

Winter 2012–2013

Finding Your Perfect Fit

Vol. 10, No. 4



From SWOT to SWAP: Schmooze or Lose

By **Beth Bliss**, Principal Librarian and Brigantine Branch Manager, Atlantic County Library System

Many of us are familiar with SWOT, the time-honored assessment tool designed to stimulate discussions of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. In recent years, librarians have needed to maximize the external "opportunities" component to help achieve their objectives on a shoe-string. Outreach and advocacy are now standard practice for most public libraries that are feeling the pinch of a sagging economy.

As a branch manager working with limited funds for programming and events, I



The classic SWOT diagram

have been connecting with individuals and businesses in a variety of informal ways to make sure we find our "perfect fit" within our community. Thinking along the same lines as SWOT, I've nicknamed my approach "SWAP," which stands for

Schmooze, Wait, Appreciate, and Persevere. Here's how I've been using these four tactics:

Schmooze: The concept of the 30-second "elevator speech" teaches us that every interaction is an opportunity to promote library services and to identify potential donors. It also gives us a chance to identify what's work-

(Continued on page 4)

Undoing Dewey and Classifying With Color

By **Susan Meeske**, Director, Old Tappan Public Library

Dear Mr. Dewey:

We regret to inform you that the Old Tappan Public Library is no longer using your Dewey decimal system to categorize our non-fiction collection. The decision to free our collection from your system involved having many discussions with my staff as well as observing the library skills of our customers. We recognized that

many adults and students had no idea what the numbers on the book labels meant, which hampered their ease in locating non-fiction books.

Our goal was to create a user-friendly system that made it easy to browse and locate topics. So I went to Borders and Barnes & Noble to look at how they organize their books using BISAC (Book Industry Standards and Communications) codes. I went online

(Continued on page 5)

Contents

From SWOT to SWAP: Schmooze or Lose	1
Undoing Dewey and Classifying With Color	1
Message from the President	2
Letter from the Executive Director	3
Note from the Editor	3
Altering Our Programs to Fit Bilingual Children's Needs	6
Offering Interactive Ways to Fit In at Hillsdale Library	8
People & Places Around the State	10
Advertisers' Index	12
Write for the Next Issue	12



Message from the PRESIDENT

Finding Your Own Perfect Fit in NJLA

By now many of you have heard that the theme for my presidential year and this issue of the newsletter is "Finding Your Perfect Fit." Being a part of NJLA can foster professional and personal growth. But how do you go about finding that perfect fit within NJLA? I think it is different for each of us, but I can tell you about my journey to President.

I have always joined professional associations. When I was a library school student at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., I was involved in the student association (AGLISS), SLA, and ALA. I wasn't sure where I wanted to focus my energies, especially since I didn't know where I was going to be working. But I knew it was important to network and to create relationships with people that didn't work or go to school in the same place I did, and professional associations provided an ideal opportunity for exactly that.

When I returned to New Jersey, I became a member of NJLA, but didn't immediately get involved. I found it hard to get out of the small public library where I was Director. Instead, I became active in CJRLC and the Monmouth Librarians Association. Once I made contacts and friends there, it was natural to move to the larger state organization.

The first step for me was to apply for NJLA's Emerging Leaders program. It was 2002 and the first year of the program, and I still feel so lucky to have been part of that initial group! Participating in Emerging Leaders provided me with a more in-depth perspective on how NJLA works and the roles that individuals can play in the association.

As part of the program, you commit to serve 2 years on a committee or section after you complete it, so I chose the Conference Committee because it seemed like fun. After serving on this committee for a few years, I was asked

to co-chair the conference. Even though that was labor-intensive, it was still fun.

Since joining NJLA, I've also been a part of the YA section, the IT (now ET) section, and the Small Libraries Roundtable. I served a term on the NJLA Executive Board as a member-at-large, which was the absolute best way to learn about all that is going on in the state and also across the country. It was invaluable to me then, as a director, to be able to bring new and different ideas back to my small library.

Around the same time, Connie Paul asked me to start working with her on Emerging Leaders. I joined the related Leadership and Education subcommittee of Professional Development, and now I chair that committee and organize/implement the Emerging Leaders program (with a team of great people assisting this year). I love being part of the Emerging Leaders program. Meeting librarians who are new to the field and getting them involved in NJLA has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career so far.

After learning about various aspects of the association and participating in many different roles, I'm now proud to say that I am the President!

I know I'm not alone in telling new professionals and library school students that getting involved is easy—just volunteer to do even one small thing. Each committee, subcommittee, section, and roundtable works all year on various projects and programs. Every person can contribute to the value of the association and help to move librarianship forward. Keep trying different sections and committees.

You will find, like I did, that your perfect fit in the association may change over the course of your career. The most important thing to remember is that all you have to do is keep trying new things!

Karen Klapperstuck

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The New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter shall provide news of the New Jersey Library Association and information about statewide, regional, and local library activities. News shall be as current as possible within the constraints of the publication schedule and the publication will serve as an archival record of significant and lasting library issues and topics. The New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter shall provide reports from officers, committees, roundtables, sections, and other units of the NJ Library Association. It shall also publish reports on trends and practices in the library profession and articles on topics of interest to the New Jersey library community. Ephemeral issues and time-sensitive topics will be covered in the listserv or the Association website.

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Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A Snapshot of NJ Library Life

I started writing this column the day after our official Snapshot Day 2012 (Oct. 24). *American Libraries Direct* published a great article on Oct. 1 entitled "Library Snapshot Day Turns Three," which did a wonderful job of charting the growth of this effort



The Dana Library at Rutgers serves a diverse population. Photo by Ed Berger

throughout the country (<http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/columns/advocacy/library-snapshot-day-turns-three>). This event is a simple advocacy tool that all types of libraries can use.

A familiar landmark here in the capitol is what we locals call the "Trenton Makes Bridge." Along the side of the bridge is the motto, "What Trenton Makes, the World Takes." I guess I can modify that slogan slightly and say "What NJ Makes, the Library Community Takes." This is certainly true of Snapshot Day. (And now that I think about it, we also started Emerging Leaders—but that story is for another day.) Those of us who were here in NJ when we started Snapshot Day may find it hard to believe that it has spread across the country. In fact, it's now international! It's been adopted in Canada! You can see lists of Snapshot activities at www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/statelocalefforts/snapshotday.

This year, thanks to LibraryLinkNJ, Snapshot Day was expanded to include The Great Library Roadtrip. All day,

groups traveled the highways and byways of the state visiting various libraries so they could report what was happening in real time. It was a wonderful addition, and I hope it will continue to be a part of our Snapshot Day activities.

What makes this day so special are the images of our libraries at work. It's the pictures that illustrate the importance of what's going on in our libraries every day. It's the pictures that show all of the varied services that our libraries have to offer. The people who think that libraries are just about books really need to see these photos. They tell the real story! (See them all at www.flickr.com/groups/njlibrariesnapshot/pool/with/8164613990).

I was interrupted in writing this column by a very unwelcomed visitor named Sandy, which caused widespread destruction throughout New Jersey, but particularly up and down the Jersey Shore. Sandy's wrath, however, gave me the opportunity to observe what a remarkable library community we have in our state. As soon as dedicated staffers were able to open, libraries became the hearts of their communities, providing a variety of needed services, including internet connections, assistance filing insurance and FEMA claims, a wide range of programs to provide a little relief for storm-weary families, and yes, just a warm place with smiling, familiar faces.

NJLA set up another Flickr site for photos of what was happening after the storm (www.flickr.com/groups/njlasandyrecovery). These pictures are simply amazing. They, too, provide a wonderful "snapshot" of the vital roles that we play in our communities.

When faced with an extreme situation, our state's library workers performed magnificently. This is one snapshot of New Jersey libraries that I believe many in our country will never forget.

Pat Tumulty



Note from the EDITOR

Intersection of Perfection

I found my perfect fit at the intersection of librarianship and journalism. It took me almost 30 years to arrive at that destination, but when I look in my rear-view mirror, it's clear that this is where I've been heading all along.

Ever since I was small, I've loved not only reading, but also writing. In high school, I decided to specialize in editing. These interests and talents steered me toward a degree in journalism at Temple University. Libraries, though, were always my lodges along the road. I joined the Library Club in high school to help out there during my study halls. For 3 years at Temple's Ambler Campus, I had a work-study job in the library. I learned so much there that, months before graduation, the director told me that one of the paraprofessionals was retiring and recommended that I apply for the job. So, my first full-time job was in an academic library.

After a few years at Temple, I felt guilty about not using my degree, so I drove away from my comfort zone and took various editing and writing jobs. When I decided to move to Virginia, the best job available was an LSTA-grant-funded gig at Shenandoah University's library in Winchester. To make ends meet, I worked part-time clerking at the town's public library.

Alas, after my main job at Shenandoah ended, I couldn't find a good permanent job, so I started mapping a way back home to NJ. That's when an editor friend told me that she'd discovered Information Today, Inc., in Medford, which published magazines and books for librarians. I knew, immediately, that that's where I was meant to be.

The pairing of publishers and libraries always felt natural to me, because the world's best written works start with one and end up with the other. I found my perfect fit simply by following both of my passions until I arrived at where they met. Since 1994, I've been parked at the intersection of journalism and librarianship; I'm not pulling out now.

Kathy Dempsey

(Continued from page 1)

... From SWOT to SWAP ... Schmooze or Lose

ing and what's not. These moments need not always be pre-calculated and rehearsed, though, and any short conversation can pay off later. I'll share a personal example. A cashier at a Wawa recently stopped me as I bought my coffee, saying, "Remember me? I got this job because of the computers at the library." I told him that of course I remembered him, then said I was glad the library's job-searching resources had yielded results. As important as it was that the young man had gotten this job, it was my response to "Remember me?" that sustained his awareness of the library. He had used our computers on a guest pass. After our Wawa encounter, he returned to become a member.

Each day at work, I spend some time walking around the library greeting users, calling them by name whenever I can. People love being recognized. A moment of "Nice to see you, Pat!" invites conversation, which presents opportunities to get donated goods or services. Some of our best craft events have been presented (for free!) by people with whom I, or one of my staff, have schmoozed, either in the library or around town.

So take the spirit of your 30-second elevator speech, stretch it out, and ask how people are doing. Or solicit a book recommendation—users love it when we ask them what *they* think we should be reading.

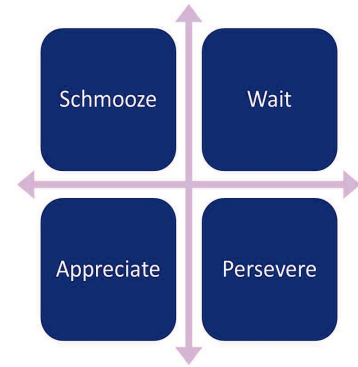
Wait: Make connections constantly through schmoozing, then wait for an opportune moment to parlay those connections into donations. Two years ago, a local business catered our manager's retirement party. As we were planning the event, I made sure to connect with Mel the owner, praising the quality of the food and making sure to ask if his kids had their library cards. After the event, I kept myself on Mel's radar screen, stopping in at the business from time to time as a customer, and always asking about his children's library experience.

Two years later I needed a donation of chili for our Patron Appreciation Day. Waiting until the right moment paid off; we received plenty of chili donations (including some from Mel), and our users loved it. A few days after the event I ran into Mel, who told me that several library users had come into his business asking to buy the chili they had enjoyed at the library. As a result, our chances of getting free chili for next year's event are looking good. Patience is a virtue when it comes to seeking repeat donations, especially from local businesses whose employees are also your users.

Appreciate: I cannot overemphasize the importance of letting people know how much you appreciate their talents, donations, and yes, even their criticisms. Thank them for their generosity. Thank them for suggesting ways to make their library even better. When appropriate, drop them a line. Handwritten thank-you notes are goodwill cash cows.

Here's another way we strengthen bonds between library and community. The city in which our county branch is located often holds family-friendly events, which sometimes forced us to reschedule library events. We called this problem to the city's attention, and its planners responded by inviting us to send a representative to its weekly event-

The author's own version of SWOP, which she retooled into SWAP.



planning sessions. Now the city concertedly tries to avoid scheduling conflicts with our programs. In turn, we thank the city for its consideration by occasionally helping out with city events. Partnering in small ways like this can result in a steady stream of good buzz about your library.

Persevere: If you feel you've made progress on seeking a donation, but the process stalls, don't give up. But don't just persevere by reminding people of their commitments; develop an awareness of the pressures or time constraints under which your donor might be laboring.

Last summer, we asked our school's TV/Film department to create a video to promote the library's summer reading programs. While the teacher's initial response was enthusiastic, her follow-through was sluggish. Instead of asking her if she had any particular time restraints or conflicts, I tossed some creative ideas her way. This got her attention briefly, but still didn't result in a video. Then one day a library user who's a parent happened to mention that the arts departments at school were under a tight deadline for a major event.

I continued to persevere, but I also let the teacher know that I understood she had pressing commitments. Should the teacher have mentioned that she had another major project on her plate? Perhaps, but it was my responsibility as the person seeking the donated service to make sure I'd been clear about my expectations. We ended up getting an amazing video only slightly behind schedule. So be certain you understand your donors' limitations. Perseverance, if managed mindfully, can be a futility-buster that yields results.

My idea of SWAP emerged from having taken an organic approach to opportunism. It's a homespun take on library advocacy that fits our community perfectly. The essence of this approach is going beyond making connections in formal settings. A successful SWAPper embraces serendipity and follows through on "SWAPportunities" with grace, good humor, and a very open mind.

Beth Bliss is Principal Librarian and Branch Manager at the Brigantine branch of the Atlantic County Library System. She holds an M.S.L.S. from Clarion University in Clarion, Pa. Her article "Staffing in the Small Public Library: An Overview" appeared in *Rural Libraries*, vol. xxxvi, no. 1. Her email address is eb bliss@aclsys.org.

Post-hurricane update from the author: The Brigantine branch suffered extensive damage. As of late November, I have only limited access to the building and we're awaiting word as to when, and to what extent, we might re-open. ▲

We liked the glade system, so we adapted that idea but went one step further and color-coded our labels as follows:

- Body & Soul: lavender
- Home: pink
- Art & Literature: light green
- Travel: yellow
- Sports & Recreation: dark green
- Science, Nature, Pets, Technology & Transportation: orange
- Business & Education: light blue
- Political & Social Science: dark blue
- Lives & Times: red

To make this work, we ordered transparent colored labels from Gaylord and assigned a color to each category. Our juvenile non-fiction books have a subject classification label in addition to the color. This way, preschoolers can easily find the animal books by looking for the blue label with the green alligator, and I am using very simple call numbers. The label on a book about elephants will read: J ANIMALS ELEPHANTS.

We started with the collections that were easiest to change to NOD: travel, cookbooks, and crafts. While we were relabeling

Next, I made templates in Word for typing the labels. We covered the old label with the new one, then placed a transparent colored label protector over the top. Staff members changed the call numbers in the database and returned the books to the shelves. Once the adult non-fiction system was completed, we rearranged it on the shelves in order of popularity of the categories. We started with Body & Soul; then Home; Arts & Literature; Travel; Sports & Recreation; Science, Nature, Pets, Technology; Business & Education; Political & Social Science; and ended with Lives & Times.

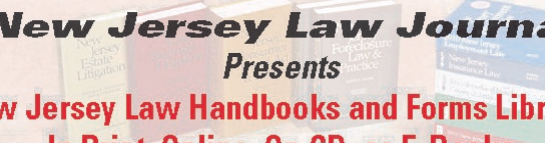
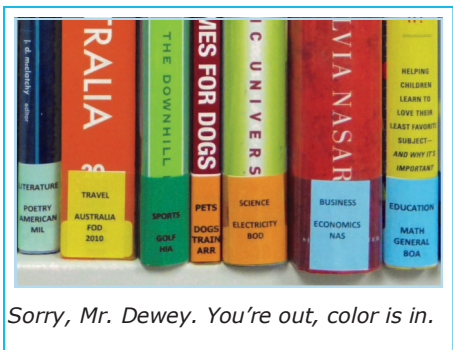
We completed the changes to the adult section in 1 year and it is a huge success. The color-coded labels not only look pretty, but they also keep books in the correct categories. The collection is very easy to browse, and our patrons and staffers love it. Our reference questions have dropped significantly because NOD is so user-friendly. My staff members also love that they rarely have to look up call numbers for titles because NOD is very intuitive. If a customer needs a book about diabetes, they simply go to BODY

HEALTH DIABETES. We still use the Bergen County Cooperative System Library catalog at www.bccls.org. If you look up *The Blood Sugar Solution* by Mark Hyman, our call number is BODY HEALTH DIABETES HYM instead of 616.12 HYM.

We've reached our goal of creating a user-friendly, intuitive browsing system that our customers and staff appreciate. NOD may need a little tweaking and rearranging in the future, and some librarians may not agree with our system, but their customers will. Times are changing, Mr. Dewey.

Respectfully yours,
Susan Meeske

Susan Meeske is the Director at the Old Tappan Public Library in Old Tappan, NJ, which ranked as one of the best 100 libraries in the nation in 2005. She holds an M.L.S. from Rutgers University in New Brunswick. Her email address is meeske@bccls.org.



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Altering Our Programs to Fit Bilingual Children's Needs

By **Barb Farrell Swenson**, Head of Youth Services,
Clifton Public Library

Striving to achieve a perfect fit demands a committed effort. You may need to make simple alterations, expand at the seams, or sometimes buy completely different material. No matter what, you want the results to complement the individual, the establishment, or in this case, the whole community.

Assessing the Community's Needs

The staff of the children's department at the Clifton Public Library carefully considers the local population when deciding how to meet the needs of our youngest patrons and their caregivers. Community assessment is at the forefront of our new programs and it's also vital when we adjust existing ones to achieve their greatest potential. Having informal meetings or simple conversations with patrons to understand their needs and desires provides invaluable feedback. Sometimes we conduct more-formal surveys with the general public. Understanding the local community—their social, educational, economic, and communication requirements—is a precursor to tailoring programs to find the "perfect fit" for the diverse city of Clifton.

According to the 2011 U.S. Census Bureau's State and County QuickFacts (<http://quickfacts.census.gov>), Clifton's population totals 84,269. The estimated median household income of \$62,271 is considerably lower than the state average of \$69,811. Another statistic that commands a great amount of attention is that an estimated 53% of the city's residents speak a language other than English at home, whereas the state average is 29%. Finally, 35% of Clifton residents are foreign-born, in contrast with the state average of 20%.

Serving Bilingual Children and Families

This data proves that it's essential for us to have a bilingual staff; a selection of special programs that are educational, appealing, and pertinent to the distinct needs of non-native speakers; and collection management guidelines that make bilingual and foreign books a priority. Here are three of the ways we achieve that:

Bilingual Programs: We have weekly programs that target children from birth through grade six. Many of these offerings are family-focused, including interactive story hours that demonstrate the importance of reading, singing, and creating dialogue with young children, in addition to art experiences and exploration. Given our diverse population, we made a commitment to offer a bilingual English/Spanish story hour biweekly. After making contacts and connections with our patrons and other community groups, we were able to expand story hours to include English/Polish, and we see English/Turkish on the horizon.

Our bilingual story hours consist of the same traditional elements that make great established interactive sessions—memorable books, dialogic reading, felt board stories or games, finger plays, and lots of singing and movement—all done concurrently in two languages. To accomplish this, we have two librarians (or a librarian and volunteer who speaks

the foreign language) working together to share two languages with the group. Typically, they read the same book and alternate pages. If we cannot obtain the same book to share simultaneously, we will use stories that are enjoyable for the group and read them one after the other in each language. As the dialogue continues, everyone benefits from the immersion in the new language they are experiencing.

The Clifton Public Library was featured in *The Record* with an article titled "North Jersey libraries keep pace with immigrants' needs" on Aug. 12, 2012 (<http://tinyurl.com/a4fcucq>). The paper's commentary highlighted our English/Spanish story hour and addressed the changing demographics, along with the needs and challenges facing many New Jersey libraries when it comes to addressing multicultural programming and collection management. Here in Clifton, we are fortunate to have staff members who can speak Spanish, Farsi, German, Hindi, Hebrew, and Arabic.



Eliana Richardson (L) and Valeria Mantilla, both age 3, sing along in English and Spanish during a bilingual story hour.

Dia! Program: Another real impetus to promote more cultural programming was the ALA's Dia! program. "El dia de los niños/El día de los libros," meaning "Children's Day/Book Day," is a nationwide celebration that takes place every April 30. This festivity commemorates many children, many cultures, and many books. Clifton PL was one of six libraries in NJ that registered its proposal with ALA for bringing together children from all nationalities, languages, and cultures on this special day. The success of this program was overwhelming: Approximately 350 people attended over the course of the day, participating in bilingual stories in English, Spanish, Turkish, and Arabic and making simple crafts that represented many cultures. Older children created African clay masks. Kids performed songs in French, German, Spanish, and English. The culmination was a bilingual puppet show in English and Spanish by Mighty Puppets of Clifton.

We made all of this possible by approaching local businesses

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

... Altering Our Programs to Fit Bilingual Children ...

and asking for their financial sponsorship for this community event. Our library staff was so encouraged by the participation and recognition from the community that we have made it a priority to build on this momentum. (You can find additional information on Dia! at <http://dia.ala.org>).

Additional Programs: All of the encouraging and constructive feedback from our patrons has demonstrated the need to broaden our efforts in developing more bilingual options for children and their families. In response, we have started a family book discussion for older children and their families aimed at giving them a bridge to the English language.

Often, the school-aged children act as translators for the parents and younger children in their households. When a new family settles in Clifton, school-aged children assimilate quickly because they are integrated into the public school system and have the distinct advantage of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. This is not the case with the at-home caregivers or younger siblings. These family members have more barriers without a support system, and frequently socialize within their own common network, so they lack the exposure to their new language. This need has propelled us to consider a commitment to an ESL program at our library.

Just recently, we hosted a PoetryLive Open Mic Night and invited all languages and all ages to participate. It was a successful evening with people of all backgrounds sharing their own creative work or lines from their favorite poets, either in English or another language. Those who read original poetry were invited to submit it early to have it included in a handbill. Another opportunity for those who are practicing their English or reading skills is our new Paws for Reading program. We invite children to read to one of our five therapy dogs in a calm, relaxed environment. The dogs are all affiliated with The Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc., which evaluates, tests, trains, qualifies, and supports therapy dogs for the purpose of giving loving and empathetic support. One research study at Tufts University has demonstrated that "Students who read to dogs have better outcomes than students who read to humans. They experi-



A young boy participates in the Paws for Reading program with a new friend.

enced a slight gain in reading ability and attitudes toward reading, while those who read to people experienced a decrease on both measures" (www.tufts.edu/vet/pr/20110810.html).

We have recognized the need for more multicultural programs within our diverse community and believe that by creating a supportive environment for families, they will become lifelong library users. Our collection of books and other resources can ease the transition to English that many of them are facing. By offering a variety of world culture programs, we are sharing our vision to honor children and their diverse backgrounds, to encourage reading and literacy, and to promote library collections and programs that reflect our plurality.

Where We Target Our Outreach

Reaching out to the larger community creates unity and enables us to determine which programs will best serve the needs of our diverse city. We focus on the students at the local schools to promote the library as "a place they want to be" and we emphasize that we have materials they want or need and programs they can participate in. Along with our 15 elementary schools, we know that early learning facilities such as preschools, Head Start programs, and private day care centers are essential places to reach young children and their parents. Contacting local businesses and places of worship are effective modes of promoting multicultural library programs. In addition to this type of outreach, we utilize print media not only in English, but also in Spanish, Polish, and Arabic whenever possible and then display the items in the library, in local venues, and on our website.

Here at the Clifton Public Library, we are committed to creating community spaces that cultivate the love of lifelong learning, and to creating sustainable change in childhood literacy, language, and cultural social skills by offering programs and materials that make an impact on our patrons' lives.

Barb Farrell Swenson is the Head of Youth Services at the Clifton Public Library. She holds an M.L.S. from St. John's University in Queens, New York. Her email address is swenson@cliftonpl.org. ▲

Nominations Are Open for NJLA Honors and Awards!

Nominate your colleagues or yourself for one of the many awards that NJLA gives.

The full list of awards, descriptions, and criteria is at <http://njla.org/awards>.

Deadline: Friday, March 1, 2013

Offering Interactive Ways to Fit In at Hillsdale Library

By **David J. Franz**, Director, Hillsdale Free Public Library

As libraries strive to keep up with their ever-changing communities, Hillsdale Free Public Library is taking active notice of community interests and demands. Not everyone is a reader. Not everyone is interested in waiting for the newest DVD. Not everyone reads the local paper. And not everyone is checking Facebook. At Hillsdale Library, we offer everyone, including non-traditional users, more than one "space" to fit in. We invite users to interact with staff and to take advantage of services by creating unique opportunities right near the front door. We also reach outside the building by using a mix of traditional press, social media, and our lawn sign. This internal/external approach helps us find the library's perfect fit in the community and allows our users to discover their perfect fit within our physical and virtual walls. Here are three of our successful projects.

The Jigsaw Puzzle Table

We finally set up our first puzzle in August 2011 after 10 years of stalling by this reluctant director. We should have done it sooner. The preparation was effortless. We simply put a folding table in the reading room, tucked two chairs underneath, opened a box, displayed the image, and scattered puzzle pieces on the table. We invited participation with a sign that said "Community Puzzle Table: Go Ahead—Take a Turn!" Only days later, the first puzzle was complete.



Relaxing at the puzzle table after work.

And here is how we really connect with users: Whenever a puzzle is finished, we frame it and hang it on the wall near the table as a show of respect for the puzzlers' accomplishment. What's more, we had the bright idea to photograph each one and post the images to our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/HillsdaleLibrary) and Flickr photo-sharing site (www.flickr.com/photos/hillsdalelibrary). Those 3 seconds of genius allowed us to permanently extend our reach throughout our virtual community. Our participants average one puzzle per week, and the effort is sustained by community enthusiasm and our effort to share the completed puzzles.

The Bottle Cap Mosaic Board

A mosaic board was part of our "Think It, Make It, Share It" campaign to generate creativity. Over the course of 6 months, the community participated in dozens of artistic activities, many featuring the use of recycled materials. The mosaic board consisted of a 24-inch square grid of rubber bands on a black plywood board. Each square is just big enough to hold a plastic bottle cap in place. We set up an



Young artists with a peace sign made with 400 bottle caps

easel very near the circulation desk and invited everyone to create images. As with the puzzles, we captured images of the mosaics and shared them online.

The mosaic board offered us a unique opportunity to serve many types of visitors. There were the thoughtful givers who contributed over 500 colorful caps. There were artists of all ages, uninhibited creators who spent hours futzing with caps, looking for just the right combination of line and color, realizing and sharing over 50 different images on the grid. Then there were the observers who passed by the board, occasionally muttering the word "cool." We offered all of them the opportunity to experience something unique and unexpected.

The Outdoor Sign

Some people read press releases and some respond to emails, but virtually everyone notices our outdoor sign. We've turned a \$230 portable sign into a personality. We took the soul, wit, and humor of our staff and stuck it on the front lawn. Thousands of drivers and passengers, many of whom never set foot in our library, read, remember, and reflect on our sign.

Sure, we use it to announce programs and events, but more frequently we use it just for fun. We've found that the more risqué messages have been met with overwhelming community approval. "Love your sign!" is heard frequently at the service desk. Now, craving feedback and compliments, staff members often compete to come up with the next cool message.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

... Offering Interactive Ways to Fit In at Hillsdale



Here are some of Hillsdale's creative outdoor signs.

And our humor hasn't stopped at the lawn. Of course, we share pictures of the messages on our website (<http://myhillsdalelibrary.org>), and they have been known to circulate via Facebook. "I like big books, and I cannot lie" was reposted by our Facebook followers and viewed over 1,000 times. It inspired comments from Workman's Press (www.workman.com/blog/tag/i-like-big-books) and a publisher in Australia. We almost couldn't believe it when we found it referenced on *The New Yorker* website (www.newyorker.com), Lifehacker (<http://lifehacker.com>), Pinterest (<http://pinterest.com>), and Tumblr (www.tumblr.com).

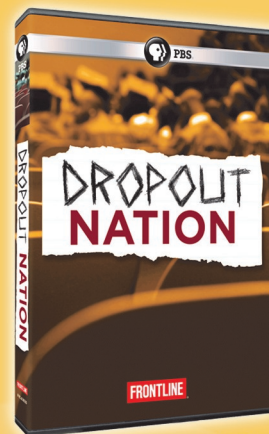
Our Fit and Yours

The sign fits the needs of passing commuters and hundreds of Facebook users. The mosaic board fits in with the whimsical imagination of many who pass through the library's doors. The puzzle fits people who want to sit down, stay, participate, and collaborate.

Libraries are different things to different people. Hillsdale Library finds its perfect fit in the community by offering interactive opportunities both inside and outside of the physical building and traditional media, and we encourage users to find their perfect fit by seeking their input, feedback, contributions, and creations. My library strives to make strong and interactive connections with both its local and its distant virtual community.

David J. Franz is the Director of the Hillsdale Free Public Library. He holds an M.L.S. from Rutgers University. His email address is dave@myhillsdalelibrary.org. ▲

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People & Places Around the State

Honors and Awards

Joe DaRold, Director of the Plainfield PL, received the 2012 Roger McDonough Librarianship Award, presented by the NJ Studies Academic Alliance. This award is given "to a librarian, archivist or manuscript curator for excellent service in advancing NJ Studies."

Mary Ellen Firestone, Director of the East Brunswick PL, spoke as part of a Congressional staff briefing on both the House of Representatives and the Senate sides of the Capitol Building on Sept. 13. She discussed the work being done through the library's groundbreaking Business Resource Center to demonstrate one of the many ways librarians are supporting the workforce.

Newark PL (NPL) received special recognition from the U.S. Government Printing Office for going above and beyond to further the Federal Depository Library Program's mission of ensuring that the American public has free access to its government's information. NPL has served as the regional hub for the other federal depository libraries in the state of New Jersey for nearly 50 years. It was selected for making the best use of limited resources and continuing to provide excellent public services.

Ocean County Library was one of only 10 libraries across the nation to receive a \$1,000 grant from the Young Adult Library Services division of ALA for its Teen Read Week Program, "Do-It-Yourself Fair."

Somerset County Library received a 2012 Economic Vitality Award from the Somerset County Business Alliance. The library was honored for its "forward thinking and creativity through its program to provide resources, funded through the NJ State Library's Broadband Technology Opportunities program, to patrons with employment search challenges."

The *Princeton Review* released its 2013 college rankings in 62 categories, including Best College Library. Among the top 20 libraries in the U.S. are **The College of New Jersey Library** and **Princeton University Library**. Congratulations to Taras Pavlovsky (TCNJ), Karin Trainer (PUL), and the staffers at their respective libraries.

Congratulations to the five libraries that received grants from the New Jersey Historical Commission for FY 2012: **Rutgers University, Special Collections and Archives**: \$87,138; **Monmouth County Historical Association**: \$84,350; **Newark PL**: \$62,276; **Plainfield PL**: \$13,245; and **Rockaway Borough Free PL**: \$9,913.

Congratulations to the libraries that were awarded NJ Book Collections by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities: **Caldwell PL**, **Cherry Hill PL**, **Fort Lee PL**, **Millville PL**, and **Wayne PL**.

In the Media

Camden County Library was featured in *AL Direct* regarding its new branch, which is housed in the academic Paul Robeson Library at Rutgers-Camden. For the full story:

<http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/features/10032012/rocking-joint>.

James Keebler of Piscataway PL has redesigned the NJLA website with Drupal to enable easier access and updating. Thank you, James!

Three New Jersey librarians were members of ALA's discussion panels at the New York Comic Con's Professional Day in October. **Laverne Mann** of Piscataway PL delivered a presentation entitled "Foolproof Graphic Novel Collection Development." **Emily Weisenstein** of Boonton's Holmes PL and **Joseph Gasparro** of Montville PL discussed the use of superheroes in promoting library programming.



James Keebler

Appointments and Elections

Alexandria Arnold is the new Director of the Long Hill Twp. PL. She had been Assistant Director at Summit PL.

David Cubie has been named Director of Hillside PL.

Ranjna Das has been named Director of the Burlington County Library. With her new responsibilities, Ranjna has had to step down as the webmaster of the NJLA webpage and wiki. Thank you for all your time and effort, Ranjna!

Carolyn Della-Sala is the new Branch Director of the Warren Branch Library of the Somerset County Library System.

Tanya Finney Estrada is the new Director of the Waterford Library.

Sara Hansen is the new Assistant Director of Operations Services for the Ocean County Library. She was previously Director of the Old Bridge PL.

Joe Keenan, retired Director from Elizabeth PL, has been named Interim Director of Summit PL.

Dena Leiter has been appointed Director of Libraries for Union County College.

Mary Martin is the now the Emerging Technologies Librarian at Parsippany PL.

Mary Torrey has been named Director of Verona PL. She was previously at Park Ridge PL and East Hanover Twp. Library.

Celebrations

Elizabeth PL celebrated its 100th anniversary in October.

Franklin Lakes PL celebrated 60 years of service to its community in September.

Hunterdon County Library officially opened its new South County Branch in October.

Ocean County Library celebrated the grand opening of its newly renovated Brick Branch in October.

(Continued on page 12)



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... People & Places Around the State

(Continued from page 10)

Randolph PL held its grand reopening in September.

Rockaway Twp. PL celebrated the re-opening of its Hibernia Branch in October.

Sayreville PL celebrated the grand opening of its newly remodeled Quiet Room in September.

Somerset County Library System welcomed Manville Library as its newest branch in October.

Waldwick PL dedicated its new addition in October.

Resignations and Retirements

Miriam Bein retired as Director of Hillside PL.

George Conwell retired as Director of Hamilton Township PL.

Glenn Devitt plans to retire from the Summit PL.

Gail Sweet retired as Director of Burlington County Library System.

Deaths

Sara Eggers, retired Director of the Old Bridge PL, passed away in August. Sara had been very active in NJLA for many years including serving on the Executive Board.

Nina Ladof, retired Director of the Camden County Library and an NJLA member since 1959, passed away in July. After her retirement, Nina consulted with many libraries and boards throughout NJ and continued serving on the Public Policy Committee for many years.

Compiled by **Mary Marks**, Associate University Librarian, Fairleigh Dickinson University Library in Madison. ▲