## Langren, Cynthia

**From:** Draves, Ken
**Sent:** Friday, May 30, 2014 9:32 AM
**To:** Carroll, Holly; Watson-Lakamp, Paula
**Subject:** Recent press and public acknowledgement

In Wednesday's Coloradoan, Vic Price, a member of the COFC Human Relations Commission, had a Soapbox on mental illness and our cosponsored series on issues related to mental health and illness in our community.  He discusses the partnership with the District.

http://www.coloradoan.com/story/opinion/contributors/2014/05/28/education-can-help-remove-stigma-mental-illness/9684187/

Yesterday, I attended a celebration of the opening of the Dr. Thomas R. Mark Assistive Technology Room, funded by the Mark Family Endowment, at the Morgan Library. Pat Burns spoke briefly, as did Marla Roll, Director of the Assistive Technology Resource Center and Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy.  Speaking to a room of 80-100, Marla described how the Library District has partnered with CSU and specifically with the OT program  to select and provide assistive technologies in our facilities and make them available to the public.  A young woman who is completely blind, and just graduated with a Master's in Social Work, explained how her graduate school journey was enhanced enormously by the staff and the assistive technology available on campus and specifically in the library. It was inspirational.

Ken

# Soapbox: Education can remove mental illness stigma

**Vic Smith**     *2:25 p.m. MDT May 28, 2014*



*(Photo: Courtesy photo )*

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, each year in the United States, over 61 million adults, about one-fourth of the adult population, experience some form of mental illness, and 20 percent of youths between the ages of 13 to 18 experience severe mental disorders.

These are serious medical conditions that can disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, daily functioning and ability to relate to others.

Mental disorders cross all demographic boundaries. Large numbers of people experience secondary effects when a family member or friend has a mental disorder. As prevalent as these conditions are, there are endless misconceptions about mental illness, leaving one-fourth of our adult population misunderstood, stereotyped or even shunned because of a medical issue.

Although mental disorders are the source of much curiosity, many people are uncomfortable with the subject and the topic is often avoided. Few conditions that are so widespread are as stigmatized as mental illness.

Recognizing the need for education and open dialogue, members of the Fort Collins Human Relations Commission and the Poudre River Public Library District are hosting a series of mental health forums during the next 14 months. The forums are designed to present information to help us better understand mental health issues and diminish the mysteries.

Each of the forums will have one or more speakers who will present information in an easy-to-understand, open and welcoming manner. All members of the community are invited.

The next presentation is "The State of Mental Health in Northern Colorado: Major Issues and Community Resources." The speaker will be Lin Wilder, director of Community Impact at the Health District of Northern Larimer County and Director of the Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Partnership of Larimer County.

Please join us at 7 p.m. June 10 at the Harmony Library, 4616 S. Shields St., for the next presentation in the series. Light refreshments will be served.

Vic Smith is a Fort Collins resident.

Read or Share this story: http://www.coloradoan.com/story/opinion/contributors/2014/05/28/education-can-help-remove-stigma-mental-illness/9684187/

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# Engaging Teens with Minecraft

Poudre River Public Library District draws in younger patrons with the popular sandbox video game.

**Library:** Poudre River
**Location:** Fort Collins, CO
**Librarian:** Amy Holzworth



Poudre River Public Library District librarian Amy Holzworth first learned about Minecraft when she noticed her teenaged sons and their friends enthusiastically toting laptops and network gear to each other's houses to collaborate on building creative virtual worlds in the video game.

"Even though they could play remotely together, they really preferred to be in each other's company," said Holzworth, who's been a librarian at the Fort Collins-based library district since 2009. "I had not seen the same response of laughter and shared play and inclusion when they were on their [other] video games."



Created by Swedish developer Markus "Notch" Persson and later by his studio Mojang, Minecraft presents players with a randomly generated world where trees and terrain are shaped from textured cubes. Though it was released less than five years ago, the independently developed video game has already sold more copies than almost any other game in history, Super Mario Bros. included.

Players can explore caverns and other areas while breaking down the blocky environment into component resources to build tools and structures ranging from log cabins to replicas of the USS Enterprise to giant cities on the backs of turtles. This "sandbox" style of non-linear play has proven popular among gamers of all ages, in part because of the radical creativity it fosters by presenting a seemingly infinite, totally open world.
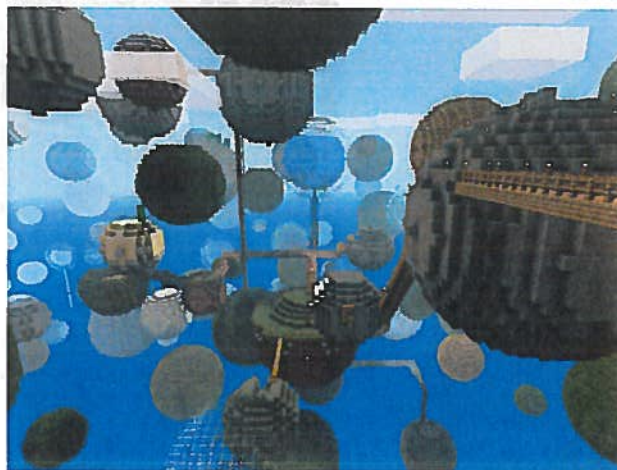
"There was something I wanted to embrace about this specifically because I saw them playing differently," Holzworth said. "It's not passive, you're actually creating."

Holzworth suspected that introducing a Minecraft program in her district, whose three branches serve an area of about 183,016 people, could expand its reach to include younger patrons who might not be interested in typical book-based programming.

## A Proposal for "Minecraft Mania"

Holzworth began by writing a proposal to submit to the programming team at Poudre River. Her stated goals were to bring a different group of teens into the library, utilize and introduce technology offerings of the library, and encourage cooperative and creative play. She envisioned the older teens taking on responsibility at the events to lead younger newcomers through the ropes of the game.

"The teens would be the experts at the game, and then myself and other staff could be the hosts, and then our systems people would determine the technical server hardware setup needs," Holzworth said.

The initial proposal had a modest budget, which included about $1,000 for wireless LAN equipment, about 20 hours of staff time from an ILS system administrator at the library to help set up server and wireless LAN and monitor during the events, and $335 for Minecraft licenses.



The library received a discount on its Minecraft licenses by requesting them through MinecraftEdu, a collaboration between Minecraft developers and educators that offers discounted licenses and custom software to teachers as well as libraries.

To help get support for the proposal, Holzworth invited her supervisor to watch her sons and their friends play Minecraft and see the kind of collaboration it fostered first-hand. (Surprise: It worked!)

## Setting Up Systems

With the help of a Poudre River systems administrator and an answer center technician who volunteered to help on the project, Holzworth's group began setting up their server and network. They chose to install Ubuntu (Release 12.04.3 LTS) as the server operating system, and then installed the Minecraft server application using a mod called CraftBukkit.
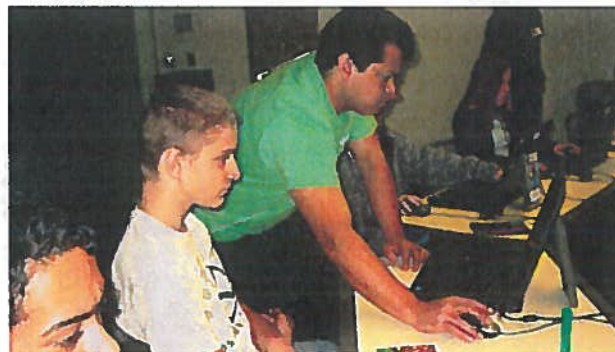


The CraftBukkit mod extends the game's multiplayer server capabilities and features. It allows administrators to add plugins to limit or expand players' in-game actions. For example, the group enabled Grief Prevention to restrict players from "griefing" or destroying each other's creations. (Other plugins they found helpful are Essentials, PermissionsBukkit, and WorldEdit.)

On the recommendation of the systems administrator, the group set up an isolated wireless network without Internet access to avoid complications and prevent unwanted interaction with outside users. Client laptops would connect to the server through a wireless router. They also restricted access to the server to the predefined logins they had set up for the laptops by adding those logins to server application's whitelist.

Because they had customized the Minecraft software extensively with the CraftBukkit mod and other plugins, the group used GitHub as a repository as they customized the software to keep track of the changes. This allowed them to track the code history, compare changes, and roll back if necessary.

## Trial Runs

Before holding an official event, Holzworth's group needed to make sure the server could handle 20 simultaneous connections. They also needed to come up with an introductory environment for the participants to learn the basics of Minecraft.

Coming up with a maze to teach newbies the ropes was no problem since Holzworth already knew some experienced crafters who were more than willing – her sons. The teens and their friends met several times to build a maze-like introductory world for the children to play in.

With the maze constructed, Holzworth's group held multiple trial runs with children of staff and friends. The trial runs allowed them to work out the bugs in the system – for example, some plugins they used conflicted with others and took a little troubleshooting to work properly. And battery life on the laptops turned out to be an unexpected issue, so they had to set up power strips throughout the room. They also benchmarked the server to understand its capabilities during the test.



The test runs also allowed the group to document step-by-step setup instructions including a checklist that covered everything from setup to mid-even activities to tear-down. Based on the trials, the group estimated it would take about two to three hours to set up and about an hour to take down.

After the successful test runs, Holzworth publicized the first event, which would be held in February. The 20 participant spots were filled within five days, with nearly 30 on the waitlist.

## First Two Events

The February Minecraft Mania event included 20 sixth to ninth graders. Holzworth outfitted the room with papercraft Minecraft cubes to set the mood and provided snacks as well.

To set expectations at the first event, Holzworth made sure to tell participants at the beginning it was a brand new program, so of course there could be bugs. (Luckily, only a few server restarts were needed. But the emergency backup plan was a movie.)



The maze the teens had constructed led the participants through a series of yes or no questions posted on signs to read and answer. Correct answers, such as affirming that griefing wasn't allowed, gave access to a door to proceed through the course. At the end of the course they proceeded through a portal to explore the larger world and build.

The teens monitored the younger players and answered questions. They also led participants through the physical break at halftime with duck-duck-goose and similar games. Holzworth felt that this mentoring experience for the older teens was an important educational component to the event. The older teens also had the experience of filling out a volunteer application.

At the end the three-hour event, Holzworth said the response from participants and their parents was extremely positive.

"One mom emailed me later and said 'I was so happy because my kid doesn't talk much, and he talked the whole way home,'" said Holzworth.

## Future Crafting

After a second full event in March, Holzworth got approval to request 20 refurbished laptops from newegg.com for dedicated use in future Minecraft Manias. This summer, she's plans on hosting slightly shorter 2-hour events for a younger group of 3rd-5th graders, and then eight more events in the fall.

She also wants to have sessions just for staff members to help others at Poudre River understand what Minecraft is about (and train others so they can help host the events, too).

Holzworth said she'd love to have themed events with literary tie-ins, where the participants read a book and then come to Minecraft Mania to build structures from book, like the hobbit-holes and castles from Tolkien's Middle Earth or even historical structures. Minecraft is already being used to teach ancient history, and it's also used in a different educational context by the UN to promote sustainable towns and cities.

The positive creativity Minecraft offers, Holzworth said, could be used by libraries to introduce both their services and a unique kind of creative play to a broader audience.

> "Kids don't always want to talk about how they feel about a book, but they can certainly build their idea of what that world looks like," she said.

Image 1: Reece Bennet

Image 2: Mike Prosser

**Tags:** gaming   teens   volunteers