Public Libraries as Partners for Collective Impact

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Fourth most read story in APHA newsletter in 2018

https://www.thenationshealth.org/content/most-read-public-health-news-stories-year-2018
Embracing the SHARED USE of the library

What do we know?

Libraries social centers for older adults (Klinenberg, 2018)

Children’s librarians infuse active play into reading programs (Bedard, Bremer, & Cairney, 2020)

Public librarians in South Carolina doing many initiatives "around active living" and want "to do more" (Draper, 2021)

Rural librarians play a unique role (ARC, 2018; Flaherty & Miller, 2016; McGladrey et al., 2019)
Pandemic: Looking outside

What a great day for gardening! Jessica and her son Patrick came to the Walkertown Branch library today to harvest sweet potatoes from their plot and to plant collards for the Fall. They enjoy being part of the Library Community Garden. Library is for growing!
Pandemic: Looking online

"Zoom-ba" with Cynthia!
FREE ONLINE ZUMBA GOLD CLASS!
TUESDAYS AT 1:00PM

Black Outdoors: The Connections Between Race and Outdoor Space – don't miss this online conversation with Jacqueline L. Scott (@BlackOutdoors1) and Demiesha Dennis (@OutdoorBrown)!

Tune in LIVE Friday at 2 pm
crowdcast.io/e/TPLblackoutd...
Total Staff of Public Libraries, 2006-2018
Source: IMLS PLS (Credit: @NoahLenstra)
“If I don’t walk, it’s really not a great day” - Seattle Public Library's Nancy Pearl

"Last year, Pearl started combining her two greatest pleasures — reading and walking."
HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living) at the Library via Co-Developed Programming

RQ: How, why, and with what impacts do public libraries collaborate with others to co-develop programming around healthy eating and active living?

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Grant # RE-246336-OLS-20
## Methods

<table>
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<th>Sector</th>
<th># Interviews</th>
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<tr>
<td>Library front-lines</td>
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<td>Library leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th># Interviews</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<td>Hospital</td>
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<td>Individual volunteer</td>
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<td>Cooperative Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
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<td>K-12 School</td>
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<td>Parks and Recreation</td>
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<td>Senior Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
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Semi-Structured interviews with individuals from organizations that have worked with public librarians on community-based Healthy Eating and Active Living initiatives
“Let's not wait for [another] pandemic before we partner on more projects” – Parks & Recreation Director

“[The partnership] became formalized, I would say, during the pandemic. I reached out to the director of Parks and Rec and said, ‘Look, we're all trying to do the same sort of stuff here. Let's work together.’ And so we did do a big Zoom call with me and some of my librarians that do programming along with him, his team that does programming, and we did some brainstorming of what we could do” – Library director
2015 – Terry Hawley starts library volunteering
2016 – Library director asks her if she’d like to do free Yoga
2020 – Shifts first to virtual Yoga and then to outdoor Yoga
“[When] the book bike comes, people are reminded that we have a bike trail system that allows the library to come see us using their bike. Having a librarian ride their book bikes: They're wearing their bicycling gear - really helps remind the public that everybody can be healthy”

Head of Main Street Organization
BORROW

RIDE

RETURN

A FREE program operated by the Bethlehem Health Bureau & partners.
Bring ID to borrow a bike and lock.
Explore the city, run errands, and enjoy the outdoors!

LOCATIONS

Comfort Suites
(3rd Street)

Bethlehem Area Public Library - Main
~Temporarily unavailable~

Lake Orion Review

Broadway Embroidery

Edwin and Ray Grooming Co.

Sarah’s Bath Boutique

Lisa Ann Salon

Prime Time Comics & Cards

Hanson’s Running Shop

Builders Custom Flooring

Twice Blessed Consignment

Lake Orion Window Treatment

Elixer Clothing

W.R. Mason Jewelers

Wine Social
Partner Evolution in thinking about public libraries

- Stage 1: Library => Book Repository
- Stage 2: Library => Resource
  (Always there, people turn to it, stable, trusted)
- Stage 3: Library => Space to use
  (for food distribution, programs, coalitions meetings, etc.)
- Stage 4: Librarian => Partner
  (We work together to figure out what to do = Collective Impact)
- Percent of LHDs working with organization in any way
- Percent of LHDs regularly scheduling meetings, have written agreements, or share personnel/resources with organization

Community-based partners (e.g., education, non-government)

- K-12 schools: 71% (98%)
- Media: 21% (96%)
- Community-based non-profits: 72% (92%)
- Colleges or universities: 62% (88%)
- Faith communities: 44% (87%)
- Businesses: 48% (87%)
- Cooperative extensions: 45% (82%)
- Libraries: 25% (74%)

NATIONAL PROFILE
OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

UNC GREENSBORO
Department of Library and Information Science

LetsMoveInLibraries.org
What is needed to close the gap?

1. A space for national conversations on these community-based partnerships with librarians
2. More research on how and why local partnerships emerge, are sustained, and spread to other places

“Caucus on Public Librarianship and Public Health”
Join us!

• Rural Active Living Work Group focusing on “public libraries as physical activity promotion partners”
• Monthly meetings – all welcome to join – lenstra@uncg.edu

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https://papren.org/papren-work-groups/rural-active-living-work-group/
Thank you!

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http://letsmovelibraries.org/