pima county public library

community impact plan

THIRD YEAR REPORT 2014-2015
In 2014-15 we review the final year of Pima County Public Library’s first Community Impact Plan, and its focus areas: Learn, Create, and Connect.

For three years we have designed an array of services: services that make learning fun; services that encourage growth; services that transcend barriers and improve lives; and services that build a community of readers.

Our success and impact in Pima County centers on several key elements:

**We address our community's biggest challenges and its highest aspirations.** We excel in the creation of sustainable services for Pima County’s diverse population.

**Our staff members are passionate, professional, and dedicated.** We are viewed as a critical part of and an important asset in Pima County because of staff who believe in what they do and care about the community they serve.

**We have grown our partnerships** with government, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations to address needs, start important conversations, and produce valuable outcomes. As a result, the Library reflects and is connected to Pima County.

Once again, we have many good stories to tell.

Melinda S. Cervantes
Executive Director
View of Downtown Tucson behind the Joel D. Valdez Main Library.
In 2014, our staff teamed up to shift the local business, nonprofit and job climate through education, knowledge-sharing and collaboration. The goal: to craft innovation spaces that can help our community work.

With funding from Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Arizona State Library, Idea+Space was born.

Idea+Space has gained solid footing in the larger system of entrepreneurship in Pima County, offering a unique blend of services for entrepreneurs, small business, freelancers, community benefit organizations, and job seekers. The Idea+Space project has given our community a flexible space on the second floor of the Joel D. Valdez Main Library to connect with others, research and develop ideas, and put their plans into action.

- One of the outcomes in the initial stages of the project was a very successful meeting and networking Lean In Circle which has garnered a regular membership of over 100 women.
- Current programs include SCORE’s (Service Core of Retired Executives) Simple Steps to Starting Your Business, Tax Basics for New Business presented by the IRS, and the Women’s Business Center program, Launch Your Business.
- SCORE and Accion, a nonprofit micro lending organization, have established office hours at the Library to provide an immediate expert connection to business resources.
- Library staff are available for drop in times for job seekers and small business owners, a grants lab, and the always popular Catalyst Café to support work and entrepreneurship, and fuel ideas and innovation on a monthly basis.
- Over 2,000 people had attended Idea+Space programs only a few months after its opening.
Library staff received training in the Career Development Facilitator Program, which emphasized the role of libraries in delivering online tools and extra support for job seekers. As a result, the Pima County Public Library designed and now offers Job Help in a Box.

Job Help in a Box is designed for any library staff member to use with any customer who is at least 16 years old and wants to find employment. Diverse populations within this age range have unique barriers to employment. These barriers can be identified and mitigated using the tools from the box that can be tailored for a unique community.
We partnered with the Metropolitan Education Commission’s Regional College Access Center to facilitate college readiness by hosting an SAT/ACT preparation workshop.

Students experienced what it would be like to go into the test environment, and they received a binder with materials related to test-taking techniques, stress-relief, the nuances of the SAT and ACT, and information about the practice exams and study guides that the Library provides online and in print. Parents have reported that their students went home more confident about the tests and were excited about future possibilities. In fact, one young participant brought her dad back into the Library after the workshop to show him what she had learned on the Regional College Access Center website.

We continue to provide high-quality reading tutoring for people of all ages in our ReadStrong Program.

Library partner Literacy Connects created the program’s curriculum, which encompasses strength-based and student-centered strategies driven by students’ reading level, interests, and goals. As a result, our tutors have the knowledge and confidence necessary to assist children, teens, and adults who struggle to read.

Whether the student is a second grader who is not meeting state reading standards, an adult who is struggling to get his GED, or a teen who is not able to keep up with the reading assignments because comprehension is a challenge, ReadStrong tutors reach people at all stages in life.

Pima County Public Library worked with Make Way for Books to expand Storytime and early childhood and parent engagement services for the Talk, Read, Sing, Play, Everywhere, Everyday initiative. Training, demonstrations, and classes helped us reach out to parents with new tools.

More than 800 people have already signed on to be part of a network of empowered parents who are making the way for reading readiness. As a result of their participation, 100 percent of parents and grandparents representing all socioeconomic levels reported that they felt very comfortable reading to their children and promoting early literacy daily.
CREATING A COMMUNITY OF READERS

Our surveys reveal that because of the Library's Summer Reading Program kids and families enjoy reading more, and they spend more time picking out books at the Library. They also spend extra time reading together, which builds kids' positive esteem as readers.

During the summer, we aim to engage children in reading for fun so they can succeed in school and life. With this summer's superhero theme, Every Hero Has a Story, we worked with school teachers and administrators in the Amphitheater Public School District to reach our goal and take on the “summer slide.”

Educators helped us align our Summer Reading Program’s activities with the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. We also designed a digital packet that teachers could print out and share with their students prior to the end of the school year.

The activities on the Summer Reading Program game board tracker were designed to give parents and students a spring board to dive into reading and thinking at a deeper level, regardless of whether the child participated in activities inside or outside the Library. Another thing patrons appreciate about summer at the Library is the fun learning events.

SummerMania!! brings together writing and drawing workshops, author talks, gaming, costumes, free book giveaways, and learning in three fun-filled afternoons. When our SummerMania!! team met with the partners at Pima Community College in September 2014 about hosting the final MegaMania!! event for the third consecutive year, the college staff told us that they were already getting questions about when the next event would be.

Kids, teens, adults, friends, and families enjoy themselves, and the Library gets to show off what great work we do to bring community together around reading. Pima Community College gets to show off how welcoming their campus is to people who may not have been there before.

“Librarians... transform visits into teachable moments that connect children’s experience to deeper learning and knowledge.”

—Growing Young Minds, Institute of Museum and Library Services
create

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Connected Learning is realized when a young person is able to pursue a personal interest or passion with the support of friends and caring adults and can link this learning and interest to academic achievement.

Our Youth Design Team researched youth voice, created and distributed a survey, held focus groups, and started talking to other youth groups in the community.

The Youth Design Team discovered several things about their peers during the planning process:

Teens:

- Prioritize college and career counseling and opportunities— including opportunities to be entrepreneurs.
- Want interaction with mentors who have experience and skills, and who relate well to them.
- Are interested in opportunities that inspire youth voice and include connections between different youth groups.
- Are looking for safe, welcoming spaces.

Pima County Public Libraries will provide opportunities for individuals to be creative, promote 21st century learning skills, and increase intergenerational exchange.
SPACE FOR TEENS TO CREATE

The incorporation of Connected Learning principles has the Youth Design Team asking “why” questions as they imagine the possibilities. As a result, the team’s conversation changed from making sure we had bean bag chairs in the space to figuring out ways to connect the youth groups in our community in order to support youth in Pima County.

Our staff stresses the importance of involving the youth to help the Library articulate its vision and mission, giving staff and youth an opportunity to focus on the big picture goals for the teen space and for the community.

The Library will support the Youth Design Team in its mission to provide the opportunity for young people to explore and develop their curiosities in collaboration with adult and peer mentors.

In 2015, we continued to outfit the 101 Space to be the space designed by teens just for teens who want to take advantage of innovative learning opportunities that will open up a world of possibilities.

We will pay attention to what teens are saying they need and build bridges between the 101 and the Idea+Space business and career services to help teens find their purpose, explore careers, and pursue the realization of new endeavors.
connect

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We position the Library to be a part of building better things for the community by investing our services, staff, and facilities in local priorities. The work of Pima County government, local civic agencies, and individuals whose outcomes and successes ensure sustainable benefits for the community is our work, too.

In its third year, the Pima County Library Nurse Program has grown to serve a broader segment of the community. The Library Nurse Program received the Health Association Public Health Nursing Lillian Wald Service Award this year, and was recognized for its creative innovation in the field of public health and for being an exemplar role model in improving access and quality of care for the individuals, families, and neighborhoods of Pima County. Dr. Francisco Garcia, Pima County Health Department Director and Chief Medical Officer said, “I am so proud of these accomplishments and the positive impact this program has made on our community.”

At the First International Seed Library Forum, which was hosted by the Library in May, people representing nine countries and the United States came to the Old Pueblo to engage and share ideas about the importance of free seed sharing and regional bio-diversity.

Panel discussions covered a wide range of topics including: increasing the quality and diversity of community seed resources, increasing access for low income households, and nurturing the next generation of seed savers in school gardens. The forum also included a seed swap, the screening of the documentary, "Seeds of Time," and a literary reading event.

The Pima County Board of Supervisors proclaimed the week of May 3-9, 2015, as Seed Library Week.

SERVICE

Accomplishments:
- Civic engagement
- Content and collections

Pima County Public Libraries create environments in which people of all ages and from all backgrounds feel they have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

Libraries provide opportunities for people to explore, become informed, and to feel self-directed in an atmosphere of increased technology and digitization.
COMMUNITY IMPACT

At the Job Connectors Meetup, now in its eighth iteration, the Pima County Public Library hosts organizations from across the county as they establish best practices for helping job seekers. Representatives from different organizations worked side by side to create tools for use by everyone who assists job seekers. This year’s focus was to retain employees and keep them at work. The feedback was positive and included comments such as, “Looking forward to the next one!” and “It was great to work with people from other organizations and learn how to network.”

Our first Laid-Off Camp was a huge success for us and for local job seekers. Expert presenters offered hands-on workshops and advice about identifying work styles, leveraging volunteer work for employment, using social media and storytelling in job searches, and coping with burnout in the job search. Throughout the day, many participants met one-to-one in brief sessions with human resources specialists from the Society for Human Resource Management to get individualized assistance. Overall, both presenters and participants found the Laid-Off Camp a valuable day of sharing experiences, strategies, and resources for success.

Based on feedback surveys, 100 percent of those responding felt inspired and energized, felt supported by others, learned new resources, and are more likely to use Idea+Space resources. For those attending the entire day, they felt more connected with others. "A shot in the arm...it gave me willingness to go on," one participant wrote on the evaluation. "This far exceeded my expectations... It was the best day of career workshops I've ever experienced in my life," said another at the end of the day.

PresenterFest, which is new to the Library, was designed to advance programming that responds to community challenges and changes. Our staff scouts out potential talent, approaching sectors in the innovation and education community to gauge interest and encourage referrals. We look for talent, skills, and hidden community treasures.

At PresenterFest, Library staff and members of the public were invited to speed-date with potential presenters, watching demonstrations and scoring their proposed programs. A program’s scheduling power is decided by the Library’s audience during the Fest event, and its staying power is tested in the Library’s venues.

PresenterFest gets staff and customers in on the act to bring fresh, educational, fun programs to the Library every day.
COLLECTIONS AND CONTENT

“I love the new website! It’s intuitive, sleek, and a pleasure to use. A change for the better.”

With the launch of the Library’s new website in January 2015, it is easier than ever to highlight the staff’s expertise, recommend great reads, and promote library services for people to discover. By tracking analytics and search data on the site to see which parts of the website—and what kinds of topics—are getting noticed, we can offer a dynamic library experience that goes beyond books. Our website publicizes our electronic content and online services and makes everything easy to find.

For the Summer Reading Program, website visitors could see all of the information bundled together in one place and easily discover what might be interesting or meaningful to them. We offered everything from Summer Reading information in Spanish and how to volunteer at the library to informing parents about how the Library helps reduce summer slide. Our website also highlighted special events, reading lists, fun and interactive polls, and the visits from artists and authors who appeared at SummerMania!!

The public noticed. All of the author and artist panels were chock full of SummerMania!! fans.

Connecting in at the Joel D. Valdez Main library.
During the adoption of the Library’s budget this year, we completed a **Library Utilization Study**. The Utilization Study is a comprehensive report of our services, and provides preliminary recommendations and conclusions about our services and service centers that will help us make decisions.

During seven regional community forums that we held, we focused outward, considering the impact that the Library has on the community.

As architect Frank Lloyd Wright advised, “Always design a thing by considering its next larger context.”

We considered Pima County Public Library’s design in that larger context and with the highest possible outcome—an iPad on a laptop bar, a laptop bar within a library, a library in the community, all libraries in the plans for Pima County, and finally, Pima County Public Library with the community and its residents in the future.

According to County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry, “All of our libraries provide important services. Some are busier than others and some provide more than one type of library service related to the location of the library.”
As we looked at how people were using and experiencing our libraries, we also asked the question, “If our library was 100 percent successful, what would that look like in our community?”

In addition to the regional community forums, our staff participated in workshops which focused on the positive impact that we want to have in our community.

The Pima County Public Library will publish our new Community Impact Plan in 2016, and all of our planning efforts will reflect the way we can impact our community.

We will continue to build community and connections around everyone’s experience, supporting the hopes and dreams of Pima County residents. Because at the Library, we bring possibilities to life and help people change their lives for the better.