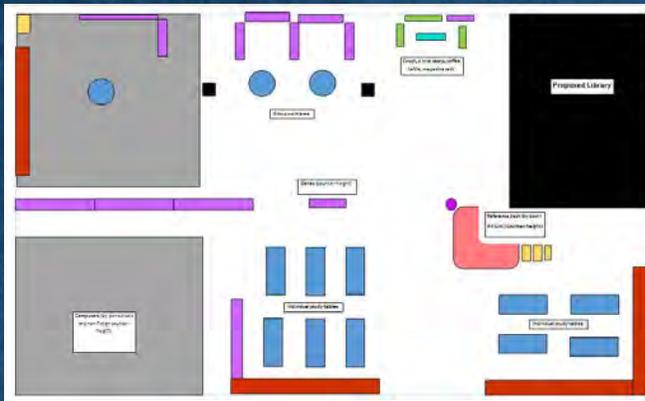


Ohio

Libraries Quarterly Changing Spaces





Changing Spaces

The articles in this issue of Ohio Libraries Quarterly look at how some libraries are changing their spaces to be more flexible and to better meet the needs of their communities.

In a 2012 article for American Libraries, Charles G. Mueller wrote, "The best libraries today—old, new, or in design—are a cross between a modern community center, an old-fashioned YMCA, and a town center." It is certainly true that the way libraries utilize space is rapidly changing. The physical space required for books, especially large sets of reference books, has decreased as these materials have become available in electronic format. In some libraries, rows of space-consuming desktop computers have been replaced with laptops and other devices patrons can use anywhere in the library.

Librarians continue to develop ways of repurposing space to meet the evolving needs of their communities. In my visits to libraries around the state, I have seen libraries repurpose

space for maker labs where people can create a wide variety of things, small business centers providing resources and assistance for those who wish to start their own business, interactive play stations for children, spaces for teens, and for places where people of all ages can come together to learn and discuss ideas. State-of-the-art technology is a must-have in today's libraries and it draws in users of all ages, from novice users to experts, who are often called upon to help those novice users become more proficient. I have also observed that flexibility is very important and libraries often achieve that by using furniture, often equipped with casters, which can easily be moved around to create collaborative seating arrangements.

We hope you will enjoy the articles in this newsletter and perhaps gain some inspiration from the ideas these libraries have shared with us.

[Beverly Cain](#)



Are you interested in a program to encourage Ohio library staff at all levels and from all library types to meet 21st century needs with interactive participatory tools in a fun and casual environment? Do

you want to be involved in a project that will develop your leadership and project management skills? Are you up to the task of problem-solving using marshmallows, cardboard boxes, and other random items? Then ILEAD USA – Ohio is for you.

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Ohio

Libraries Quarterly

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Ann M. Watson is the new Associate State Librarian for Library Services

As Associate State Librarian for Library Services leads and manages the Library Services Division of the State Library of Ohio. The Library Services Division includes two major program areas within the State Library: (1) Research and Catalog Services and (2) Circulation and Special Services, which includes the Ohio Talking Book Program. She also advises the State Librarian and senior management on overall agency operations, policy formation, budgeting, strategic planning, and program evaluation.

She returned to Ohio from Shepherd University's Scarborough Library in West Virginia where she was Dean of the Library for over three years. As the chief administrative leader, Ann was responsible for accomplishing strategic and day-to-day operational goals in all aspects of library operations. Ann was Library Director at the Ohio University regional campus in Lancaster from 2008 to 2011 and Head of Access Services and Instruction at Denison University from 1997 to 2008.

Her professional activities and leadership contributions on

the state and national levels include the Board of Trustees of Lyrasis, Academic Library Association of Ohio (ALAO), and Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).

Ann holds an MA in Educational Policy and Leadership from The Ohio State University, MS in Library and Information Science from Kent State University, and BA in History from West Virginia University. In addition, she completed the Harvard University Graduate School of Education's Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians.



Board President Stephen D. Wood recognized for his service by the State Library of Ohio

After six years of service Board President Mr. Stephen D. Wood of Lyndhurst bids farewell to the State Library of Ohio. Mr. Wood was recognized at the October board meeting with the following resolution: State Librarian Beverly Cain and former State Library Board President Stephen Wood

WHEREAS, Stephen D. Wood has been a member of the State Library Board since 2009 and President of the State Library Board since 2012; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Stephen D. Wood has provided an unparalleled level of professional service to the Ohio library community through his work with the State Library Board, Library Leadership Ohio, the LSTA Advisory Council, OPLIN, the Ohio Library Council, and the Regional Library Systems; and

WHEREAS, Stephen D. Wood helped lead the State Library of Ohio through a period of tremendous change, including budget decreases that impacted not just the State Library, but the entire Ohio library community, shifting legislative priorities, the hiring of a new State Librarian in 2010, and redefining the boundaries of 30 public libraries in order to eliminate double taxation for library services; and

WHEREAS, Stephen D. Wood has contributed in numerous ways to the success of the many programs and services offered by the State Library;



Pictured L to R: State Librarian Beverly Cain and Stephen D. Wood

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Board of the State Library of Ohio, meeting in regular session this 30th day of October, 2014, at Columbus, Ohio, express their individual and collective gratitude and appreciation for Stephen D. Wood.

Lima Public Library's Teen Spot Lounge



By Steven S. Moser
Teen Librarian, Lima Public Library

The Teen Spot Lounge at the Lima Public Library opened in August of 2013. The space was previously an unused staff work area. Jackson Donley, a Teen Advisory Group member, approached the library with interest in doing his Eagle Scout project at the library. One of his ideas was to create a space specifically for teens. He met with the Director, Head of Youth Services, and the Teen Librarian, and obtained approval to use an old work room and create a teen lounge as his Eagle Scout project.

Jackson headed up the project working with the teen librarian, Steve Moser. They worked together to compile a list of what they'd like the room to look like and what would be included in the room. In the end, this 1200 square foot area was completely renovated and refurbished with teens doing most of the work, logging over 850 volunteer hours. The teens repainted all the walls, pulled up the old carpeting, scraped up the old carpet glue, purchased and assembled the furnishings, made the artwork, and arranged the space. New carpeting, a built-in projector, and surround system were installed, as was a deep sink. The new space appeals to teens and has helped to grow teen program attendance tremendously. The library provided the six computers, but the rest of the project was funded entirely through local grants and donations. The total project would have cost the library approximately \$18,000.

The Teen Spot Lounge offers area teens access to six iMac computers with printing capabilities and photo and video editing software, two video game systems hooked up to TVs, comfortable seating, café style seating, folding tables, stackable chairs, a collection of board games and



Lima Public Library Teen Advisory Board member Jackson Donley proposed the Teen Spot Lounge as his Eagle Scout project.

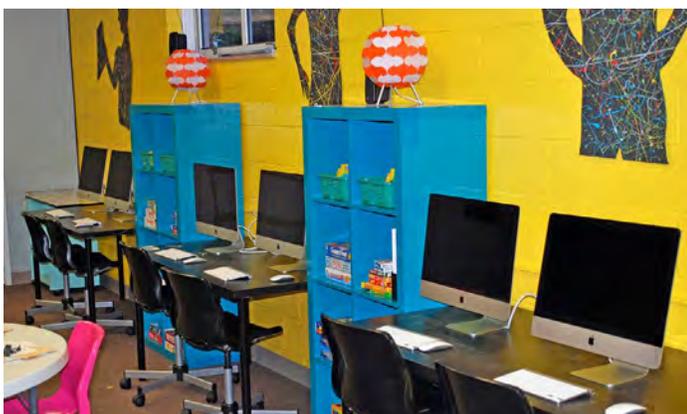


All photos courtesy of Lima Public Library

LIMA continued on p. 4



TAG member Jackson Donley and Teen Librarian Steve Moser cut the ribbon to officially open the Lima Public Library Teen Spot Lounge on August 29, 2013. Jackson and Steve are joined by other TAG members, Library Director Gary Fraser, visitors from the Lima Chamber of Commerce, and teen patrons of the library.



LIMA continued from p. 3

card games, basic arts and crafts supplies, decorations made by the teens, a quiet room for studying, lockers to store coats and book bags, a ceiling-mounted projector, surround sound system, the ability to project from any of the computers, and makerspace items (button-making, duct tape crafts, Perler bead crafts, 3D printing, LEGO robotics, paper crafts, writing and drawing supplies, paper roller coasters, stop-motion filming, photography, and video blogging).

Lima Public Library's teen programs are nearly all held in this new space. Program attendance has increased, with as many as 45 attending at some programs. The Lounge is open when staff is available, as well as for programs. Lima area teens take great pride in their area, helping to keep it clean and organized after programs. They help

set up for the programs and clean up afterwards. With all the equipment set up and ready to go in the room, staff time required to set up before programs and pack away equipment afterwards has been greatly reduced, allowing the library to offer additional programs with this newly available time. A typical week at Lima Public Library includes two or three teen programs in this new teen-created space.



Steven S. Moser

Staff Spotlight

Katy Klettlinger is a Library Consultant within the Library Programs and Development Department at the State Library of Ohio. She helps libraries with space planning, digitization, and strategic planning. Katy joined the staff in August 2014 and has over ten years of experience in the library profession. Before working at the State Library Katy was the Records Manager & Archivist in the Licking County Government. Prior to that, she worked at the Ohio History Connection (Ohio Historical Society at that time) as a Local Government Records Archivist and at the Peninsula Library and Historical Society as an Assistant Curator. Katy earned her Master of Library and Information Science and Bachelor of Science in Educational Studies degrees from Kent State University.

K
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Y



TEEN Space Planning

COMMON COMPONENTS

- Creative**
 - Performance Area
 - Makerspace
 - Music Studio
- Engagement**
 - Lounge Area
 - Interactive Gaming/Technology
 - Group Workstations
- Study/Reading**
 - Study Carrels
 - Individual Seating
 - Computer Area

BEST PRACTICES

Collect teen input for the design of the space

- Teens who like a space will attract their peers
- Create a teen advisory board to participate in designing the space
- Allow teens to name their space

Create a false sense of isolation

- Teens desire a space that is their own and fosters independence
- Ensure entire area can be discretely monitored from service desk
- Enclose the space with transparency in the design (ex. Cut-out circular wall seating, glass walls, steel grid partitions, etc.)

Construct a space that can be changed

- A small space that can be easily converted for individual and group activities
- Furniture, shelving, and partitions on casters can accommodate this need

Provide comfortable seating

- Select seating for lounging and studying
- Choose seating that is mobile
- Stackable seating will maximize space

Teenagers are innovative. Your teen space will routinely change to reflect their needs!

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Teen Space Planning

These spaces are not about separating teens and providing them with fancy digs. It is about providing them with access to information and providing them with a voice. Even a simple space can accomplish this task.

Katy Klettlinger
Library Consultant
Library Programs & Development
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Library Renovation Project



SCHOOL BOARD PRESENTATION

Archbishop Alter High School began a much-needed renovation to their Library Media Center during the summer of 2014. Phase one was completed before students started the school year and phase two was completed just recently over Christmas break. The following presentation was given by Christie Sanderman, Library Media Specialist, to the board to highlight the renovations and stress the

importance of the Library Media program at Alter High School.

View Christie's presentation at: <http://app.emaze.com/@AOFQFLOZ/renovation>

Christie is in her 4th year as Librarian at Alter and is looking forward to the next stages of empowering her students to be 21st century digital learners.



Christie Sanderman

Designing a library to meet the needs of the community it serves



By Desiree Thomas
Practicum Student
State Library of Ohio

Design features in libraries have changed dramatically in the last ten years. Libraries of the past were static buildings designed primarily to house collections of books. Due to a seismic shift in the use of digital technology and an increase in the amount of resources available online, libraries have seen their reference collections decrease as the use of their remote resources has increased. Library architects are now shifting their focus from book-centered layouts to multi-purposed layouts that include visual design elements and meeting space considerations as components in their development plans. Designing a visually appealing space that also provides access to digital resources is now at the forefront of the design process as library construction moves forward. Design elements included in new library construction range

from drive-up pickup windows, text-to-speech computer features for the visually impaired, video conferencing software and interactive whiteboard applications in meeting rooms. Each of these design features seeks to make the library a focal point for tech-savvy customers. Great libraries are designed to incorporate the needs of the communities they serve, with emphases on functionality and sustainability.

Consistently rated one of the nation's top libraries, Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) has focused considerable attention on providing services that support the developmental needs of children. The communities CML serves have shown an increased need for pre-literacy skills and access to technology. To meet the needs of these growing and thriving communities, CML has kicked off an aspirational building program that will rebuild or renovate ten library locations by 2020. The new libraries

will have updated technology geared towards helping children with kindergarten readiness and providing information for parents. The Driving Park, Whitehall, Parsons, Martin Luther King, Northside, Parsons, and Shepard branches were selected for new buildings largely due to the age of their buildings and the growing needs of their respective communities. The first building completed was the new Driving Park Branch.

The Driving Park neighborhood is located on the near southeast side of Columbus and takes its name from the Driving Park race track built in the 19th century. This urban landscape was home to World War I veteran Eddie Rickenbacker and noted inventor Granville T. Woods. The original Driving Park Branch, built in 1972, offered a compact 6,000 square feet and housed a Homework Help Center, ready to read corner, computers, and a modest collection.

Columbus Metropolitan Library, Driving Park Branch



All photos courtesy of Columbus Metropolitan Library

The design firm NBBJ was selected to design the new Driving Park Branch, which is located at 1422 E. Livingston Ave. and opened in July 2014. The new branch has 15,000 square feet and includes touch screen interactive boards, iPad stations in the children's area, a creative space to connect teens with technology, gaming consoles and approximately 50 commodity computers. NBBJ also installed a rain garden for sustainability purposes.

Designing a library that meets the needs of the community it serves and incorporates work flow designs for existing staff members can be a daunting task. Successful transitions require input from the community and public service staff members in the branch installation plan. Managing the transition from the old location to the new is manager Melvin Jones. Jones has worked for Columbus Metropolitan Library for over 30 years. When asked what the

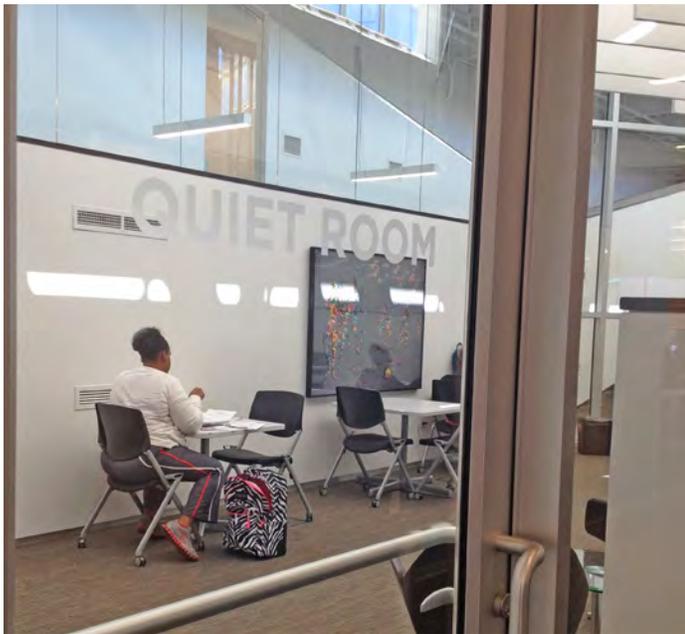
major differences in the use of the space have been since the transition, he spoke about the way the space was designed and how customers use it. "Customers (primarily kids) are adapting the space to their needs," Jones said. "Most are enjoying the ability to spread out and enjoy the increase of useful space"

The Driving Park community has definitely welcomed the increase in space. The new location is a few blocks west of its prior location and has seen a 50% increase in user visits, a 250% increase in meeting room reservations, and a nearly 300% usage increase in the Homework Help Center within the first three months of opening their doors. Jones noted that the increase in size has attracted new customers. "Those customers who seemed to either not relish the often crowded conditions in our old building have come to use our facilities again," he said. "Kids are drawn to the tech, and adults don't



have to travel as far for handling computer-oriented tasks." Along with more customer visits, the new Driving Park Branch has attracted the attention of students eager to use its quiet study rooms and updated technology, including faster Internet speeds. CML has developed a unique partnership with Columbus State Community College. All of the approximately 800 public PCs throughout the Columbus Metropolitan Library system are equipped with CSCC software. The Driving Park branch has a space dedicated to classes and other CSCC activities. CSCC students in distance learning programs can use any public PC computers to complete homework assignments, answer discussion questions, etc. Jones credited CML Public Services Director Shaunessy Everett with spearheading this collaboration. "Shaunessy has been the driving force behind establishing a partnership with CSCC," he said "We have sat down

DESIGNING continued on p. 8



Photos courtesy of Columbus Metropolitan Library

on many occasions to hammer out operational details with their administrators for mutual benefit".

The increase in space also means there are more service points for staff members to cover. Envisioning a new workflow for a newly inhabited space can be a challenge. "We have more stations to cover, resulting in more time spent on the floor," Jones said. "We have to be more adept at handling tech issues with the change and increase in new gadgetry. Three meeting rooms with a variety of both physical and technical components make for a more challenging environment, along with impressive circulation and registration increases."

The new Driving Park Branch was designed to incorporate and meet the needs of their community and transition into the new space was seen as a positive experience. "For the community, this building has proven so far to be a totally positive transition," Jones said. "Their needs were considered in all phases of this project." The new Driving Park Library offers creative design features and technology that are a welcomed addition to this wonderful community.

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Desiree Thomas and Mel Jones, Manager of the Driving Park Branch



Desiree Thomas is a graduate student in the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science and an Information Services Specialist at the Columbus Metropolitan Library, Reynoldsburg Branch. She was a practicum student at the State Library and working with Janet Ingraham Dwyer on the Choose To Read Ohio toolkits when she authored this article. Desiree will be graduating with her M.L.I.S. Photo: From State Library of Ohio

Teen Space Planning

BEST PRACTICES

Implement technology

- ◆ Create a separate computer space
- ◆ Use wireless technology
- ◆ Supply ample outlets

Consider acoustics

- ◆ Hard surfaces emit sound; soft surfaces absorb it
- ◆ Locate space away from flow of traffic
- ◆ Display signage to designate social and study areas

Color and light

- ◆ Use lighting to define functions of space such as small lamps to designate study places and open lighting to identify group spaces
- ◆ Within color scheme, choose a color that allows for flow from the teen area to adjacent areas in addition to the bold colors teens prefer



COST EFFECTIVE TRICKS

- ◆ Metal sheeting can serve as functional wall art and be used as a magnet or display board.
- ◆ Paint walls in patterns versus solid colors.
- ◆ Add tinted or patterned window film to interior windows or glass walls to create an individual space.
- ◆ Interlocking rubber floor tiles can separate a space.
- ◆ Update existing furniture to reflect teen style by adding new laminate or large decals to table tabletops or repaint furniture in a bold color using high gloss paint.

AVOID

- ◆ Hideout spaces
- ◆ Area that is too isolated and lacking windows
- ◆ Space adjacent to quiet areas
- ◆ Using same colors as other parts of library, particularly children's area
- ◆ Color schemes using only primary colors
- ◆ Adjacent to children's area unless a separate entrance and exit is available

Teen spaces are not about separating teens and providing them with fancy digs, it is about providing them with access to information and providing them with a voice. Even a simple space can accomplish this task.

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Photo: Toledo Lucas County Public Library

Turning On A Dime: Changing My Library on a Budget



By Jennifer Holt, School Librarian
Willoughby South High School

I had loved my eight years of teaching English at Willoughby South High School. Even so, at the end of the 2012-2013 school year, I was ready for a change. So was the library.

Our library—designed prior to the concept of the information commons—was a structured place for silent study, as was the norm for many decades. Anyone who peered through the large window at the front of the library would be greeted by tall shelves of books. Behind the shelves, at the far side of the library, were two ordered rows of ten rectangular tables spaced closely together for silent study. At the far back corners of the library were 32 desks lined neatly in 6 rows and a computer lab. In short, it was crowded with furniture that closed in patrons and kept them silently testing or studying.

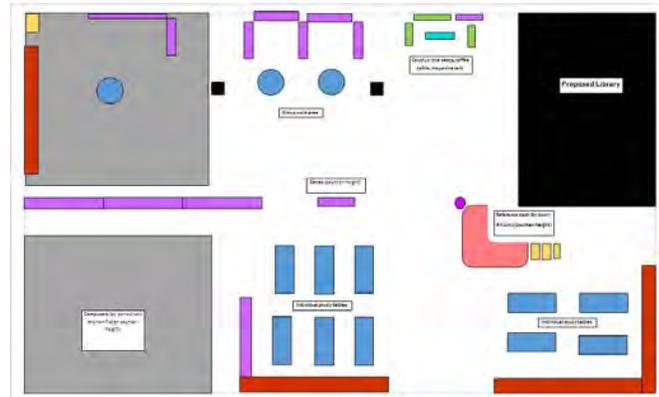
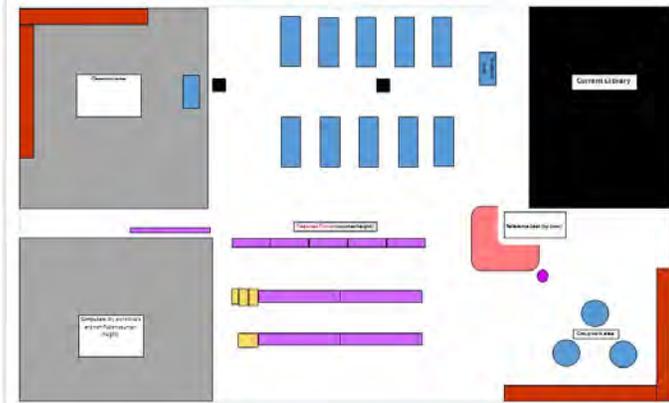
Immediately after accepting the WSHS school librarian position, I was told that we would be renovating the building. This meant that I would need to move all 11,497 books out of the library—a daunting task for any librarian, especially a first-year like myself. However, it also afforded me the opportunity to re-design my library into an information commons. I was overwhelmingly excited for the adventure that awaited me.

Asked to present a plan to the principal and custodial staff, I engaged the help of our head custodian to measure all walls, shelves, and furniture. I took detailed notes as we measured—notes which enabled me to

create a color-coded, to-scale diagram of the library and to create various potential layouts in Microsoft Publisher. Reflecting on my facilities design assignment from Dr. Meghan Harper's class at Kent, I knew I must consider my philosophy and goals, the areas I wished to create and their intended uses, the traffic flow, visibility, and atmosphere as I re-designed South High's library.

I envisioned it: my ideal library—an inspiring place that embodied free thinking, ideas-sharing, learning, collaborating. It would certainly not be quiet, but it would still promote reading and reflection. Extroverts and introverts, popular students and "fringe" students, leaders and readers—all would find a place in the oasis of learning that I would create. An idealist, I was overwhelmed and invigorated by the challenge of trying to realize the library in my mind's eye.

I arranged and re-arranged the furniture in Publisher, finally settling on several distinct areas, each with its own psychologically set noise level. Upon entering, students could choose to enter the main library or to work silently at one of four rectangular tables in the reference corner (a more remote corner—a haven for introverts, readers, studiers). Venturing into the main library area, students could work at a reasonable volume with a partner or a couple of friends at the rectangular tables in the center of the library (somewhat spread out and in the center of the library near the nonfiction books, to indicate that quiet talking was expected and encouraged). Groups working on projects or friends seeking louder discussions could find inspiration and space at the round tables in the fiction section (very spread out and near the fiction



Photos: Left page—Student staff; Above top row—L to R: Floor plan before, floor plan after; Bottom row—Book sale books, Students exhausted from move-in

books so as not to disturb students seeking books for classes and projects).

In the very back of the library, students could find a computer (when the lab was not booked by classes) or seek tutoring (at the very back, remote table in the fiction section where they would not feel watched). Finally, I determined to create a high interest reading area with bean bag chairs or couches to face the library window and be students' first view of the library as they passed it between classes. I wanted my library to entice students, to call out "learn in me...read in me...discuss in me..."

Having created my initial layout, I double-checked it for potential traffic flow issues, making sure students in each area would have easy access to the resources they would need: non-fiction books near the computers, fiction books near the round tables and the high interest reading area, reference books near studying students. I then made sure every area was clearly visible from the reference desk and reflected on the atmosphere I envisioned. Passing my mental checklist, my plan was presented to the principal for approval. He approved.

I began the process of moving the books out of the library. We did not have money for boxes, so I drafted a letter to businesses requesting that they donate to help us with our move. I solicited businesses at many nearby plazas and gathered the 350 or so boxes we would need.

I knew I could not move this library on my own, so I enlisted the help of willing students who were stuck at Saturday school. After two Saturday schools, more help was still needed. I asked current students if they could help me before and after school, and many did.

We did it, school ended, summer passed.

Again, it was crunch time. I emailed every student whose email address I had. I emailed advisors and student leaders from National Honor Society, Student Council, and Key Club. The S.O.S. sent out, I hoped and planned and prayed.

Move-in day came. Entering the library, I beheld twelve towering pallets: each stacked six feet tall with boxes of books to be unloaded, organized, and shelved. Empty shelves surrounded me. A tear trickled down my cheek. What if no one showed up?

Then came Katie, bearing doughnuts. Students to the rescue! I breathed powerful relief alongside Bavarian cream. We could do this. Katie, Nora, Macey, Nate, Julia, Emma, Ana, Chelsey: so many students gave up their last week of summer to help me. With doughnuts and determination, we muscled through this mental and physical challenge. I have never been more thankful.

Having made it through the re-design and move, I set

TURNING continued on p. 12



TURNING continued from p. 11

about recruiting an excellent student library staff. More than thirty students chose to aide for me, and we worked together to create an engaging, student-centered atmosphere.

The first step was updating our physical resources. An INFOhio Age of Collection report revealed that two thirds of my collection was pre-1980's and one fourth was pre-1960's. Only 688 of these 7,496 books had ever circulated since our 2005 automation. Clearly it was time to weed.

Although we had weeded some books during the move, haste had prevented us from being anywhere near thorough about deselection. I researched weeding, and we tackled one section at a time—my students helping to set aside books that were falling apart or contained outdated information. We moved from 500's and 600's (science, medicine, drugs, nutrition, technology) to 900's (travel and geography) to 700's (sports, games, music) to 300's (controversial issues...since nuclear war is no longer the major issue) to fiction. If it was MUSTY, we discarded it from the system, removed all identifying information from it, and offered it to teachers or recycled it. But we had been underfunded for so long that instead of looking "new," the library merely looked "less old."

By this time, students were using the library more, and I began to notice a problem: about one out of eleven books that students searched for could not be found. Our catalog was not accurate. My student library staff and I decided to conduct an inventory—the first since our automation. One student in particular, Nate, helped me head up this manual inventory. I printed a shelf-list and enlisted the help of approximately forty National Honor Society students and explained the process they would use to highlight missing resources and to place mismarked or misshelved books on designated tables. Nate led them through this process. He then spent many weeks leading other student library staff members in locating missing resources and problem-solving to make this inventory successful. I was teaching various research projects and NoodleTools at this time and could not have completed this inventory without Nate and my student library staff members.

The catalog was updated, but we still needed new books. And we had no budget. A solution presented itself. A freshman student library staff member excitedly told me about the BYOB (bring your own box) sale at the Willowick Public Library. She opened my eyes to the glory of public library book sales.





All photos provided by Willoughby South High School
 Photos: Left Page—Moving in
 Left—Students assembling furniture; Above—View of couch area after assembly

Just...wow. We had no budget. Yet, I bought approximately 1,800 new fiction books and 500 new nonfiction books—all published recently—all for a total of \$100. The books that no longer circulate at public libraries vastly surpassed the books I had chosen to keep. By far. I spent four cents per book. I spent four cents per book plus many, many hours of processing and cataloging. My student library staff now had a new task: processing the new books and giving them to me to catalog. I spent the entire two weeks of AP testing cataloging all the new books. Though the cataloging was mind-numbing, it was worthwhile and rewarding.

Only one aspect was missing from my original plan: an inviting reading area. Collaborating with several colleagues, I wrote a grant to create this area. The Rebel Moms funded our grant, and I purchased a couch, two loveseats, and a coffee table. This area—alongside the colorful student sculptures and artwork the art teacher and I had displayed in the library—made the library finally feel inviting, inspiring, exciting.

We finished the year knowing we had done it. We had re-invented the library. The space, the resources, the atmosphere—all were transformed.

Seeing that students and teachers were learning and benefiting from the library's resources, the principal

approved my proposed 2014-2015 budget. The senior class left me money too. I finally had money to develop the library's collection.

Because of my students' and my effort and determination, my colleagues voted last year to honor me with one of the four district-wide awards given at our 2014-2015 beginning of the year assembly. They named me Certified Non-teacher of the Year.*

This affirmation of my program means so much to me—primarily because it is a concrete reminder of the students who dedicated their vision, time, and hearts to the library. These students have forever changed and inspired me. They are the true library at South High.

*This award is for staff members who are certified but are not solely in the classroom.

To view Jennifer Holt's "Turn on a Dime" presentation from the OELMA and NEO-RLS collaborative workshop, visit <http://tinyurl.com/TurnOnADime>



Jennifer Holt

To learn more about the Willoughby South High School Library visit their website at: <https://sites.google.com/site/mrsholtenglish/>

library refresh

By Jamie Riley, School Library Media Specialist
Eli Pinney Elementary School, Dublin City

Developing a Vision

I began working as a media specialist at my current school two years ago and at that time I knew that my students were incredibly lucky to have such a large, open library space. I also realized we were fortunate to have a computer for every student, a story pit area, lots of tables for group work, and a great collection of books. Before moving into a position as a media specialist, I taught third grade for many years, and my vision of our library program continues to evolve. As it evolved during my first year as the media specialist, I began to realize that the library space wasn't meeting our needs, even though it had so many positive attributes. It was time to rethink the media center space. My students felt the same way and they have played an integral role in how our library space has and will continue to change. I hope to share with you the process we went through and to document the ways our space has changed.

We decided to call our redesign process a "refresh" because refresh means to provide new vigor and energy, to stimulate, and to make fresh again. My first year as a media specialist, I started the process by doing some research about library spaces. I read books and articles, watched webinars, and visited lots of public and school library spaces (including some media centers in our district that had the same layout as ours). I had strong administrator support for this research as part of my ongoing professional development plan and evaluation. If you are embarking on a project like this for your library I recommend reading [The Third Teacher](#) and [The Language of School Design: Design Patterns for the 21st Century](#). Both of these resources apply to all educational spaces. For redesigning library spaces specifically, the books [Library Spaces for 21st Century Learners: A Planning Guide for Creating New School Library Concepts](#) and [The Learning Commons: 7 Simple Steps to Transform your Library](#) will be helpful. Demco also has a great webinar series for library media specialists looking to make changes to their spaces (<http://ideas.demco.com/webinars-category/>). I highly recommend watching the following webinars about library spaces: Rethink and Re-envision; Dramatic Redesigns of Existing Spaces; Zoning in on Children's Spaces; Innovations in Teen Spaces; Collaborative Spaces; Make it Last; Choosing

Colors, Fabrics, and Finishes. As I did my research I began to develop a vision for what our library could become.

Planting a Seed

The next step was to add student input to my vision of the library space. Based on many ideas in the book *Library Spaces for 21st Century Learners*, I began to work with the fourth graders in our school. First, these students took a survey with questions based on those presented in the book, but more tailored for our elementary learners and library users. Two important ideas came from these surveys: students wanted comfortable spaces to sit and read in the library, and they wanted more color in our drab space. Next, I worked with the same students in small focus groups to brainstorm possibilities for our library. During these sessions all ideas were accepted, including a loft space and a slide so that students could get to the library from the second floor. A big idea that came from these sessions was flexibility of the space and we began to think about creating spaces that could serve more than one purpose in our library. Finally, I showed students pictures of many library spaces that I had collected using Pinterest. Students gave feedback on colors, furniture, and space design. Results from this activity were very mixed (everyone had a strong opinion), but doing it caused students to begin to think like designers, and as a result they became invested in and excited about the project. They also began sharing our work with their parents. During this phase of the project I also did a brief presentation to our PTO, sharing our process and the ideas that our students and I had developed. My administrator had also been planting seeds about the project to this parent group.

During the beginning of my second year as the media specialist, our PTO approached me about granting the money from their large fundraising project for that year to begin our library "refresh." I truly believe that we would



All photos courtesy of Eli Pinney Elementary School



Before



After



not have been given such a wonderful opportunity without the input from our students and the support of my administrator. Their enthusiasm was contagious and because of it our parents wanted to see our ideas bloom.

Watching it Bloom

After our funding was secure, I began to work with a designer who could help turn our vision into a reality. Luckily, she was a parent of students at our school and she worked for the company that provides furniture to our schools. She was a great fit for our project because she was invested in our school and she knew so many things that I did not in terms of rules of our school district, state regulations, and how to even begin such a project. I met with our designer many times. She listened to all of our ideas and helped to guide me to further develop the following overall goals for the project: to define different zones within the library in order to promote creativity, communication, and collaboration; to design a space with better flexibility and function; to create a more colorful and inviting space; and to provide students with soft seating and spaces to read and work.

Along the way I gave updates to my students, administrator, and the PTO. I also collaborated with our art teacher to

develop some of the zones in the library. The designer and I also created boards with color schemes and our students voted on the colors for the space. In the end our project was completed this past summer. Our students and parents have very favorably received our changes. They like the new colors and students love having a space to sit and read. (We are a library after all!) We have been using the space for a little over two months now and our space is meeting the goals we set for it. We have flexible seating that can be moved to accommodate a variety of groups and needs. Our library tables are on casters and able to be moved for small and large groups to work, or out of the way completely for staff meetings. After we moved shelving and added our new furniture, there is a much better flow of traffic. We are also able to hold class in several zones within the library and to use these zones for other purposes, as well.

Next steps and Starting Small

In our space, the next step will be to design a digital makerspace in the area that was formerly known as "The Story Corner." This area is our story pit area and has largely been underused. The hope is that this area of the library will allow students to foster creativity and collaboration. So

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Transitioning from Media Center to Learning Commons on a Shoestring Budget

By Vicky Mendoza
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Before we began the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program in the fall of 2012, our students at Indian Hill High School in Cincinnati were borrowing laptops from our library media center. I also made myself very accessible to teachers and their classes for training on databases, website evaluation, new Web tools, etc.

More and more, after those initial orientation seminars, teachers booked the media center just to use our computers to write papers, use Excel, or get on the Web. I could see traffic dwindling as students started bringing their own devices. For convenience, teachers would keep their students in their rooms. Clearly, we'd need to draw our once-captive, soon-to-be-web-liberated audience to the media center. I would need to reinvent our space, and myself.

I heard about "learning commons" through blogs and my Personal

Learning Networks. This notion intrigued me. The Learning Commons: Seven Steps to Transform Your Library by Pamela Colburn Harland particularly galvanized my realization that the learning commons concept is about the media center's transformation from mere repositories for print and media, into dynamic and inviting spaces. It would be about the transition from guardian of books and overdue fines to emphasizing the media specialist's role in helping students and teachers navigate. It was less about searching for information, and more about sifting and discerning the right information from the deluge flooding from all the emerging hardware, software, and web-based resources.

With PowerPoint in tow, I pitched an idea to my principal and superintendent. The goal would be to have more open and flexible areas. To aid their imagination, I had a volunteer architectural firm render sketches that visualized project collaboration booths; a comfy-chair casual area that aimed for posh and no shush; and a fun playroom of a media production

studio. I was excited by the principal's and superintendent's clearly intrigued attention.

Given my tight budget constraints, though, I had to use some creative ways to make the transformation happen. Creativity here meant part-serendipity, and part improvisation. Luckily, my media aide's father, Hap Pendleton, owner of Pendleton and Sears Architects, along with his designer Jackie Klein, gifted us with a beautiful rendering of my ideas into a coherent architectural vision.

Weeding books was the first thing that needed to be done. We got students to help us move and compact our collection. With so much emptied shelf space, I asked Maintenance to split our book cases in half and take out the shelves, and voilà! The remaining skeletons were suddenly chic and popular high-top tables.

I then started writing proposals for funds from our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) which generously bought high stools for the "new" high-top tables; a couch, some comfy chairs, and





end tables. The Indian Hill Television Network studio donated some of their extra equipment. With funds for audio and video equipment, we transformed a former back-room storage area into a media production studio.

Instead of buying expensive commercial partitions, our creative and wonderful Maintenance

folks used drywall to build two collaboration booths. The PTO donated external monitors with shelves, plus dry erase boards for the booths. Rummaging through the building turned up extra conference tables for those booths.

Teachers and students seem to have taken naturally to the idea of a learning commons. Kids are flocking to our casual area for conversation and relaxing. Teachers are sending small groups down to work collaboratively in our project booths. Both faculty and students are exploring the media production studio's features.

What's in the future? We'd like to add more flexible spaces including a lecture/workshop space, electronics and media. Also, I'm exploring the idea of adding a makerspace area

for students to design, prototype and create objects. I'm feeling more and more comfortable with striving to be relevant; continually exploring and evolving; and discovering the dynamics of new interactions.



Vicky Mendoza



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far we have opened up the space by moving shelving and we have added a whiteboard, projector, green screen, and a mobile supply cart. I hope to work with students this year to design digital maker challenges they can create using the space, including stop motion animation, green screen movie making, comic creation, and coding.

If you are hoping to implement changes in your library, but can't undergo a large project, I would

recommend thinking about a small zone in your library to change to meet a goal that you have. For example, I also wanted students to become more independent users of the library as part of having better functionality. We implemented small changes like self-checkout, better signage, and book bins to make easy reader chapter books more accessible. I would also recommend gathering student, administrator, and parent input and support along the way and

sharing your vision for a better space when you have an opportunity. Even if there are not funds at your school or library right now, you never know when one of your supporters can come up with a way to make your vision bloom.

You can check out before and after pictures of our space at <http://bit.ly/epesrefresh>.

