

Director's Report

June 2009

ADMINISTRATION

June has been a very productive and busy month, as evidenced by the departmental reports. Given the length of the reports below I will keep my comments brief.

Public & Stakeholder Facilities Plan Input Process

We invited the public to read and comment on the executive summary of the Facilities Plan and provided access to the full draft as well. We solicited participation through our e-mail distribution lists, in the *Coloradoan*, and via our web site. We asked participants to answer a 3 question survey and requested comments. Staff presented the plan summary and offered the survey at outreach storytimes held in Livermore and Stove Prairie. Approximately 20 people attended the Open House event. A number of Laporte area residents attended, asked questions, and expressed their interest in a branch library located in Laporte. A member of the North Fort Collins Business Association expressed concern that the District be mindful of the needs of the North Fort Collins area in locating future facilities, including a service center and kiosks.

The week of June 15 I sent the plan's executive summary and links to the full draft to Larimer County Manager Frank Lancaster, Fort Collins Assistant City Manager Wendy Williams, and Timnath Town Manager Rebecca Davidson, requesting that they share the summary and links with their respective elected representatives. I invited feedback on the recommendations and plan and asked that they share any concerns with me.

I spoke about the plan's recommendations with Dr. Phyllis Abt, Dean of Instructional Services at FRCC-Larimer Campus. Regarding the primary recommendation for the Harmony Library, that Harmony's meeting space be expanded in the next five to ten years, Phyllis said that she and other campus administrators agree with the recommendation and see a real need to expand meeting space in the future.

As of July 29, 43 people had completed the survey either online and in person.

Summary survey results:

Q: Do you understand what is meant by the Regional Library Approach?

A: Yes---95.2% (40 responses) No---4.8% (2)

Q: Do you agree that this recommendation meets the needs of the District's communities?

A: Yes ---78.6% (33) No---21.4% (9)

Q: If the Main Library is expanded, what are your top three priorities for this expansion?

A (In order of popularity):

Larger collection of books and materials---66.7% (28)

Expanded Children's area---42.9% (18)
Larger Community Room---40.5% (17)
Quiet/study space---31% (13)
More computer access---26.2% (11)
Friends of the Library used book shop---23.8% (10)
More seating---14.3% (6)
Coffee bar---11.9% (6)

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The Communications Office finalized the following projects:

- Created June programming calendar media and e-mail releases
- Sent out 15 press releases and made 9 media follow up calls
- Updated website weekly
- Wrote June District Employee News Update
- Finalizing Main Library "refresh"
- Continuing promotion for LSTA grant "Book Express", billboards and advertising
- Coordinating effort for 2009 Summer Reading Program promotions- over 200 events!
- Setting up Brand Standard guidelines for all printed materials
- Organizing Chamber Business Red Carpet Event, Main Library – June 30, 9- 9:45 am
- Annie Walk activities
- Investigation and research for a viral marketing campaign for event on September 26
- Set up of Facebook and Twitter "pages"
- Continuing on branding efforts
- Creation of survey, displays and promotion of Facilities Plan Open House
- Compiling survey data as it comes in
- Attended a Library and Museum grant writing workshop in Denver
- Coordinated promotion of candidates Open House
- Obtained a CSU intern for summer session – Ashley
- Attended Panera Bread Grand Opening and facilitated the Summer Reading Program sponsorship from them

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
- Video scripting for capturing this years activities for a Summer Reading video
- Creating a Graphics Branding workshop for staff

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Council Tree

Council Tree Library's children's books have been so popular that picture book and easy reader shelves were left distressingly empty through the first part of June. And this was despite the fact that we had anticipated the excitement generated by opening a new library and initially purchased many, many more books than could fit on the shelves on opening day.

When the shelves first started looking empty back in April, Children's Collection Development Librarian Marian Sawyer responded by ordering more new books. When those books came in and went right back out the door with appreciative kids, the shelves were once again getting bare. Council Tree's Children's Librarian Millie Kridler worked with Marian to quickly order duplicate copies that will be on the shelves in mid-July. Meanwhile, we are trying different short term solutions such as letting books returned to Council Tree "float" there instead of going back to Main or Harmony, shifting duplicate copies of books from the Main and Harmony collections permanently into the Council Tree collection, and, finally, picking out multiple crates of needed books from Main every day and sending them out to Council Tree to be put on display. These books quickly check out and fill in the gaps temporarily and are returned to their home libraries when they are checked back in.

In other Council Tree news, Lu has been working with Front Range Village's General Manager Melissa Moran to make sure outdoor events at the new library work for both our customers and our retail neighbors' customers. Since the first outdoor program was rained out earlier this month, plans for special handling of the parking spaces, crosswalk, and grassy median area to accommodate outdoor programs got their first true test on Monday night, June 29. The first program was a great success. All went smoothly and over 150 were in attendance.

Retail neighbors Carol and Charlie of Learning Express Toys donated six popular games for older children to be used in the north end of the children's area of Council Tree. Positive comments are already coming from customers appreciative of this added fun.

Summer Reading Program

Registration numbers continue to be fantastic – at over 6,900 we are currently less than 100 registrations away from breaking last year's registration record...and we still have 6 weeks of the program to go!

Early Literacy Librarian Vicky Hays and Programming Librarian Jean Gullikson worked hard to employ Planning for Results priorities and emphasize the importance of reading to the very young with the specially-focused Curious Kids materials, programs and prizes. Parents are appreciative of this effort to address even the littlest ones, generating comments on how they "... love the way the new kids' program allows you to expand on more than just reading and really help [young children] to love all aspects of learning."

We're about a third of the way through the lineup of summer events and finding some trends. Construction around Harmony Library may be the culprit behind unusually low attendance at programs there. Not surprisingly, Council Tree continues to be the venue our customers most like to visit to enjoy the rich variety of programs we offer.

Volunteers

Recruitment of over 60 volunteers for the Summer Reading Program registration desks continued into June. Then there were the volunteers to sign up for the Victorian Sunday in the Park. Many people responded to the volunteer opportunities placed on the firstcall211.org website. Two trustees volunteered and one brought several mother/daughter National Charity League teams along with a dad and brother who helped with tent set-up. All in all there were over 77 volunteers on the Library Park grounds plus a number who helped with children's activities at the Fort Collins Museum.

Volunteer applications are still coming in in response to recruiting messages that have gone out and volunteers are being interviewed and oriented for open opportunities in Family Story Craft events, the Annie Walk, Circulation areas at all three libraries and for Technical Services. A big thanks goes to Sue-Ellen for the teen volunteers and to Paula and her intern for calling all the Victorian Sunday in the Park volunteers to thank them for volunteering!

Creating Young Readers

At recent Children's Services staff meetings, Vicky Hays has been providing an Early Literacy Minute giving quick tips to use in our storytimes. For example, this month, we made and tried out comb/wax paper kazoos, showing that music is important to children and a way to help children remember words, learn rhymes and have fun.

Vicky recently attended the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute on Play: Where Learning Begins and learned more about infant development and best practices in working with young children.

Services to Remote Areas

LSTA grant-funded BookExpress continues to roll along sending books by mail to children in the northwestern corner of our district. As part of the publicity for the project, an electronic sign in front of one of the schools, a color ad in the newspaper serving the targeted area, and two very colorful billboards installed coming and going on Highway 287 north of the "Y" have been used to get the word out.

So far, approximately 80 new library cards have been issued to students in the BookExpress area, a step required for participation. We have families from the farthest reaches of our district participating, as well as from Red Feather Mountain Library District thanks to a Memorandum of Understanding detailing our collaboration. About 50 participants registered for BookExpress so far, with about 2 ½ new applications a week coming in. Packages were going out at about 5-7 a week a few weeks back but that may have dropped off a bit with the start of summer vacation. Lu will be presenting a workshop on the project at the Colorado Association of Libraries conference this fall.

Storytimes are being taken to Stove Prairie and Livermore Elementary schools this summer and audience numbers in these lightly populated areas are starting to build. Information about the BookExpress program and the Facilities Report is being shared with the parents who attend.

The Public Forum on the Facilities Report held recently generated feedback from several different groups in the areas further out. For example, four members of the LaPorte Area Advisory Committee made a point of attending this event and expressing their interest in having a small library in LaPorte.

Bilingual and Multicultural Outreach

Library informational booths were set up at the family celebrations at Irish Elementary, Harris Bilingual, and Romero House to promote the Summer Reading Program, register children and inform all of library programs. Weekly storytimes are being provided to Irish Elementary's summer school students in order to encourage students to read and be creative. In addition, storytimes are being provided during the summer to neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income families, such as Collins Aire, Hickory Village, Poudre Valley, Timber Ridge, Harmony Road and Coachlight. Each site is averaging 20 people who learn about our programs and the importance of literacy.

Harmony Library

A Secret Garden installation just outside the Children's wing has been completed. The Front Range Community College Natural Resources Department will maintain the garden. Also, bright yellow "cat" chairs have been added to the Children's Place, replacing the bean bag chairs.

Main Library

Meanwhile, Main Children's area staff is very grateful for the re-upholstering of their chairs as part of the Main Refresh project.

We have two new staff on board at Main: Sarah Hepler is a new hourly aide for the summer, helping so that staff can keep on track with new early literacy projects. During the school year Sarah works as a Work Study student.

Gail Frick has joined us as an hourly substitute. She is a retired Poudre School District media specialist and brings a wealth of knowledge with her.

REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

We are off to a record breaking Summer Reading Program. The Adult program has already surpassed last year's total registration of 2,121. With 6 weeks left in the program, we have 2,225 registered – 569 at Main; 498 at Harmony; 865 at Council Tree and 293 Online.

The kick off event for the Adult Summer Reading Program, *Victorian Sunday in the Park*, was a huge success. The event was sponsored by the Friends of the Library, the Library District and Fort Fund. Over 2,600 community members of all ages enjoyed a beautiful day filled with entertainment, crafts, food and wagon rides. A big thanks go out to the all the volunteers that made the event so success. Shelly and Robin deserve a round of applause for staying the whole day to promote the District and gather comment cards. This year the event planners tried to make the event as green as possible. Separate containers were placed for trash, compostable and recyclable items. We received nice kudos from the Citynet Kudos Board.

“Thanks to Louise and her staff for taking the time to make the library Victorian Garden picnic a zero-waste event. Louise also works extensively with Green Girl to maximize all the recyclable materials. The library has the best recycling diversion rate of all the departments in the City. Thanks for all you do to help assist the City meeting its sustainability goals.”

Louise has also started recycling withdrawn disk media and their cases.

Anne Macdonald and Gen Ponce-Pore (Project Manager Business & Enterprise, Larimer County) are working to set up an Entrepreneurs' Book Club and General Discussion Group. They will be meeting on the last Friday of the month at the Matter Bookstore to discuss general business issues, usually centered around a book. The first book will be Groundswell: winning in a world transformed by social technologies by Charlene Li. The first meeting is planned for July 31st.

The bike parking lot in the front of Main is starting to take shape. Hopefully, it will be finished in the next couple of weeks. It will expand the number of bike racks and draw bike parking away from the sidewalk.

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION

May and June were chock full o' technology goodness. Here are some highlights!

Summer Reading Program (SRP)

From the electronic sign-up and website perspectives, SRP 2009 was a whole new bag. From web developer Peggy Shaughnessy:

Starting last October Children's and SA staff have been planning and adding lots of new features to the Online Summer Reading Registration web application for 2009. In many ways we have begun our first steps toward a 'virtual branch' for children:

- 1) There is a new program category in SRP for children birth to 5, with separate registration forms, prizes, and web pages.
- 2) We have added the ability for all children to register for SRP from home for the first time.
- 3) Check It Out lists have been added to the SRP web pages for children birth to 5 and school-age kids. These include lists of readers' advisory titles as well as links to age appropriate online activities and web sites for children. They also include early literacy titles/sites for parents. The lists are created and maintained by Children's staff with technical support from SA.
- 4) We have created an automated kids SRP calendar application in Check It Out which is also maintained by Children's staff. We have integrated the calendar into the web page design, with the ability to search for events as well as display programs by library location.
- 5) Council Tree Library has been integrated into all the SRP web pages, application forms, and statistics.
- 6) There are two new library blogs -- one for kids and one for early literacy.
- 7) Lastly, we have redesigned/integrated the look/feel of the web site for all SRP programs: adult, teen, kids, and birth to 5, and added a tabbed display for ease of navigation.

Thanks are due to several Children's staff members who put in a lot of time and effort to make 2009 SRP a reality: Jean Gullikson, Cydney Clink, Jennifer Zachman, Vicky Hays, and Erin Senseman.

IUG Conference

The Innovative User's Group conference (this year held in Anaheim, CA in May) is always a rewarding experience, but this year especially so as our own Carol Gyger officially took the helm of the organization as Chair. The IUG is important to the library because it is how we most effectively communicate with the vendor of our most significant technology resource. Carol's leadership in the organization has been greatly embraced – she is well-respected by our peers throughout the world (the IUG is an international organization) and has worked tirelessly in her duties. We're fortunate to have Carol here!

Carol was very busy throughout the conference – attending to the grandest and most minute details, working with other members of the steering committee, and ensuring a successful experience for all. Well done!

Carson experimented with Twitter as a way to report on conference events as they happened, and found it quite useful – as did most of the others who followed the “tweets.” While it's unlikely that Twitter will become an everyday tool for SA (who has the time!) it proved effective in this context. We'll try it again!

Carson presented several sessions at the conference this year, including two sets of “Lightning Rounds” (late breaking developments from multiple presenters in very quick succession) and co-presented (with Carol) a session on the Poudre River Public Library District's RFID project. Even almost a year after implementation, our approach to RFID continues to bring interest from our colleagues – more on that below.

Conference details (including our significant take-a-ways) are too detailed to go into here, but things learned and ideas discussed will significantly impact the way we use ILL over the next year. Carson and Carol are always happy to give you the scoop.

Rocky Mountain Innovative Users Group

Not everyone using ILL is able to attend the national conference – that's where the regional groups (ours is called Rocky Mountain Regional Innovative User's Group – or RMIUG) come in to play. Peggy, Carson and Carol attended the June meeting, where we learned much from our colleagues, and also presented our session on the Poudre River Public Library District's implementation of RFID technology. The response from the group was enthusiastic – with lots of questions and interactions around RFID.

CU Library – RFID Tour

In June Carol and Carson hosted a group from the CU-Boulder Library to discuss our implementation of RFID technology. Due to the costs and enormity of retro-conversion of materials, most academic libraries have yet to implement RFID, but CU-Boulder is beginning to gather information to see if it is a fit for them.

The afternoon-long session was rewarding for both groups – we met at Council Tree library (and were joined by Currie Meyer and Chris Cortez) and learned a lot about the challenges that academic libraries face with their materials and patrons.

Local History

Ta-da! We are ready to have a “soft launch” of the Local History web site in July, with the official launch coming in October. Carson is scheduled to give a short presentation to Trustees at the July meeting – so more then!

HARMONY, COUNCIL TREE, & TEEN SERVICES

Harmony

Road construction on Harmony and Shields Roads continued in June. As construction progresses east on Harmony through the summer, the portion of Harmony Road that is closed to traffic moves eastward as well. Whether attributable to the ongoing road construction, the opening of Council Tree, or most likely a combination, door count, program attendance and circulation are all somewhat down at Harmony.

Council Tree

May and early June proved to be another steady month of heavy use and facility management at Council Tree library. Community enthusiasm for our Summer Reading Program seemed to have a direct correlation on our increases in daily visits and circulation of children’s materials.

Use of Council Tree:

- Average daily visitations went up significantly in June, with an average daily door count of 726.
- We had our busiest day since opening day, when 3,671 people visited CT, on Monday, June 1, when 1,152 people visited the library.
- For the first time, Council Tree is sharing in the excitement of our Summer Reading Programs, with CT registration of 2,363 children (35% of District), 489 teens (35%), and 898 adults (39%).
- The meeting room is being heavily used by District staff for programming, with summer storytimes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, family story and craft on Wednesdays, and adult programming various weekday evenings. The room is being used by outside community groups about twice weekly.

Facility Management:

- All six of the toilets in the men’s and women’s bathrooms were re-attached to the floor after it was detected that they were incorrectly installed during construction.
- We are investigating additional exterior signage for the NW and NE corners of the building. We have received mockups and cost estimates from DaVinci Sign.
- Interior signage: PRPLD logo on the garage door is to be installed soon. Painted signage “stroller parking” and “returns” is on the way.
- We are adding a Front Range Village-approved awning over the exterior book drops to provide better protection from the weather for customers returning materials.
- Malfunctioning wall outlets in the study rooms were fixed on June 16.
- Walk pads on the roof were installed on June 23.

Teen Services

Teen Programs – Main Library

- Sue-Ellen did a summer reading program presentation for three 6th grade classes at Cache La Poudre Elementary school to a total of 64 students.
- Sue-Ellen conducted a tour at the Main Library for 12 special needs students in grade 6 from Kinard Core Knowledge school.
- Sue-Ellen talked about the teen Summer Reading Program and teen volunteer opportunities available through the Poudre River Public Library District to three Library Pals groups; there were a total of 38 students.

Teen Outreach

- Back in 2007, the teen Summer Reading Program hit a high of 1,201 students who signed up for that year's program. As of 5 p.m. on Monday, June 15th, 2009, we have 1,224 teens signed up for this year's SRP. So far, 337 teens have signed up at the Main Library, 303 teens have signed up at the Harmony Library, 447 teens have signed up at the Council Tree Library, and 136 teens have signed up online.
- Even though the Teen SRP has offered online registration for the last 5 years, we have never had more than 50 teens register online. This year, we have almost tripled that figure and we are still in the early part of June.