Libraries as Gateways to the Outdoors

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Let us know in the chat:

1. Who are you?
2. Why are you here?
The gardens are a cooperative project between the American Indian Community Housing Organization and the Duluth Public Library.

Jun. 2, 2021

Durowaa Agyeman-Mensah (left) and Ann Perrin, both of Duluth, place bamboo poles in a garden on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at the Duluth Public Library downtown branch. The gardens are a cooperative project between the American Indian Community Housing Organization and the Duluth Public Library. AICHO plans to make signs describing each plant in English and Ojibwe, which will later be put up this summer. (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)
Prologue

“It will not be a toy garden with terracotta teacup flowers, but a real garden,”

Los Angeles City Librarian Charles Fletcher Lummis in 1906 about plans for a rooftop garden, quoted on page 147
Prologue
Americans love (and fund) libraries for three reasons:
1. Transformative potential of reading
2. Useful nature of information
3. Community building capacity of public space
More voters today say it’s important for the library to be a community hub.

- Activities, entertainment not found elsewhere: 48% in 2018, 38% in 2008
- Be a place for people to gather and socialize: 45% in 2018, 36% in 2008
- Support civic discourse and community building: 47% in 2018

**Ladybug Release Party**

**Rakow Branch of the Gail Borden Library District**

The Library and the Elgin Community Garden Network hosted three ladybug release parties at the Rakow Branch. Families were invited to learn more about these insects and learn how ladybugs can improve a garden.
Shaping forces

Cities Connecting Children to Nature

Libraries as Nature Connectors

NLC | National League of Cities

children & nature network
April 2021 newsletter

WATCH | Dia de Los Niños / Dia de Los Libros

This year’s virtual celebration of kids, books, and nature was a huge success! If you missed it, you can still tune-in and be inspired to read, explore, dance, and connect with nature.

Watch the virtual celebration >>

MUCHAS GRACIAS to the San Francisco Public Library and the SF Early Literacy Network for putting on a celebration of BookJoy that will outlast the pandemic, and to all of the partners that shared their love for learning from parks and natural spaces across the city: Alemany Farm, City College of San Francisco Early Education Department, First 5 SF/SF Family Resource Center Initiative, Friends of the SF Public Library, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Jumpstart, National Park Service, Mission Promise Neighborhood, San Francisco Children & Nature, SF Botanical Garden, SF Recreation and Parks Department, SFUSD Early Education Department, Tandem Partners in Early Learning, the EcoCenter at Heron’s Head Park, and The Presidio Trust.
ALA adding sustainability as a core value of librarianship
bit.ly/30nLy9g
America's 17,000+ public libraries employ nearly 145,000 individuals. All of them are potential partners.
### Semi-Structured Interviews

<table>
<thead>
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<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>Parks and Recreation</td>
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<td>United Way</td>
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<td>Boys and Girls Club</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></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

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**Research**

[Logo: INSTITUTE of Museum and Library Services]

Grant # RE-246336-OLS-20

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<td><strong>69</strong></td>
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Up to now, what have been your experiences working with public libraries or librarians around nature or outdoor-related initiatives, of any sort?

Or, if you’re a librarian, how have you worked with partners on nature or outdoor-related initiatives?
“[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
Come help the Friends of the Library beautify the grounds

By Shelby Harrell sharrell@themountaineer.com  Sep 16, 2020  0

Re-imaging our libraries as places made by our communities!!
Shaler Scout hopes to make Eagle with food pantry for hometown library

Eagle Scout hopeful Xander Hill, 16, works on the food pantry project with his great uncle, Eddie Idzakovich. Xander said the pantry cost about $300 to complete. Family and friends donated $500 to the Shaler North Hills Library to keep it stocked.
Partner evolution in thinking about public libraries

- Stage 1: Library => Book Repository
- Stage 2: Library => Resource / Space to Use
  (Always there, people turn to it, stable, trusted)
- Stage 3: Librarian => Partner
  (We work together to figure out what to do = Collective Impact)

My question to you:
HOW CAN WE GET TO STAGE 3, FASTER!?!?!
If you want to do something with public librarians
They *need* to be at the table from DAY 1
If you’re trying to connect with them on DAY 70, you’re too late…
Pandemic -> Outside

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<td>StoryWalk</td>
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<td>Scavenger hunt (including geocaches)</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>Obstacle course</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>15</td>
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Outdoor library programs offered by rural public libraries during COVID-19 Pandemic in Summer 2020. Learn more in:
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/
LEARN MORE

NOAH LENSTRA

HEALTHY LIVING
AT THE LIBRARY

HOME
ABOUT US
GET STARTED
LET'S MOVE STORIES
EVENTS
CONTACT US
SEARCH

STORYWALK(R) AND SCAVENGER HUNT

RINGTOWN AREA LIBRARY, PENNSYLVANIA

How has this library supported healthy living?
During the COVID-19 stay-at-home order in Pennsylvania, the Ringtown Area Library started monthly scavenger hunts around the community, relating to a children's story when possible (green sheep for Mem Fox's Where is the Green Sheep? and strawberries for Don Wood's The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry and the Big Hungry Bear.) The library began offering StoryWalk(R) programming during summer 2020, and in September 2020 unveiled the 4th StoryWalk(R) of the year at a local farm's pumpkin patch, choosing Pumpkin Trouble by Jan Thomas.

What impacts have you seen this work have?
The scavenger hunts and StoryWalk(R) both provided no-contact, fun activities that got families moving and kept them engaged with the library while it was temporarily closed and/or after reopening but with limited services and capacity. In addition to encouraging families to get out for a walk, these outreach efforts brought awareness of our library to many people who rarely or never utilize traditional library services. The library also believes that these activities led to an increase in monetary donations to the library this year.

LEARN MORE

Lessons learned: Don't be afraid to think outside of the library! Lots can be done using outdoor spaces to engage communities in healthy living programming.

Combine stories and literacy with outdoor programming. Weave stories into public space and you promote the library, promote reading, and also promote fun, active engagement in the outdoors!
Thank you!

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http://letsmovelibraries.org/
Based on today’s conversations, what would you like to do with librarians to promote access to nature, greenspaces, and the outdoors?

What would you need to make that happen?