

Director's Report

December 2009

ADMINISTRATION

The staff has been busy this month gathering customer satisfaction statistics for an end-of-year assessment of the Library's *Planning for Results* objectives. Surveys were conducted by various methods including exit polling and on-line tools. Parents and caregivers were surveyed at story times and customers were asked to rate the Library's holds system at time of pick-up. Remote and in-house PC users answered questions on-line. A cadre of volunteers, organized by Barbara Crandall, distributed exit questionnaires at each library. Eight contact hours were conducted at each location. Initial review of the raw data indicates that the Library has a very high approval rating and many of the objectives have been achieved. A complete report will be presented to the board in January.

Also as part of the on-going planning and assessment of library services, I have asked Carson Block to draft a technology plan and Paula Watson-Lakamp to complete a communications and marketing plan. Both documents will be companion pieces to the PFR. Carson has assembled a planning team to conduct a needs assessment, establish goals, gather information from staff and public and to draft a plan. Paula has submitted a first draft of a communications plan to me for review. Both documents will be presented to the board in January for review.

The Library has been asked to participate in the City's Climate-Wise program. The program is a voluntary program for local businesses and organizations to achieve sustainable business practices. As a partner, the Library will receive free on-site assessments, technical assistance, public recognition and networking opportunities. Each partner is expected to report data annually, attend two meetings, complete a site assessment with Climate-wise staff and to implement one climate related measure per year. Jeff Barnes and I attended the fall fair and orientation session on November 5. There are no fees to participate.

Two new book returns will be installed in early December. Cement was poured and is now curing at the Chapel of Annunciation, north of the city on Route 1 and the Poudre Valley Rea, at Carpenter Road and Route 5. Rob Stansbury has coordinated the installation at the two sites and Paula worked with Sign-a-Rama to create decals with our logo to place on all remote book returns. I am still waiting confirmation of a book return site in Timnath.

The Colorado Association of Library Conference was held November 19- 21 in Denver. I was impressed with the high quality of sessions and keynote presentations. The Poudre River Public Library and Austin's American Grill received the Library Community Partnership Award at the conference on November 20. I also attended a pre-conference on fundraising. Marty Tharp and Bill Mygdal from the Library Trust participated in the session as well and gained valuable information on annual fundraising campaigns and best practices in developing a donor list. A follow-up meeting with Lil Price and Gene Bosler from the Friends took place on November 25 to clarify the roles of each group.

The Fort Collins Reads author appearance featuring T.C. Boyle was held at the Lincoln Center on November 8 to an audience of approximately 800. This was the largest audience to attend the annual event. Tova Aragon and Sarah Scobey represent the library on the community planning committee. I will be joining the committee in planning next year's author selection and event for 2010.

I continue to meet with community leaders and have introduced myself during the past month to Ryan Keiffer (Beet Street), Mayor Hutchinson (City of Fort Collins), David Short (DBA) and Poudre School District Superintendent Jerry Wilson. Nina Bodenhamer arranged an introductory meeting with Cheryl Donaldson and Annette Geiselman from the Fort Collins Museum and Discovery Science Center. I attended the annual Prospector Directors Meeting on November 13 and presented an overview of library services to the Kiwanis on December 1. I met with Ellen Lake of the Mountain States Employers Council on November 30 to ascertain how best to use the services of this organization to which the Library District belongs.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The Communications Office finalized the following projects:

- Created November programming calendar media and e-mail releases
- Sent out 10 press releases and made 6 media follow-up calls
- Updated website & TV monitor
- Wrote and redesigned November District Employees News Update
- Continued efforts to gain FaceBook and Twitter fans
- Continuing work on updating library pieces with new name & logo
- Coordinating promotion of PFR customer satisfaction surveys
- Creating new Library Trust marketing brochure
- Attended Social Media Marketing class
- Wrote 1st draft of District Communications Plan
- Worked on scope of work and implementing a new web based annual report
- Created and facilitated design of new newsletter for 2010
- Researched vendors for online registration

The following projects have been started:

- Communications portions of Strategic Plan
- Updating Emergency Procedures and Crisis Communication Guidelines
- Video scripting for capturing this year's activities for a Summer Reading video
- Staff internal communications survey #2
- Promotion of winter and 2010 activities and events
- Planning for 2010 Employee Recognition Event – January 22
- Preparing step-by-step guide for Annie Walk
- Training graphic artists in InDesign program to be used for new library newsletter
- Preparing Communications budget for 2010 expenditures

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Lu Benke, Lead Librarian for Children's Services, was pleasantly surprised recently to find that our Readers to the Rescue program was mentioned in the summer/fall 2009 issue of the national journal of the Association for Library Service to Children, Children & Libraries. The article "Summer Reading Incentives" highlighted the research behind offering prizes in summer reading programs and mentioned our approach of using altruism as an incentive.

Lu and Programming Librarian Jean Gullikson met this month with representatives of the Northern Colorado Homeschoolers group to discuss ways that the library serves homeschoolers. Plans are underway to investigate web links, email lists, and specific programs that will increase service to this group, other homeschooling families, and our customers in general.

Graphics Coordinator Cydney Clink has been working with Communications Manager Paula Watson-Lakamp to create a new monthly publication for the Library, replacing many of the flyers and bi-monthly story time publications.

Collection Development Librarian Marian Sawyer gave well-received book talks on gift ideas for children's books as part of a presentation from several staff members at the annual membership meeting of the Friends of the Library.

Library Assistant Giny McConathy worked alongside volunteer Karen Christophersen this past month to prepare and perform six presentations of Storytheatre to 220 kids and parents at the three libraries. This is the Library's second Storytheatre run, a program created each time by the talented Ms. Christophersen, a retired teacher and well-known actress in local children's theatre. Together with the thirteen teen actors, well over 400 volunteer hours were accumulated. But the best part was the very funny performances and the obvious enjoyment of the teen actors.

Early Childhood Literacy Librarian Vicky Hays joined the Parent Education Network, a group of people from non-profit groups interested in early childhood education. Vicky also went to University Village and an Early Childhood Intern class at CSU to talk about Every Child Ready to Read. As part of the Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL) steering committee, Vicky has been spearheading the finding of material for an LSTA grant creating short videos of early literacy activities for showing on Rocky Mountain PBS.

Irene Romsa, Bilingual Library Assistant for Outreach reports that the presentation titled "Talking Diversely: Strengthening our Linguistic Heritage" was enthusiastically received at the US Department of Agriculture on October 7. Forty-eight employees heard about our efforts for the "Rincon de Cuentos" (Storycorners) program which is partnered with the CORE center and the CSU Spanish program for Heritage Speakers.

Salud Health Center is also interested in using the Storycorner Spanish-speaking trained volunteers to read aloud to children in their waiting rooms as part of the national Reach-Out-and-Read program.

Two Children's Services staff members, Main's Erin Senseman and Council Tree's Kathie Young-de Herrera helped at the annual Day of the Dead celebration at Main this year. They report that it was very busy with approximately 275 people ages 2-62 making sugar skulls.

The Noches en Familia program at Council Tree on November 6 celebrated and educated about "Day of the Dead" through stories, songs, a puppet show, and crafts. Finally, an additional monthly average of 150 children continues to be reached by story times taken to United Daycare, Irish Elementary, Family Center, and University Village.

Special Services Coordinator Barbara Crandall worked with Lu and Ken Draves to recruit, place and train 14 volunteers to help with an exit poll that will gather statistics on customer satisfaction as part of our Planning for Result evaluation process. This was in addition to staff distributing a brief survey at each of the preschool and baby story times held the previous week, resulting in feedback from almost 300 parents and caregivers about the effectiveness of our programs in preparing children for literacy.

This was the year for Poudre River Libraries to be well represented at the Colorado Association of Libraries (CAL) annual conference in Denver. Lu presented a workshop on the BookExpress for Kids program, Vicky presented a poster session on early literacy programs for CLEL, and the Library's efforts were recognized at the Awards Banquet where Austin's American Grill was given the Community Partnership Award. Eight representatives from the story time-friendly restaurant were on hand for the presentation. Four additional Children's Services staff members representing all three locations attended some of the conference and returned with excitement about the new ideas and information they found.

Programs for the past month include Halloween Hijinks with 50 costumed listeners and the School's Out Movie which is doubling its audiences (over 120) as it gains notice among families. NaNoWriMo, a series of community events held to encourage budding authors to produce a novel within a month, had nearly 160 in attendance including approximately half of them children at the kick-off. Subsequent Write-Ins have had an average audience of around 50. Finally, for National Puzzle and Game Week (Thanksgiving week) the Children's areas will have book displays and ongoing activities to encourage the celebration of games and puzzles.

CIRCULATION SERVICES

Circ/Shelving/ILL-Prospector continues to roll along with the day-to-day functions as well as the weird and wonderful things that come our way! This past month Judi, Crystal, Chris and Nancy were receiving instructions on how to do their hourly staff evaluations. Lynda, with the valuable assistance of Kim Travis-Miller, was able to present an evaluation checklist that accurately reflects the tasks assigned to all hourly positions within the department. Thanks to many months of questions and experiments a way to make these evaluations appear electronically and in I-TMS has been established...big thanks to Joan in HR! So, we are all about the evaluation process in November and into December.

In the most recent information received from Unique Management Services, our Collection Agency, it was noted that our "return on investment" is a ratio of 6.9 to 1; so for every \$1 we pay to UMS we are seeing a return of \$6.90 in fines, fee or materials! UMS also reports that 96.74% of all the accounts we have ever sent them have had some form of activity on them; meaning items have been returned or fines paid. UMS recently completed their annual customer satisfaction and received a rating of 5.7 on a scale of 6. We have been a client of UMS for 10 years and have found their service to be outstanding and professional at all levels.

REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

The Fort Collins Reads program featuring T.C. Boyle drew record attendance. They sold 911 tickets; attendance was 753. Reviews were glowing and he stayed until all those that wanted books signed made it through the line. Mr. Boyle was a great sport. Besides the show at the Lincoln Center, he also appeared at a donor's reception and spoke with local authors at a brunch. Here is his thank you to the committee:

"You are a delight, as are your compatriots. I have never had as good a time at any community read as I had last weekend--I felt, from the beginning that I was just hanging out with old friends. Please give everyone my deepest thanks.

Abrazos,

Tom

The process for picking next year's book has begun. Because the Lincoln Center will be closed for repairs, the committee is busy exploring other venues.

Jimena Pena recently partnered with the India Association of Northern Colorado to present "Indian Film Night" at the Council Tree Library. Fifty people attended the film *Lage Raho Munna Bhai*.

During "Global Entrepreneurship Week", Anne Macdonald partnered with TriMedia Film Festival and the Kauffman Foundation to present three films exploring how young people can start and build a business of their own.

Sarah Scobey and Sue-Ellen Jones joined Diane Tuccillo and Marian Sawyer at the Friends of the Library membership meeting. They book talked several titles that they recommended for gifts. Additional recommendations were added to a shopping list for the Friends to take with them. The shopping list was created by Sylvia Garcia.

Another 'Big Weed' is planned for December 17th and 18th. Weeding is a continual process for the library. This 'Big Weed' will allow us to coordinate several projects at the same time; utilize more volunteers; provide on site sorting for the Friends of the Library and recycle more efficiently.

Projects include:

- Create more space for the Harmony non-fiction collection by weeding reference; raising one low reference stack to match the tall non-fiction stacks and move Oversize to the beginning of non-fiction.
- The "Classics" collection at Harmony will be moved to the beginning of the Fiction section by shifting the Large Print Collection back. This is in response to a request made by staff, patrons and Annie Fox. It will create more space for Classics so that FRCC can add more titles to the collection.
- All VHS films will be removed from the Main and Harmony libraries. FRCC will retain their non-fiction VHS films.

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION

Technology Planning

A team of library staff has launched headfirst into a process to write a new technology plan for the district. The plan will be designed to cover a two-year span to match the remainder of our PFR plan.

During November and the first week of December, input was gathered from a variety of sources, including patrons (via surveys for internal and external customers), managers and staff.

The first draft of the plan is scheduled for completion in December, with BOT review slated for the February meeting.

Colorado Association of Libraries Conference

The CAL conference this year was marked by innovative ideas and high-energy among attendees. Carson recorded his thoughts during the conference via twitter – you can see those at http://twitter.com/SA_PRPLD

Year-End Projects

A number of technology projects are in full swing, including some computer replacements for Main, an upgrade to the wireless systems at Main and Harmony, continued work on the Harmony fiber upgrade project, and many more!

HARMONY AND COUNCIL TREE

HARMONY LIBRARY

As reported last month we are improving our materials arrangement at Harmony. Changes are scheduled for December for the periodicals, reference, nonfiction and media areas.

Ken Draves and Annie Fox will meet in December with FRCC staff and administrators to gain a fuller understanding of college processes for further space and interior planning and project management in the future. No immediate projects are planned. We want to understand the processes in place before contemplating changes.

COUNCIL TREE LIBRARY

- Council Tree staff met with City staff and a representative from Wattstopper, the lighting control system at Council Tree, to learn more about the system and to address a number of lighting issues.
- Council Tree staff's cross-training program that began in October continued through November. In order to better serve the customer with the entirety of his or her library inquiry, be it to pay fines, find a good book to read, use the conference room, return the missing part from a borrowed item or find a list of Accelerated Reader books, CT staff initiated an experimental cross-training program. The Library Assistant (LA) staff was trained by Library Services Representative (LSR) mentors, and vice-versa, through hands-on, real-time training and shadowing. Once trained, staff members worked shifts outside of their regular area. LAs worked behind the circ desk, and LSRs worked on the floor.

Thus far, the staff has responded positively to the training, saying knowing more about how they can help customers makes them feel more confident and capable, and more aware of ways they can support other staff members when needed.

- To gather input about CT operations, Currie and Ken co-facilitated a roundtable meeting with CT classified staff on November 17. Holly attended. Currie and Ken asked staff to come prepared to talk about their ideas, suggestions and thoughts for improving CT operations in seven areas: staffing model (roving reference), merchandising, physical arrangement, technology, open hours, HVAC and lighting, and collections. Staff members provided insightful feedback. Currie will compile comments into a report form soon. The thoughts and insights from Council Tree staff contribute to a larger discussion that includes LMT and other District staff. Recommendations for needed changes to current operations will follow.