

Library Director Report December 2015

END OF 2015

It would be great to be able to deliver a comprehensive list of MPL's accomplishments over this past year and I have no doubt that it would be a very lengthy list. There were awards and moments of recognition by a variety of agencies, organizations, the media, and more. There were the staff accomplishments and the praise shared by the community for a variety of programs and services. It would include recognition from the Mayor's office and from the Common Council. It would also include many donor stories that accompanied their donations. There was so much accomplished this past year--from true personal stories of success and those countless transactions that truly made a difference to individuals in our community.

So with that in mind I wanted to share one last story from a small and quiet gathering at Meadowridge Library on December 14th. The gathering at the Meadowridge kitchen was a celebration of the closing of a successful program. The intent was to include the community and provide a meal. That was the essence of the event but underneath there was much more to the story. At first glance you might not know or even notice the significance of the celebration. There was a very small turnout and perhaps you might think that there was nothing special happening but there was something very special happening here. This gathering was more about the meaning of the program than about the number of people attending. It was really about MPL making a meaningful connection by collaborating with other agencies. And it was really about the lives that were impacted by this program.

The program I'm speaking of is Making Justice. It was a program in coordination with the Neighborhood Intervention Program, Dane County Juvenile Court Detention Center and Dane County Juvenile Court Shelter, plus a UW connection helping to coordinate the program. The night's meal preparation received assistance from Slow Foods Madison, South Side Farmers Market and Growing Power, and even the cook from the Detention Center lent a hand. So many people made this a success including the dedicated work of Jesse Vieau, a MPL teen services librarian, and other MPL staff assisting throughout the duration of this 14 week project. All of this was focused on a very small group of young people that were involved in the program.

Where I see the significance of this for the Library was that we decided to be involved in this program because we wanted to make a difference and knowing that that difference may have a life-changing impact on the young people who experience the program. From looking across the room at the program's participants I could sense that we were successful and made a connection. I could see it in their faces as they shared their meal and their conversations with each other. It was a sense that at least for this moment these young people didn't have to worry about consequences or impressions but could just enjoy themselves. As I said it was a small celebration but in the eyes of the Library it was a huge success.

I hope we can continue to provide this type of engagement with our community. To explore new ways to make those connections, to work with other agencies, and as our mission states to enrich lives. It was a great year for MPL.

LIBRARY SITING AND ALLOCATION

We will be scheduling our first design meeting for the Badger Building with all levels of MPL staff to determine how the buildings needs to function for the system. An example would be a consideration for the proper storage for art at this location.

CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM

Tana Elias and I met with Dr. Laurie Greenberg from UW-Madison to discuss how MPL could assist in their offer to provide citizenship instruction to individuals who are eligible to become citizens but lack the ability or knowledge on how to become an official US citizen. The library will offer space to host these programs and will work to help promote the program. It is estimated that over 10,000 people in Madison are eligible to become a US citizen.

Business Meetings

You may notice that I am again traveling to all of our locations and visiting departments to be able to share my thoughts with staff and more importantly to learn from them.

Meeting with CaS4 an architecture firm to listen to a development proposal

Meeting with Dr. Laurie Greenberg to discuss citizenship program

Meeting with Meadowridge Library staff

Meeting with Bubbler staff

Meeting with Public Service staff at Central

Meeting with Hawthorne staff

Meeting with Lakeview Staff

Meeting with Lower Stacks Staff

Meeting with DaneNet

Meeting with Circulation Staff at Central

Meeting with Youth Services

City Business

Dept/DivisionHead Meeting with Mayor

Mayor's Management Team (2)

Planner position meeting with Community Development Dept.

Mayor's Human Services Workgroup

Public/Media Appearance

Pinney Library Launch Party

MPL Foundation Holiday party

Meadowridge NIP Dinner

Mark Benno and I were interviewed by Dean Mosiman, reporter from the WSJ to share MPL's experience of moving to temporary quarters during the renovation of the Central Library. It is part of an article on the renovation of the Municipal Building.