

# Director's Report

## August 2009

### ADMINISTRATION

In August we finished up this year's Summer Reading Program with a record-breaking number of participants. Read more about our adult's, children's and teen's programs in the department reports below.

Our circulation numbers continue to remain at historic highs, with this August compared to last up 35%. Year to date, our circulation is up 22% over 2008. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, we had our 2 millionth check out for the year, and if business keeps up, we very well may see 3 million circulations this year.

Some very good news to share is that Austin's Grill has won the Colorado Association of Libraries (CAL) Award for Community Partnerships. Lu Benke, Lead Librarian for Children's Services, nominated the restaurant back in June and was able to surprise the restaurant staff with the good news late this month. This award will be given out at an awards dinner at the state conference November 20 in Denver.

As the flu season fast approaches, and with the reemergence of H1N1 virus, we are working on a comprehensive library response plan. We met this past week with staff from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment to learn the latest regarding local planning efforts so that our District approach is well coordinated with other local public entities.

### COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

**The Communications Office finalized the following projects:**

- Annie Walk Event: promotion, activities, booths and pre-registration. On Critter Patter Show – KRFC, Thursday, August 6, day-of organization, after program follow-ups
- Created August programming calendar media and e-mail releases
- Sent out 15 press releases and made 7 media follow up calls
- Updated website & TV monitor
- Wrote August District Employees News Update
- Continuing promotion for LSTA grant "Book Express", billboards and advertising
- Setting up Brand Standard guidelines for all printed materials
- Planned all-staff End of Summer Event September 4
- Coordinating marketing efforts for Holly, i.e. Style Magazine interview
- Activities surrounding new Director arriving, photo org chart, etc.
- Continued efforts to gain FaceBook and Twitter fans
- Co-sponsored and participated in Ignite Fort Collins event
- Attended Chamber Envision event at Front Range Village
- Attended Poudre School District Media Specialist meeting
- **Monday, September 21, Harmony Library, 4-6 pm, Community invited to Holly's Meet & Greet**
- **Banned Book Week is September 26-October 3**
- **September is "National Get A Library Card Month"**

- **Continued planning for Writers' Block Event on September 26**
- **Working with Friends on promotion of October Book Sale - October 2-4**

**The following projects have been started:**

- Communications portions of Strategic Plan
- 2009 All-staff meeting coordination, next one in October
- Coordinating PFR competencies calendar for dissemination
- 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 fall activities and events
- Establishing marketing efforts towards public knowledge of library response to H1N1

**Annie Walk Update:**

This year's event provided a fun community event which included a diverse audience. It attracted media attention but a bit smaller attendance than 2008. The event still brought in a higher net income than in other years – a profit of \$4,328. Though this event has been named as a fundraiser, it has been supported by a large donation from the Friends of the Library (\$3,000). The Friends were not involved with the planning of the event this year. A committee of five community members did the leg work, which was simplified from last year.

The Library District is shaping the goals of the event, mainly to have a community event which builds goodwill and promotes the Library District as a community center with diverse programming. This in itself is valuable and cannot be measured in dollars and cents. The goals are to cover the costs and make some money with a minimal amount of staff effort. The Annie Walk as an historical venue is loved and appreciated by the community.

**Writers' Block:**

On Saturday, September 26 from Noon to 3 p.m., the Poudre River Public Library District will be sponsoring "Writers' Block" at Library Park, 201 Peterson, Fort Collins. Write history! Come, grab a piece of chalk, and contribute to Fort Collins' first community-created story. Join with local authors, family, neighbors and friends for a day of scribbling a creative story on the sidewalk around the downtown library. Let out your inner author, and enjoy a day of fun, food, and writing at Library Park. Everyone is a writer at Writers' Block! Be There. Be Square.

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Since you last read a director's report, the Kids' Summer Reading Program (SRP) came to a close. Programs finished up at the end of July, with rainy weather closing down many more outdoor programs than could be remembered by several old-timer staff members in the last 20 years! Usually, outdoor programs work out just fine over the summer, and are our only option for accommodating the extra-large crowds who love our summer events. Luckily, with each rainstorm this unusually wet summer, our customers took it all in stride and enjoyed what they could of the programs and pushed into the crowded but dry libraries. Council Tree gets the prize, though, for having the very best consolation after rained out events: gorgeous double complete rainbows on a wide-open horizon visible from the many Council Tree second floor windows showed up minutes after the program was closed down. The children who saw it were entranced!

As of September 1, we stopped giving out SRP prizes and started looking at the summer's totals. By next director's report, there will be more complete statistics on the comparisons of this year's SRP compared to previous years. For now, it is good to share that we had 7,554 children sign up this summer, an increase of 8% over last year. This is close to double the increase experienced between 2007 and 2008, despite two factors that could have decreased registration: the fact that the program finished three weeks early and that sixth graders (approximately 175 children) that used to be in the children's program are now included in the teen program. However, we did add a new branch and this summer the bi-annual occurrence of Campus Crusade brought more registrants to our program.

Readers to the Rescue, a late summer component, was affected by the early finish (11% less than last year) but still met the goal of kids reading 15,000 hours extra and even went over by 3,680 hours. It was also expected that the completion rate (the percentage of children reading at least 5 hours and receiving a first prize) would not be as high as in 2008 (70%) and indeed, it was 63% this summer, a decrease of 7%. The number of events (239) held increased 26% over last summer in order to accommodate the need for programming at our new branch and try out new programming configurations. Total attendance at events, however, dropped 13% to 13,525. Staff will be evaluating to see if rain, Harmony Road construction, sufficient coverage, or other factors are indicated in the drop in attendance statistics.

The early finish to the SRP reflects a carefully thought out plan being gradually put into place by Programming Librarians Jean Gullikson and Norm Fitzpatrick to have the kids, teen, and adult SRPs follow the same basic structure and dates. The goal is to make the programs for all ages more user-friendly and customers ready for the changes in programming that will be coming in the next few years as we adjust to a more system-wide all-ages approach to programming. It did, however, mean that the Kids SRP experienced a 23% reduction in the length of program while the teen and adult programs lengthened theirs slightly. To counter this expected reduction, the ability to register online, the opening of the new branch in an area heavily populated with young families, and repetition of popular programs gave customers added convenience and were our plan to keep the shortened summer from having any significant impact. Overall, we feel the transition to a shorter program seemed to have worked for customers and the staff.

Outreach activities have continued to blossom and Bilingual Outreach Library Assistant Irene Romsa reports on the progress of several exciting projects. On August 7 & 8, the Library was present at the annual Pack2School event with a booth sharing program information, giving out bookmarks, and providing Library Cards. 277 people stopped by the booth and 77 applied for cards. Most of these families were Latinos whose income qualified them to "shop" for school supplies at the cost of \$5 per child (or for free if they couldn't afford it).

Storycorners, the innovative CSU-partnered Spanish Language story time continues to grow. The Harmony Road site has received the support of the Food Bank in order to provide a snack bar to all participating children.

In the meantime, the Department of Health and Environment heard about the Storycorner program and invited us to partner with their "Vida Sana" program that offers free wellness classes to Latinos. As soon as their program coordinator is hired, we will have two additional weekly storytimes at Northside Aztlan. Given the turnover in volunteer storytellers, another training workshop has been scheduled for September 19.

Another agency that also is interested in partnering with Storycorners is The Family Center and their Motherread program (Colorado Humanities program that trains mothers to read to children). Starting in September, they will be assigned one story time per month and at the end of the semester we will assess their methodology and partnership.

A new program at Council Tree will recognize the interests of our customers in the Spanish language. Starting this September 4, there will be a new program for all of those who speak Spanish or are just interested in being exposed to the language. Family Nights will happen the first Friday of every month at Council Tree and will include a story time, a craft or game and then a movie in Spanish.

Because the Spring Volunteer Appreciation event was snowed out and because our summer has been so full of volunteers, we decided to hold an end-of-summer "Thank You, Volunteers!" Ice Cream Social at Council Tree Library on August 13. Cake, coffee and delicious Walrus Ice Cream was served to the approximately 60 volunteers that dropped by (including Board Members Shelly Kalkowski and Robin Gard). Staff representing the different departments and sites also came to visit with the volunteers and thank them for their service. Banners thanking volunteers were hung around the room and a PowerPoint presentation ran showing many pictures of our volunteers. It's been a fantastic summer for volunteer help, especially at Council Tree where staff could not have possibly kept up with the busy SRP desk without volunteer help. Just at the SRP desks alone 60+ volunteers (compared to 30 last summer) gave over 1,200 hours helping customers register, selecting prizes, and answering questions. In addition, the 2009 Victorian Sunday in the Park Event had 77 volunteers who provided over 260 hours of assistance from set up to take down and many activities in between. And, the opening of Council Tree involved volunteers at every step-putting books on the shelves, hosting the Trust event, and helping at the Grand Opening. No wonder the statistics shared by Special Services Coordinator Barbara Crandall look so good for 2008!

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Volunteer Hours:	13,765	13,950	17,064
Number of Volunteers:	600	660	789
FTEs:	6.6	6.7	8.2

A big part of those totals are the Friends of the Library volunteers who can be found helping in all sorts of ways:

Book Sales:	970 hours
Main Dock Clearers/Shelf Restockers:	738 hours
Harmony Book Shop:	3,292 hours
Sorters & Pricers:	1,832 hours
FOL Board & other misc. activities:	417 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,249 hours</b>

Homebound Delivery Service is perking right along. An average 757 library items were delivered each month, April - June, with an average of 73 deliveries each month to approximately 50 homebound customers primarily in the Fort Collins city limits. The possibility of moving this service to books-by-mail to accommodate the need for such services in the far reaches of our district is being discussed.

August was a busy month for showing off the Council Tree Library to groups and associations with whom we have partnerships. Vicky Hays, Early Literacy Librarian, hosted the Early Childhood Council (ECC) of Larimer County meeting and the Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL) Advisory Committee meeting at Council Tree this month. Since the focus of these groups is on children ages birth to five, exploring the Play and Learn Center at Council Tree was especially fun for all.

Vicky will also be involved in a session at the Colorado Association for Libraries (CAL) conference that recognizes libraries trained in Every Child Ready to Read through an LSTA grant. Vicky continues taking Every Child Ready to Read to community groups. This month, she talked with mothers from the Fort Collins Mom's Club. And, in a new exciting cooperative program, she is presenting programs on how to integrate preschoolers into the school media centers to Poudre School District (PSD) media specialists who will be welcoming preschool programs into their schools.

In fact, this was a big month for furthering our partnership with PSD in several ways. The Second Annual PSD Media Staff Appreciation event was held at Council Tree on August 12 with over 60 in attendance at this back-to-school event. Board Member Nina Bodenhamer welcomed the group, hourly Librarian Corky Walters shared ways to use Advance Google with the school staff and Teen Librarian/Reference Librarian Sue-Ellen Jones introduced the new Local History page.

Some good news: The Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC's) final rule on children's products containing lead has been released. CPSC confirmed that libraries have no independent obligation to test library books for lead under the law. The American Library Association (ALA) encouraged libraries to follow these simple rules:

1. If a library is aware that any children's book does indeed contain lead above the legal limits or otherwise presents a danger to children, the library should remove it from public access, for instance by moving it to the non-circulating collection.
2. If libraries do learn of any particular books containing lead they should let the ALA - Washington Office know so that they might share that information with other libraries.

Closing off the summer was the Annie Walk organized by Communications Manager Paula Watson-Lakamp with \$4,500 raised for children's books. The Lions also raised about \$460 dollars at their pancake breakfast that morning, and it will be used to purchase large print children's books.

## **CIRCULATION SERVICES**

Circ/Shelving/Prospector-ILL...we made it through another Summer Reading Program right into Back-to-School! What a summer!

Numbers are up all over the place...last August we saw circ numbers of 192,859 for the month; this year we saw a 35% increase to 260,440. Self-check numbers are up as well; last year across the District we were at 56.6% and this year is 77.7%.

Our year-to-date numbers are looking good too! We are up 22% over last year's number of 1,557,862 compared to 1,995,669. 2009 is going to be a record setting year in this department without a doubt.

While on the subject of setting records, last year we did not have many CSU students coming in for Work Study positions with the Main Library; as a matter of fact, there were only a total of six the entire school year. So far the number of students coming in has been amazing and unexpected. We have hired three for Children's, two for Adult Reference, one for Council Tree (we had a super young lady who lives in Loveland that was more than willing to go to Council Tree), fifteen for Circ/Shelving and Harmony hired five for the year. Most of these young adults come to us with little or no library experience but they are "long" on customer service oriented skills. Five of the six students that we hired last year have returned for another year...most have been here 3+ years now! We use most of our students to help out with shelving, paging slips and some are trained at the desk. This is a great way for us to connect with the student population from both CSU and FRCC, and we have been approached by Aims Community College in Greeley about the Work Study program for Council Tree once they get their program up and running.

Nancy and the incredible folks working with Prospector/ILL continue to see amazing growth in the number of things coming in and going out through the system. Recently we received 27 crates of Prospector "stuff" from the daily courier. One of Nancy's helpful staff, Kim Travis Miller, has been working with Lynda and Jeff Barnes to get the monthly e-commerce numbers pulled together quickly and efficiently at the end of each month. Kim also works closely with Annie Fox during the first week or so of each semester to do remote library card registrations for new FRCC students. The information is downloaded and checked at the end of each day. This has provided great customer service to new students and relieved a lot of the long lines previously seen at the desk when new students came in to get their library cards.

Lynda has been working with the Human Resources folks at the City on getting the District up and running using the I-TMS system for staff evaluations. We are just about ready to start loading in individual goal/expectations for 2009 based on 2008 performance evaluations. The HR folks have been great to work with and have learned a lot about "what a different animal the library is"... their words not mine. Everyone is working hard to try and smooth things out before we go live.

## **REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES**

Even the weather didn't daunt our customers from attending the wonderful variety of adult programs this summer. With clouds threatening, 372 attended the African Drum and Dance program outside Council Tree Library. At the Harmony Library, as the rain started to fall, Mark Twain led the History Comes Alive audience from the outside stage at Front Range Community College into the library. The actor never broke character and the audience loved it.

The Summer Reading Program changed in structure this year by changing the official end date and shortening the overall time frame for the program for all ages. Registration for the adult program did go up 22% to 2,584. The number of registrants that picked up their sign-up prize dropped 5.5%. The completion rate was only 43%. Our aim was a 60% completion rate. Completion rate for 2008 is not available. The Program Team will be considering what factors may have contributed to the low completion rate.

Winners of the monthly drawings were all excited about winning and several shared stories. One woman had planned ahead in case she won. It had been a long time dream to learn to paint in water

colors. She told us that she was going to take her certificate to purchase water colors then come to the library to check out a book on how to paint. She promised to bring in a painting for the library. There was a very lucky man too. His wife won and chose the golf prize. They had been tightening their belts and he hadn't been able to golf all summer.

Our new bike racks finally made an appearance just in time for New West Fest. The City staff created a very inviting and useful bike parking lot. The new bike racks have cut down on the number of people locking their bikes to trees and other objects in the park but not completely. The racks are often full.

The vendor for our downloadable audiobooks has launched a new interface. They are now offering some titles compatible with i-pods. If you are interested in downloading and listening to audiobooks on your own i-pod or mp3 player, get started by reading the instructions on the wonderful help page Peggy Shaughnessy created:

<http://www.poudrelibraries.org/help/audiobooks/>

The fall is looking to be busy with programs. Among the wide variety of programs, there are several series of programs that the library will be co-sponsoring with local community groups. The "Health Care Reform" series is a very timely series discussing the health care crisis. The series is being held at Council Tree and ends October 5<sup>th</sup>. The Eracism Film series starts Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and runs through October. This film series is designed to heighten awareness and create a better understanding of the issues facing people of color or of minority ethnic backgrounds. The Fort Collins Reads series of programs starts Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup> with a talk by Laura Resau, author of "Red Glass" and ends with T.C. Boyle, author of "Tortilla Curtain" presenting at the Lincoln Center on Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. There will be two opportunities for the public to discuss "Tortilla Curtain." Book discussions will be held October 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Council Tree Library and October 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at Northside Aztlan Center. Sarah Scobey and Jimena Pena will lead the discussions.

## **SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION**

### **New Technology for Harmony Library**

Ling Zhao completed a desktop computer technology refresh at the Harmony library with the assistance of Chris Bauman. Pending available funds, each year our partner in Harmony, FRCC, provides technology equipment to replace aging gear. This time the lab computers and a few others were the greatest need for Harmony and have been replaced with brand-new computers.

### **Web Team Reboot/Web Team 2.0**

After a very long hiatus (to accommodate the work needed for our freshening of our web site) SA reconvened the Library Web Team. The group, representative of all library staff, is in the process of re-chartering purpose, roles and functions. Our first meeting was enthusiastic and productive! Peggy's work is integral to the web team, and the web team's efforts are integral in prioritizing the ongoing work of maintaining and improving our web sites.

### **Summer Reading Program**

SRP has wrapped up, with impressive statistics! One we're particularly happy with is the on-line enhancements SA was able to contribute. More than 11,000 people participated in SRP this year with 1,500 (13%) registering on-line. The software used to manage in-house and Internet registrations was authored by Peggy; our library won a Colorado Association of Libraries "Technology Project of the Year" award for it several years ago, and Peggy continues to improve it.

### **III Software Upgrade**

Under Carol Gyger's careful guidance, III performed a software upgrade to our Integrated Library System. Most of the changes are "under the hood" - with improvements to our data structures and performance. One visible change has made our e-commerce module on our self-check machines operate even better!

### **Federal Recovery and Reinvestment Act**

Carson investigated the first round of Federal stimulus grants available to enhance public Internet access. After research and discussions with colleagues in Colorado and elsewhere, and an evaluation of the significant application requirements, he decided to sit this round out and instead look to round two or three for possible District projects that would qualify.

### **Outreach to Colleagues**

Carson was invited to Boulder to speak to members of the Boulder Public Library's management team about Fort Collins' experiences in forming a Library District, sharing information about our collaborative effort and strategies, and also discussing proper roles, approaches and boundaries to the effort as a staff member, and an advocate when "off the clock."

## **HARMONY, COUNCIL TREE, & TEEN SERVICES**

### **HARMONY**

On the heels of the completion of the months-long road improvement project, the fall semester has started at FRCC, with early enrollment numbers showing impressive, double digit increases. As usual, Campus Librarian Annie Fox and all the Harmony staff are working to welcome back returning students and greet new ones.

### **TEEN SERVICES**

#### **Teen 2009 Summer Reading Program Statistics:**

#### **Registration**

- 75% of teens who signed up for the program did so within the first three weeks between May 14<sup>th</sup> and June 11<sup>th</sup>. 1,133 teens signed up for the program during this time period out of the summer's total of 1,530 teens.
- 544 teens (36%) signed up at the Council Tree Library. 445 teens (29%) signed up at the Main Library. 372 teens (24%) signed up at the Harmony Library. 169 teens (11%) signed up online.



- 114 teens (7%) were from the 80521 zip code. 188 teens (12%) were from the 80524 zip code. 436 teens (28%) were from the 80525 zip code. 337 teens (22%) were from the 80526 zip code. 223 teens (15%) were from the 80528 zip code.
- 1,388 teens (91%) who signed up for the teen summer reading program were from Fort Collins zip codes. 109 teens (7%) were from the region. 33 teens (2%) were from outside the region completely.

### **Readers to the Rescue**

- Teens completed 7,820 Readers to the Rescue hours, earning a total of \$1,564 for the Fort Collins Cat Rescue shelter.
- Teens who finished 6<sup>th</sup> grade read for 2,890 hours (37% of the total). 7<sup>th</sup> graders read for 1,810 hours (23%). 8<sup>th</sup> graders read for 1,130 hours (14%). 9<sup>th</sup> graders read for 675 hours (9%). 10<sup>th</sup> graders read for 760 hours (10%). 11<sup>th</sup> graders read for 465 hours (6%). 12<sup>th</sup> graders read for 90 hours (1%).

### **Prizes**

- 744 teens (49%) who signed up for the program earned the first prize. 444 teens (60%) chose the free ice cream coupon. 300 teens (40%) chose the bookstore discount coupon. (The completion rate for 2008 was 54%).
- 528 teens (35%) who signed up for the program earned the second prize. 288 teens (57%) chose the book light. 240 teens (43%) chose the paperback book.
- 776 teens (51%) who signed up for the program did not complete the program; they earned no prizes.

### **Media Specialist's Meeting**

Sue-Ellen Jones did a tour and 10-minute presentation on the Fort Collins History Connection for the August 12<sup>th</sup> Poudre School District Media Specialists' meeting at the Council Tree Library.

### **COUNCIL TREE**

In Late July and August, Council Tree Library continued to be busy with summer reading program participants collecting prizes and attending programs along with typical customer visits. Nine CT staff members marked six months on the job, and the end of their introductory period with the District in late July. All earned kudos and appreciation.

### **Facility management:**

- July 27, exterior sign package put out to bid by COFC, winning bidder Signs Etc. of Charlotte, NC. Installment date TBD.
- July 30: All hanging can light bulbs (lamps) were replaced by City Operations in the hopes that they would maintain a longer life than the previous bulbs. The previous set of bulbs, of a slightly higher wattage, was burning out bulbs prematurely due to overheating.

- Aug 3 and ongoing: Material “Torzo” selected for self-checkout unit surfaces to replace the current material “Ecotop” that is bending. John Murphy Millworks will install replacements as a part of their warranty. Still working with them on installing corner guards for chipping corners.
- Aug 4: second master key given to Garnet England of Poudre Fire Authority for CT’s Knox box (emergency access).
- Aug 4: “stroller parking” and “returns” wall-painted signs installed (Avalis).
- Aug 4-7: F & C Door installed braking device to protect fingers from being pinched in the child-sized story time room door.
- Aug 18: Awning over outside book drops installed;
- (Ongoing) Investigating Play and Learn cleaning routine and costs to add to Porter contract.
- Aug 24: investigating repair and maintenance of APP installation “Knowledge Shared” with Ellen Martin. Installation is showing some wear and tear.

**Furniture:**

- Investigating warranty of 3 broken stools in teens (Elements, StudioTrobe)
- Investigating addition of a locking cart to provide surface area and storage next to copier (Elements)
- Received eight Move-Upp wooden children’s computer chairs (First Continental)
- Estimate and design of literature display unit requested (First Continental)
- Investigating getting upholstered chairs cleaned (Porter)

**Of note:**

Ken and Currie were interviewed by Angie from *Lydia’s Style* magazine on Aug 25. Focus was on new library and its place in the FRV retail center.