Targets are set up for practice and to get acquainted with blasters.

After a check-in period of approximately 15 minutes, there is a brief rundown of the rules: 1) no headshots; 2) no running (fast walking is acceptable); 3) safety glasses must be worn at all times (if you already wear glasses, that is sufficient); 4) don't be a jerk; 5) play nice; 6)



Tweens (fourth through sixth graders) wait anxiously with their Nerf blasters for a Tween Takeover to begin. (Photo by Lindy Brown of the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library.)



don't let people into the building; 7) no stacking furniture; and 8) no climbing on furniture or shelves. If any of these rules are broken, participants may be asked to sit out for the remainder of that particular Nerf game. Any egregious or repeated rule breaking could lead to a ban from the entirety of that night's Nerf games; however, this has never been necessary.

After everyone has their Nerf equipment, participants are ushered from our event room into the library itself. Anyone involved in other activities such as video games or crafts is invited to stay in the event room, where a staff member and a few volunteers will also remain. Only those participating in Nerf games are allowed on the library floor. Prior to the event, staff and volunteers remove all potential tripping hazards (e.g., footstools) and put caution tape over restricted areas such as stairwells and service desks. Play is limited to the first floor for ease of staff and volunteers in keeping an eye on all the activity. Typically, participants play three games for the duration of about an hour. Examples of Nerf games include Humans vs. Zombies, Capture the Flag, and a free-for-all game.

A number of supplies are crucial to Takeover success. If Nerf games are involved, a supply of Nerf blasters and darts is essential. The library began with 25 Nerf blasters and a few hundred darts. Because many teens and tweens bring their own equipment, this remained an adequate supply for the first several Takeovers. However, when we added the event for adults, we assumed fewer adults would bring their own equipment and purchased another 25 blasters. Over time, we have accumulated another 20 blasters, making it an arsenal of 70. Each library-owned blaster is labeled with marker and duct tape. Other supplies include video game consoles such as a Wii or Xbox One, board games, instructions and craft supplies for self-guided crafts, signage for the check-in station, snacks, and water. All equipment and supplies are funded by the Friends of the CBC Library.

One of the biggest surprises in hosting these events has been the extraordinary attendance at the Tween Takeovers. The high attendance prompted staff to require registration for future events. Getting everyone registered and making sure permission slips were received ahead of time was challenging; however, at the last event, we required online registration, helping to streamline the process.

Further, because so many people are playing fast-paced, unpredictable games, it is important to have adequate staffing and ample volunteer help. Up to six volunteers typically assist at Nerf Takeovers with three staff members; this augmented presence helps ensure there are eyes all over the library as well as in the event room when there are additional activities. High attendance can also impose a limit on the type of Nerf games played.

Other surprises have included the realization that the air conditioner does not get left on after hours unless we ask ahead of time. More than 100 sweaty (i.e., smelly) tweens certainly helped us remember for the future. Adequate snacks and water are also important as participants work up a sweat and need refreshments. Examples of snacks we typically offer are granola bars, fruit snacks, and pretzels. We have several water coolers ready and we encourage people to take water breaks throughout the evening. In addition, Nerf darts will be all over the library at the end of this event. We enlist the help of the participants and volunteers in picking up as many darts as we can find at the end of the night. We email our colleagues the next morning to let them know where to put darts when found. A basket is kept in our Circulation Workroom for ease of dart collection.



Takeover events are perfectly tied to the CBCPL mission: Enrich! Excite! Explore! The events enrich participants' lives through social interaction and play. The events are intrinsically exciting and they give the specific age group targeted a sense of ownership of the library space. The events encourage exploration by bringing many brand new people to the library and introducing them to a range of activities available in our space. Though these events can feel chaotic, the excitement and energy of everyone involved in Takeovers is uplifting, thrilling, and completely different from what we typically see at library events. 🐼



Bonnie, Elizabeth, and Kristy are always ready for Nerf fun. (Photo by Lindy Brown of the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library.)



OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2018

The *OLA Quarterly (OLAQ)* is the official publication of the Oregon Library Association. The *OLAQ* is indexed by *Library Literature & Information Science* and *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts*. To view PDFs of issues, visit the *OLAQ* Archive on the OLA website. Full text is also available through *HW Wilson's Library Literature and Information Science Full Text* and *EBSCO Publishing's Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) with Full Text*.

Each issue is developed around a theme determined by the Communications Committee and Guest Editor(s). To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact the *OLAQ* Coordinator.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 24 • No. 1 Spring 2018	<i>The Specialness of Special Libraries</i>	March 9, 2018	May 15, 2018	Sue Ludington <i>Law Librarian, Lane County Law Library & OLA Legal Reference Round Table Chair</i>

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