

Director's Report

May 2009

ADMINISTRATION

Even though the school year is not quite over, activities related to summer have been going on for some time. Registration for the Summer Reading Program has started and is moving at an impressive pace, approximately 20% higher than the same period one year ago. All of that business, and the addition of Council Tree, means we need even more volunteers than in years past. Staff has been actively recruiting and training new volunteers and welcoming returning volunteers back. With our extensive planning efforts staff and volunteers will be ready to serve all of our enthusiastic patrons when summer arrives in earnest.

Community Engagement

On May 13, several members of the Board of Trustees and District staff attended a work session of the Timnath Town Council. Mary Atchison and Ken Draves provided a presentation on District services available to Timnath area residents, the District's strategic plan, current facilities planning efforts, and District funding needs. Board members responded to questions from Council on a number of topics including District governance and financing.

On May 27, Mary Atchison and Ken Draves provided a District overview to approximately thirty members of the North Fort Collins Business Association. Attendees asked questions and expressed interest in an increased District presence in North Fort Collins.

Safety at the Library

Below are a number of updates regarding safety in and around the Main Library:

The increased presence of Fleming Security staff at Main Library had resulted in a decrease in incidents, faster, more effective response to violations of Library Facility Regulations, more library staff time devoted to providing direct customer service, and an enhanced sense of security in the library.

Recent concerns about the spread of the H1 N1 Flu prompted research and action on the part of LMT to consult with experts and explore City resources. Emergency plans are underway. In addition, preventive measures such as hand sanitizers and tissues were placed at each public desk.

While the H1N1 threat appears to have subsided for now, a reinvigorated, more contagious strain of H1N1 (or a similar virus such as H5N1, avian influenza) may emerge in the future.

Building Technician Rob Stansbury has installed an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) at the Main Library next to the Delatour Room doors. Harmony Library has had an AED in the lobby for the past three years. Many high-traffic City of Fort Collins facilities provide them as well. The device is a portable emergency first aid unit designed to deliver an electric shock in an attempt to restart the heart of someone whose heart has stopped due to a heart attack. It is designed to be extremely simple for untrained first aid responders to use. Rob is investigating basic AED training for staff. In the meantime the Fleming Security staff members are fully trained to use the device and Library staff may use it if an emergency first aid situation warrants doing so. This spring we worked with David Kemp with the City of Fort Collins to design clear, prominent signage for the diagonal trail bisecting Library Park. New signage indicates that bicyclists must yield to pedestrians and slow their rate of travel, and that children are at play in the Park. The new signs are now installed. Staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the signage through the summer.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The Communications Office has finalized the following projects:

- Created May programming calendar media and e-mail releases
- Sent out 10 press releases and made 7 media follow up calls
- Updated website weekly
- Wrote May District Employees News Update
- Finalizing Main Library "refresh"
- Promotion for LSTA grant "Book Express"
- Coordinating effort for 2009 Summer Reading Program promotions- over 200 events!
- Council Tree, BOT and other website updates
- Attended a 2-day seminar on digital engagement and the use of social media as part of the branding process. Lessons learned will be incorporated into external communications plan and viral marketing campaign.
- Setting up Brand Standard guidelines for all printed materials
- Working with Lu on summer outreach efforts to mountain areas
- Attended Spring Marketing Forum put on by the Downtown Business Association
- Information put together for LEED Standard Education credits
- **Chamber Business Red Carpet Event, Main Library – June 30, 9- 9:45 am**

The following projects have been started:

- Communications portions of Strategic Plan
- 2009 All -staff meeting coordination
- Coordinating PFR competencies calendar for dissemination
- Emergency procedures and Crisis communication guidelines
- Partnership & Sponsorship negotiations
- Outreach schedule of summer events
- Annie Walk activities
- Investigation and research for a viral marketing campaign next year
- Video scripting for capturing this years activities for a Summer Reading video

ToolBox update:

- Finalized ToolBox contract. Additional efforts for the year will be prioritized and expensed out to see if they fit into the budget.

Communications Plan

- Sent out the first employee survey to asses the effectiveness of internal communications.
- Second survey is in the works.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Council Tree

Here we are over a month out from the Grand Opening at Council Tree and the picture book shelves are still shell-shocked. As of April 23, 82.6% or 4,300 Council Tree picture books were checked out. We are reaching the young families--just as we planned.

Further evidence of the young family customer base can be found in the attendance at the special storytimes for babies and preschoolers that are being held for six weeks at Council Tree, using funding from the Friends of the Library. Despite the pandemic flu scare and possible school closings permeating the media in late April and early May, these six weekly storytimes averaged an attendance of 55 with individual preschool storytimes sometimes hosting over 100 children and parents.

And the good news doesn't stop there. Bilingual Library Assistant Irene Romsa has worked with families at the Harmony Mobile Home Park just west of Council Tree to provide StoryCorner storytimes at their Community Building. She has even walked parents from there over to Council Tree in order to assist them in getting library cards at their neighborhood library. There, they are greeted by friendly Council Tree staff, including staff members Kate Merrell and Kathy Young de Herrera, who are fluent in Spanish. Visit Council Tree in the after-school hours and you will see how comfortable these nearby neighbors are in visiting their library.

Summer Reading Program

It goes without saying that we have been crazy busy preparing for the Summer Reading Program (SRP) this past month. So far about 20 classes have made visits to our libraries and we've made 20 visits out to the schools. We've also made special overtures to second grade classes that are coming to Old Town as part of their local history curriculum unit inviting them to also visit the library and hear the Annie the Railroad Dog story.

Appreciative nods need to be made this month to the Library's two graphic artists, Cydney Clink and Sylvia Garcia. The pressure to produce scads of printed materials and flyers and bulletin boards and decorations at each of the libraries in preparation for SRP is tremendous, and they both have many beautiful products to show for their hard work.

The children's SRP website makes us very proud this year with its ability to sign children up from home. Systems Administration's Peggy Shaughnessy created many colorful and interactive pages that will make our virtual library experience for young customers something they will truly enjoy. A safe blog is planned for the older kids to e-chat about children's books with library staff, and another is for parents to share early literacy tips. Take a moment and visit these pages and see for yourself. Just for laughs, take a look at the avatars that the Children's Services staff created so that they are smiling at the kids from our web pages as well as from our desks.

SRP registration began on May 13 and the excitement was palpable. So far, Council Tree is leading with 35% of the 1,620 children signed up in the first week, Main with 30%, Harmony at 18% and online registrations at 17%. Our total registrations so far put us 21% ahead of the same time last year. But there is a lot of summer left, so stay tuned.

Volunteers

Summer Reading Program also means a sharp increase in volunteers brought on board. The 63 positions for the Library Pals have been filled--39 at Main, 12 at Harmony, and 12 at Council Tree. Once again, we had to turn away applicants. We only wish we could accommodate more kids ages 11-14 who are eager to work as volunteers at the libraries.

Adult and teen volunteers are also streaming in to help at SRP desks, reflecting the increased demand of our new library and that Adult and Teen programs will be using volunteers for the first time. So far, we have placed 44 adult volunteers at the different Summer Reading Program registration desks. Many teens have stepped up to volunteer this year, especially at Council Tree Library.

Creating Young Readers

This top goal of our Planning for Results process is on our minds a lot. Vicky Hays held a marathon Saturday at Council Tree recently, giving three consecutive presentations of the Every Child Ready to Read training for parents and day care teachers. With preschools being added to 17 elementary schools this fall, she is also working to create a special early literacy training that will be offered to media center staff as part of our ongoing partnership with Poudre School District. Our new "Curious Kids" component of the SRP focuses on the 0-5 age group, offering activities and prizes with their unique interests in mind and recognizing the parents for their important role by offering them prizes as well. Helping us with these additional activities is the addition of an hourly staff person, Sarah Hepler. Sarah was our CSU Work Study student through the spring and will be again next year. Being able to keep her with us over the summer is allowing us time to focus on the additional early literacy activities.

Services to Remote Areas

BookExpress is the star of this topic. At present, approximately 75 new library cards have been issued to students in the BookExpress area, a step required for participation in this books-by-mail program. Then, 31 residents applied to BookExpress, and approximately 100 books have circulated out so far. Cache La Poudre and Stove Prairie families are

contributing the most business to BookExpress, but there are five families from further north, including two from the Cherokee Park area and one family from Virginia Dale. Publicity for the program is going out through the schools, a Channel 10 interview on BookExpress, our website, media outlets, communication with area contacts, the electronic sign at Cache La Poudre Elementary, and a billboard coming on north US Highway 287.

We are also pleased to announce that we are in the final stages of working out a Memorandum of Understanding with Red Feather Mountain Library District to pay a fee and extend BookExpress services to the children in their district. It is particularly exciting to think of this as the first of many times our library districts will cooperate with other libraries.

In other outreach activity, we obtained a legal map of our district boundaries from the City's GIS services, researched how we can check specific addresses on the Larimer county website to see if they are within our district (Ask, and I will show you how. It's very simple.), and answered questions from a Windsor resident concerned that he did not belong in our district. Lu and Trustee Robin Gard also attended the First Annual Waverly Community Pancake Breakfast where many of the 120+ attendees shared their appreciation of the library and asked questions about services. We also registered folks for SRP, issued library cards, and even signed up one BookExpress customer.

Program Highlights

This past month's Story Theatre represents a new kind of program offering for our library. Under the expert direction of Karen Christophersen, a local actress and retired teacher who generously volunteered her time and the riches of her decades of experience in children's theatre, 18 Library Pals were transformed into Theatre Pals. They gave five performances of a 35-minute show, delighting a total of 330 people at the three libraries.

CIRCULATION SERVICES

Circulation at Harmony and Main have been adjusting schedules due to the end of the school year for both Front Range Community College and Colorado State University, which means bye-bye Work Study students. We had several great students this past year and are looking forward to many of them returning in the fall.

Crystal, Judi and Chris have been working on schedules for Circulation's Summer Reading Program (SRP) support person that is funded by the Friends of the Library to assist with the increased business that Circ/Shelving sees as the result of SRP programs each summer. This will be the 3rd year that the Friends have funded this support and we appreciate the extra help!

Nancy in Interlibrary Loan is working with CLiC on next year's courier contract for Prospector/ILL items. The courier reported that last year PRPLD moved over 100,000 items through the system! That is a lot of Prospector items being loaned and borrowed.

Looking at self-check stats has been really interesting since Council Tree opened.

- ◆ Last year at the end of May we were at 54.1% self-check; this year we are at 72.5%
- ◆ YTD Main is at 70%, Harmony at 68.6% and Council Tree a whopping 92%!!
- ◆ As of May 20, Main is at 71.4%, Harmony at 66.7% and Council Tree at 91.8%

REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Summer is off to a roaring start. Registration for the Adult Summer Reading Program, "Express Yourself @ your Library, was at 426 in the first seven days; up 24% from last year at the same time. The program is growing so popular that this summer, the adult reference desks will be utilizing volunteers to help with registration during high traffic times. In addition to our regular programming, a wide variety of programs have been added to celebrate creativity, such as Latin American cooking, flower arranging, theater productions and musical concerts. The 'Victorian Sunday in the Park' will kickoff a summer full of fun on June 14th.

The City's Economic Development division is putting together their next Economic Enewsletter, addressing the current economic situation for local businesses. They are including a section on the business resources available at the library, as well as contact information. The issue should be out in June. Anne Macdonald met with Claire Thomas and Josh, the new assistant for economic development, and gave them a packet of information about the library, and the following quick note (with the new logo on it) about what the library offers for local businesses.

Library Resources

Fort Collins Research Assistance for Business

Fort Collins/Larimer County are connected with local librarians to help new and existing entrepreneurs/business owners find great resources for research, at no charge to you!

Librarians can supply you with:

Company Profiles
Competitive Intelligence
Industry Information
Market Information
Sample Business Plans

Libraries also provide access to:

Resume Books
Sample Business Plans
Online Information Databases

Contact Anne Macdonald at amacdonald@fcgov.com to connect to the resources at Poudre River Public Library District and for a local listing of reference librarians near you.

Several of our regular volunteers have retired from Technical Services. While we search for replacements, we have shifted some of the processing to Main. In order to keep materials flowing into the collection, reference volunteers and computer assistants are helping to process books.

HARMONY, COUNCIL TREE, & TEEN SERVICES

Harmony

Construction continues to impact usage of Harmony Library. As anticipated, the combination of the opening of Council Tree and the ongoing Harmony Road improvements has resulted in lower than normal visitation and circulation. West Harmony Road, between Seneca and Shields, is scheduled to reopen June 13. Construction will continue on Harmony through the summer, with portions of the road closed through mid-July. Access to the Library should remain open from both Shields and Harmony (via the Starflower entrance) through the duration of the project.

Teen Services

Programs

- Sue-Ellen hosted an IRS meeting at the Council Tree branch on May 2nd and 28 teens attended. Our IRS group was chosen to submit reviews for School Library Journal online and they will earn \$150 - \$300 per month that will go into Teen programming fund.
- Sue-Ellen hosted the Teen Poetry Slam at the Harmony Library on April 18th. 62 people attended.
- Sue-Ellen taught a Storytelling workshop at the Harmony Library for 8 teens. These teens will perform their stories for a family storytime on Tuesday evening, June 23rd, at the Main Library as part of the Children's Summer Reading program.
- Diane did 4 tours/booktalks of the Council Tree Library for 44 Preston Junior High students on April 22nd.

Outreach

- Sue-Ellen videotaped an Channel 10 Bookends program on April 20th that highlighted good summer reads for teens.
- Sue-Ellen did 3 lunchtime booktalks for 119 Lesher students on April 16th in honor of National Library Week.

- Diane did a SRP/booktalk presentation to 89 sixth graders at Timnath Elementary on May 1st.
- Sue-Ellen did 2 SRP/booktalk presentations to 51 6th grade students at Harris Bilingual on May 12th.
- Sue-Ellen did 7 SRP/booktalk presentations to 14 classes in grades 7-9 for 300 students at Lesher Junior High on May 13th.
- Sue-Ellen did 7 SRP/booktalk presentations to 11 classes in grades 7-9 for 265 students at Lesher Junior High on May 14th.
- Sue-Ellen did 2 SRP/booktalk presentations to 2 classes in grade 6 for 60 students at Bennett Elementary on May 18th.

Council Tree

The Council Tree library is experiencing great success in the areas of public reception, operability and functionality. Lead Librarian Currie Meyer reports that the vast majority of people who visit CT are impressed with the building, pleased with service, and compelled by its collection. In addition, the 32-member CT staff (of whom 23 are new to the District) is taking on the operation of the building with confidence and enthusiasm.

General flow: The library is busiest on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, when storytime occurs. Mid-day weekdays is a quieter time, with mainly adults using the Wi-Fi, reading and browsing the stacks. After school becomes busier, with many elementary and middle-school - aged children (some with parents) using the Internet stations, researching homework projects and reading. Our flow will undoubtedly change when school gets out for summer break.

Door count: Daily average for May so far = 541. This number will certainly increase in upcoming summer months.

Circulation continues to be very high. The most popular collections include adult and children's DVDs, picture books, easy readers, adult music, and audio books.

Tours for Librarians: Staff has provided tours of CT to visiting public library groups from Denver, Garfield County, and Jefferson County. Denver PL staff members have visited more than once as they develop plans for remodeling their "Contemporary Cluster" of library six branches. Veteran library architects visiting Council Tree with Garfield's Director were highly complementary about its creative and appealing design and functionality.

Building Maintenance

Repairs: We have been working out a few building issues recently, including cooling in the children's area (adjusted), water fountain overflow (fixed), elevators (fixed, we hope), front door squeaks (fixed), roof leaks (fixed in April, fine in May), and warping self-check surfaces (solution pending). All systems are under warranty.

Signage: Some customers have told us of the difficulty they have locating our building. We are working with a sign vendor on a proposal for additional exterior signage on the north side of the building and considering potential improvements to the entrance area.

