Cultivating and Sustaining the Relationship-Driven Library

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Ashley Stewart talked about how her library, the first in Southern Illinois to offer drag queen storytime — by working as a critical community partner in efforts to distribute diapers, food, the library establishes a firewall against power of attacks.
How can relationships help?

- Sustainability & climate action
- Trauma-informed services
- Workforce development
- Digital inclusion
- Kindergarten readiness
- Public health
- Library advocacy
- [Insert your issue here]
The branch manager told me "almost the whole first year [I participated in the health coalition], when we met I was asked to explain why the library was there. 'What are you doing here? Like you're not a member of the community care team?" Those were not the words. It was that sort of questioning. To which I said, 'Oh, uh, we are.'

Librarians often feel they have to ask:

- Do I have space?
- Do I have budget?
- Do I have staff?

Librarians increasingly find success asking:

- Who can I work with?
- Can I do this?
What blocks this work from happening?

In a word: **Perceptions**

Unless you are already working with other health & social service organizations, they do *NOT* think of YOU.
People often ask librarians: Can you distribute, market, host?

People increasingly find success asking: How can we work together?

Can you do something for me?
Colorado to give out free KN95 masks at libraries, but program’s rollout leads to confusion

Denver Public Library among the locations warning patrons they have no masks to give out

The public library is the latest place to pick up a coronavirus test. Librarians are overwhelmed.

By Julie Zauzmer Weil

January 18, 2022 at 12:44 p.m. EST


Project website: https://letsmovelibraries.org/about-us/heal/

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, RE-246336-OLS-20
How do we cultivate and sustain the relationship-driven library?
### Semi-Structured interviews with individuals from organizations that have worked with public librarians on community-based Healthy Eating and Active Living initiatives

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<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Cooperative Extension</th>
<th>Individual Volunteer</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>K-12 School</th>
<th>Parks and Recreation</th>
<th>SNAP-Ed</th>
<th>City Government</th>
<th>Health Department</th>
<th>Senior Agency</th>
<th>United Way</th>
<th>Boys and Girls Club</th>
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**Research**

Institute of Museum and Library Services

Grant # RE-246336-OLS-20

Let’s Move In Libraries.org
What we found

The goal of a relationship-driven library is to have community members that naturally look to librarians as partners!

Stage 1:
Library = Book Repository
"storytime, book clubs, and book borrowing"

Stage 2:
Library = Trusted Resource
"Always there, people turn to them, stable, trusted: A space to use for health promotion"

Stage 3:
Librarian = Partner
"We work together with librarians to figure out what to do in our communities"
Cultivating the Relationship-driven library

Planting Seeds
- Seeds = confluence of needs and interests
- Start to find seeds inside your library
- Look to multi-sector organizations
- Use your connections to build new connections

Nurturing the Seedlings
- The process of moving from idea to reality
- Building and sustaining trust among partners
- Protecting your project to help it grow

Harvesting the bounty
- Document and celebrate what you have done
- Share your story to inspire and engage
- Advocate for your library through your relationships

Resting the garden and prep for next year
- Looking backwards - how did things go?
- Looking forward - where do we want things to go?
- Creating space for mindfulness, sharing, and planning

https://LetsMoveInLibraries.org/
How Milagros Tanega did it
At Harris County Public Library

1. Talk up the idea
2. Met with those interested in idea
3. Worked with them to develop idea
4. Made a plan and divide the work
5. Started small: Herb garden
6. Kept building: Vegetable garden
7. Kept growing: Fruit forest, storywalk, lending garden supplies, collaboration with adjacent middle school – it just keeps going!
Welcome to the Encore Café Grand Reopening.

Encore Café at the Marion Public Library is finally here! After the original library building was damaged beyond repair in the 2020 derecho, Heritage Area Agency on Aging is excited to announce the Grand Reopening of the Marion Public Library Encore Café on March 3rd, 2023.

Please join us for great company and a restaurant dining experience.

Meals are offered on a voluntary contribution basis for those 60 and older, and their spouse or caregiver (or just $9 for those under 60).

Call to reserve a lunch:
(319) 398-2585

Please contact Julie with questions at 319-926-6726.
www.heritageaaa.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gardens</th>
<th>Recipes</th>
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<tr>
<td>One or more people working in an uncontrolled environment</td>
<td>One person working in a controlled environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>No guarantees of success – always depends on externalities</td>
<td>If you have EVERYTHING, comes out the same each time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a time and a place for different seeds to flourish</td>
<td>You can follow the same recipe any time or any place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyclical – time for rest, reflection, and harvesting</td>
<td>You can make a recipe any time if you have the supplies</td>
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Step 1

Seeds =

Confluence of need and interest

Interests

Need

Let'sMoveInLibraries.org
Step 2: Nourishing seedlings

Seedling

Seeding so precious and vulnerable

Now we have to give our seedling the best chance of becoming a plant

Shift from idea to reality a difficult process

Right set of conditions have to come together for seedling to successfully sprout
Step 3: Harvesting the bounty

You and your partners have put so much work into taking an idea and turning it into a reality.

It’s critical that you and your partners take the time to celebrate what came from your labors, and also make sure your bounty nourishes those that need sustenance.
Step 4: Look back & forward

Seek to understand what just happened as you simultaneously prepare your garden for your next ideas.
Join us on this journey!

Toolkit now live

https://letsmoveinlibraries.org/toolkit

All welcome to try and share.
Award ceremony November 3

Register at https://letsmovelibraries.org/

An award celebrating community collaborators
Sponsored by the non-profit Let's Move in Libraries
Thoughts? Questions?
Thank you!

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