How Libraries in Alabama are Partnering with Local Media Specialists, Teachers, and Schools

We received several great commentaries on school media specialist/public Librarian partnerships, we decided to focus on YOUR stories in this issue.

Bessemer Public Library

Bessemer Public Library has a great partnership with our local school media specialists. The Library has a big event each September called “Night Out @ the Library.” School media specialists and students come out to the Bessemer Public Library to sign up for library cards, get program information, tour the library, and donate canned goods. Many of our students now know about their local library and have library cards. This event usually brings in over 100 students and their families.

Not all of the school media specialists participated when the event first started 3 years ago. However, word got around with the help of one of the key media specialists and currently all of the school media specialists attend. The students get extra credit for showing up so that gives a huge incentive to attend this event.

We do not actually create library cards on this night because it would be too overwhelming for our small staff. The staff gathers the applications and groups them by school name. The library cards are processed at a later time and then delivered to the school media specialists to be given out to the students.

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At this time, there have not been any barriers for this event. This partnership was built by implementing aggressive outreach to the schools to make sure they knew about their library and that the kids knew I was their librarian. Once we showed how much we care and want the local schools to use our services to support their educational goals, it lead to being contacted by school officials. The key is to first build a rapport with the local school community and stay consistent. Let them know that you value their patronage and they will reciprocate.

-Megan Green

Homewood Public Library

We have been partnering with Edgewood Elementary School on a monthly book club for 3rd-5th graders called Paper Bag Book Club. Each month we highlight a different genre. In September, it was Fantasy and in October it was Mystery books. The kids bring a book that they have read in that genre, put it in a paper bag and write a teaser for the book on a sheet of paper. Then we divide into groups, do some fun icebreakers, then go around and talk about our books. We don’t give too much away when talking about the books, so that the kids can try to guess what the book is before they take it out of the paper bag and reveal the book.

Laura Tucker and Molly Saunders from Homewood Library go to Edgewood Elementary School’s Library with Fran Woodruff, the school librarian. They bring snacks and bottled water and recommended reading flyers and bookmarks and paper bags. Fran provides the space, the sheets, the pencils, and helps lead the groups. Fran also promotes the program in her school and signs out the permission forms for parents to sign. The kids stay from 3-3:45 p.m. when Fran takes them outside to carpool or signs them into EDP after the book club.

So far we have over 40 kids attend each month - which has been amazing! Partnering with Fran and Edgewood has allowed us to meet the kids where they are. What we’ve learned is that these kids love to read and are excited about reading. However, they are hampered to come into the library after school due to after school activities, EDP, and getting their parents on board for transportation. It is truly the magic of our partnership with school librarian, Fran Woodruff, that made this happen. She believed in our idea, took it to her principal, got it approved and set out to get the kids in her school excited about it.

-Laura Tucker
Irondale has partnerships with several schools: Here are just a couple:

Book character costumes rented from Costume Specialists have been a wonderful tool in building relationships with the elementary schools in our city. Irondale Public Library’s children’s librarian Tamara Hue contacts the schools’ principals and/or librarians once or twice per year to offer visits from a popular character (usually played by homeschooled teen volunteers). No one has ever turned down a character visit.

Our most fruitful elementary school relationship has been with Irondale Community School.

We are fortunate that the faculty and administration at Irondale Community School (3rd-5th grade) are enthusiastic about partnering with the Irondale Public Library. In 2013, Charles Yeager, who was then principal of the school, contacted the library about starting the Irondale Public Library Club as part of the school’s monthly club program. The club is currently led by Tamara Hue, hosted by exceptional education teacher Allison Reed, and has fourteen members. Each month, Tamara does a quick book talk, the students discuss books they have read recently, and they do an activity that typically ties in to reading or IPL programs. Favorite activities include field trips to the library, programming Ozobots, making book character sculptures, and making/playing a life-size game of Candy Land.

The connections that IPL has been able to make with teachers and principals through these visits have led to Tamara being invited back to do outreach at events such as parent nights, family events, and student clubs. The elementary schools also allow us to send monthly IPL calendars home with every student, and they display our posters advertising upcoming events. Children who attend library programs often mention having seen the posters at their school.
STEAMing Along

Fun Holiday How-to (and it could make a great gift!)

Homemade Snow Globe

You will need:
A jar with a tight-fitting lid
Things to put inside the jar
Fake snow or glitter
Distilled water
Liquid glycerin
Hot glue gun
Sandpaper
Spray paint for lids (optional)

General Information/Ideas:

Anything from a baby food jar to a pickle or pepper jar will work. You can use plastic or ceramic figurines, plastic greenery, anything that is not affected by water. You can test out and item by leaving it in water for a couple of hours and see what happens. Here is something that makes it even more personal. Parents/caregivers can bring a picture of their child, copy it on a printer, and cut the child’s image out of the picture. Laminate this image and cut it out leaving a sealed edge. See the picture for an example (pretty cute, huh?)

Step One (optional): Spray paint the outside of the lid. You can skip this step, but the finished look is much better, particularly if it is being given as a gift.

Step Two: Create your scene on the underside of the jar lid. Rough up the inside of the jar lid with a piece of sand paper and so the glue adheres better. Use hot glue to secure the scene. If you have things with wide, flat bases, they’re easy to just glue right on. But if you have something like flat pictures, or a tree sprig with a tiny twig at the bottom, it is easier to have something like little rocks (the blue things you see in the photos; are aquarium rocks) to help keep things in place. It will make sense when you do it, but
basically you can pile some glue down there, put your object in, and then mound some pebbles around it to adhere everything together as the glue dries. It is important to remember to keep things away from the edges enough that you can still screw the lid onto the jar, so don’t fill the entire base with glue or rocks. When the glue is dry turn the lid upside down and shake it a few times to make sure nothing falls off!

Step Three: The next step is filling up your jar with distilled water, almost to the very top. Add the glycerin to the water (about 2-3 teaspoons for each cup of water.) Then add the snow or glitter in small amounts; you can always add more if it is not enough. Make sure you leave some air space or the globe won’t work as well. If you have time, try it without the glycerin first; then add it. You can see the difference in how the “snow” moves.

Step Four: Screw on the lid, turn upside down and watch it snow!


Have you ever noticed how sometimes objects of the same size weigh different amounts? That’s because of density. We figure out an object’s density by comparing its mass to its volume. Mass refers to the amount of matter that makes up an object. Volume refers to the amount of space an object occupies. Compare a rock and a marshmallow that are the same size (having equal volume), which is heavier? The rock is, because it has more mass. That means the rock has greater density than the marshmallow because it has more mass (amount of matter) in the same volume (occupied space).

Liquids have density, too. The denser a liquid is, the easier it is for an object to float on. Glycerin is denser than water; so after we added it to the snow globe, the snow fell more slowly. Try adding a few more drops of glycerin. What did you notice? You should have found that the more glycerin you add, the slower the snow falls.

Books:

Captain Kidd’s Crew Experiments with Sinking and Floating; Weakland, Mark; 978-1404872363.

Things That Float and Things That Don’t; Adler, David A.; 978-0823431762.

What Floats? What Sinks? A Look at Density; Boothroyd, Jennifer; 978-0761360551.

Who Sank the Boat?; Allen, Pamela; 978-0698113732.
Actually, two words: TAKE ACTION!

Unrestricted Internet access lies in the balance. On December 14th, the FCC - Federal Communications Commission - will meet to discuss and perhaps vote to repeal Net Neutrality.

The Internet is the “free press” of the digital age. What are your expectations when you go online? You expect to be able to access any website you want. You expect that your provider isn’t messing with your data, blocking content or apps, or controlling your access to information. In short, you want control over your Internet experience. Currently, Internet providers are considered “common carriers” which essentially means that they provide “essential services” and have to treat all traffic neutrally. If Net Neutrality is repealed, providers such as Verizon, AT&T, and Comcast could slow down data that was competing with “their” data, and/or speed up data from a company who paid them more, or just block data from sites that don’t “reflect their values”.

Ajit Pai, the chairman of the FCC, has said that undoing the net neutrality rules was his top priority. Pai claims that this would allow the government to stop micromanaging the Internet.

A simple example would be this: electricity companies are considered common carriers. What if the company down the street from your home was able to purchase the right to have electricity delivered to their business quicker than it was delivered to your home. Your home would be experiencing a brown or black-out, while those who paid for the privilege would be flooded with light.

What does the repeal of Net Neutrality mean for libraries? First and foremost, the loss of intellectual freedom - the “right of all peoples to seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction.” Since repeal will mean that some companies could have increased speed due to willingness to pay their ISP for this “luxury”, libraries could be relegated to Internet “slow lanes.” Many rural libraries suffer from limited access due to lack of broadband and repeal could exacerbate this problem. Libraries who apply for e-rate reimbursement and grants may lose this ability.

What can you and your patrons do? The time for online public comment to the FCC is over. You can call 1-202-418-1000 Voicemail of the FCC and say you oppose the repeal of net neutrality. However, there are also things Congress can do to stop this from happening. It is imperative that you call or write your representatives in the House and Senate and tell them what you think before the FCC vote on December 14th. At this late date, calling might be the best action, but letters would make a difference, too. The websites, Fight for the Future and EFF Action have some suggestions for a letter or call.

For a phone call: “I support Title Two net
neutrality rules and I urge you to oppose the FCC’s plan to repeal them. Specifically, I’d like you to contact the FCC Chairman and demand he abandon his current plan.”

For a letter: “Dear __________, As your constituent, I’m writing to urge you to protect the FCC’s 2015 Open Internet Order.

As you know, the FCC is currently considering Chairman Ajit Pai’s proposal to reverse net neutrality protections. Namely, the Chairman seeks to reverse the 2015 order that treats broadband Internet providers as common carriers under Title II of the Telecommunications Act.

That decision would give major telecommunications companies an unprecedented level of control over how we use the Internet. No agency would be able to protect the public from unfair practices like site blocking and throttling. Large cable companies claim to support the principles of net neutrality, but without the authority of Title II, those principles will be impossible to enforce.

Please oppose any attempt by Chairman Pai to roll back the FCC’s net neutrality protections. In addition, please oppose any effort in Congress to undermine the Open Internet Order.

A free and open Internet is essential for a free society. I urge you to defend existing net neutrality protections. Protect my rights, not ISP profits.”

How does this affect youth? It will seriously limit the ability to do homework online, research, access entertainment options, have freedom of information, and more. In advocacy issues, we sometimes forget to give youth a voice. This is a prime learning opportunity for youth to get involved in something that will directly affect their daily lives.

Help your patrons to understand what is going on, how it will affect the library and your Internet services, and provide names, addresses, and phone numbers for the federal representatives in your district.

Sources:
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/telecom/netneutrality
https://act.eff.org/action/congress-don-t-sell-the-internet-out
Because IPL is within walking distance of Irondale Community School, occasional class visits have been part of our relationship. with the school for many years. Recently, teachers have taken the initiative to make the trips a regular part of the school year. Since 2014, one fifth grade teacher has contacted the library each fall to organize a visit for each of the fifth grade classes. Last spring, third grade teacher Heather Youngkin arranged for each third grade class to visit the library, and we hope to continue these visits annually. Students who bring their library cards are allowed to check out books during these visits. When parents understand this, it usually leads to an increase in families signing up for library cards before the visits. However, making sure that parents do understand that their child will need a card to check out has been a challenge. In 2016, Tamara created half-page information sheets about signing up for a library card and sent them to the schools to distribute to the students before the visits. This seems to have cut down on some of the confusion.

From 2015 until their retirement in 2017, Irondale Community School teachers Christine Cubelic and Nancy Dunn arranged for their mixed-grade classes to visit IPL at least every three weeks to check out books (on their teachers’ cards or their own) and attend library programs. Many of the students in these classes began as struggling or reluctant readers, and we were thrilled to watch them develop a love of reading during this partnership.

North Shelby

Our library’s most successful partnerships have been with school librarians where there has been a prior personal relationship. Last year we started doing story times for kids with severe disabilities at Berry Middle School. The storyteller visits once a month with two classes and shares stories and songs that use manipulatives and basic movements to connect the students to the story. This partnership came about because we delivered “what can we do for you?” goodie bags to all the school librarians. I knew the school librarian from college so reaching out was easy.

We also do book-talks and STEM programs at Spain Park High School for the ESL and Reading 180 classes. I take a selection of books on a topic/theme chosen by the school librarian and promote them to the students. The books are checked out on a school card and students are allowed to take them home. Due dates are open-ended and missing books are resolved at the end of the school year. The library director and the school librarian went to library school together. The library’s newest partnership is with Oak Mountain Middle School. I recently spent three days there talking to as many of the English classes as possible. I talked to almost 1,000 students and teachers! I promoted the library’s digital offerings and teen programs. The favorite: “It’s your section! If the adults are annoyed with you talking, we ask them to go out to the adult area!” North Shelby got special permission from our regional library to allow the kids to get 1-year student cards without actually coming into a library to fill out the application. Going to the school was a great thing for our library. We received at least ten new applications for our teen leadership council, have seen new faces at programs, and have given out about 50 of the student cards. Several more kids brought their parents in to
get cards because they couldn’t wait. Our
director and the school librarian were in a
book club together and I had served on a
book challenge committee before for her.

Oak Mountain Middle School has also been
helping the library promote events for
years. The school secretary includes our
events in emails to parents and announces
them in the mornings.

We have thirteen schools in a 3-mile radius
of our library. We reach out to all of them
once a year with a goody bag that includes
information on the library and what we
can do for teachers/librarians. The library
is willing to say yes to any idea they have
and to come out whenever they will let us.
We also ask for help promoting summer
reading by giving our calendars to students.

-Kate Etheredge

“At the moment that we persuade a child,
any child, to cross that threshold, that magic
threshold into a library, we change their lives
forever, for the better. It’s an enormous force
for good.”

-Sen. Barack Obama

Goings On Around the State....

If you don’t send us pictures we can’t publish them!
Show everyone else in the state what you are doing
and gather ideas from others. Email your pictures
of activities with a brief description to gsheldon@
apls.state.al.us.

Lawrence County

The Christmas Painting class was taught by a local
artist and school art teacher, Judy McCaghren. The
cost was $35 per painter and included all supplies.
Participants selected from two designs, then painted
an 11 x 14 holiday canvas or a wooden Christmas
ornament. The instructor is supposed to be making a
donation to the library after deducting her expenses.
Twenty-five people of all ages attended the event and
nineteen people painted.
Title: A Dog Like Daisy

Author: Kristen O’Donnell Tubb

Release Date: June 13, 2017

Daisy knows her time is coming. In the place filled with cages and the dogs they contain, there are only two options. One is for humans to choose her to become part of their pack. The other is a door through which many dogs are taken, but none ever come back. She knows her time is coming soon, but who would want a grown up dog with a torn up ear?

But then the Colonel comes. He is with a man and a boy. The man, Alex, encourages the Colonel to pick a younger dog, one that will be easy to train to be the service dog the Colonel needs. But the Colonel recognizes something in Daisy and she is given a chance to become a part of this pack, to be useful. A second chance at life. She will have ten weeks to learn how to be a service dog and prove the Colonel was right to pick her.

But it isn’t easy. The pack she has been brought into is broken. Everyone tiptoes around the man she is to obey. And the Colonel himself is struggling on a daily basis. Daisy wants to help him. She wants to be the tool that will help him feel safe and confident again. But the longer she’s there, the more complicated it seems to be. But with not just her life, but the future of the pack she’s joined on the line, failure isn’t an option.

I enjoy dog books and there was a lot of positive themes to look forward to in this book. Service dogs, veterans, Hispanic characters, adopting adult animals from the shelter, and more. Unfortunately for me, this was another first person telling that just didn’t click together in the end. It can be difficult, writing from the point of view of an animal, and personally it never felt convincing enough. Sometimes Daisy is too smart, seeming to understand everything the humans say, if not always the context. Others it is like the author was purposefully trying to make it come across as, “Remember, Daisy is a dog and dogs don’t understand these things.” The back and forth was jarring for me and I was never sucked in.

Another issue was the way scents were described in the book. Obviously scents are enormously important to dogs, and so I understand why an author would try to continually work that into the story. Daisy was constantly describing things in terms of scents and how they made her feel. But the words she chose fell right back into the same issues as the rest of the story. Sometimes it would be concepts it would make sense for a dog to know, other times not so much.

In the end, it just doesn’t make it to the level as books from the classic The Incredible Journey to more modern tales such as Racing in the Rain, the Chet and Bernie mystery series, or A Dog’s Purpose in my opinion. Following Daisy’s point of view is difficult, and would have benefitted from either not telling it in first person, or smoothing out the narrative. Personally I wouldn’t recommend it, but there were times as a child I enjoyed books that I later reread more critically as an adult and
just couldn’t get into. Kids aren’t as likely to point at the issues I had with the book and say, “That doesn’t make sense,” and instead take it at face value. Perhaps if you can get it on sale, it might be worth it to add to your library’s juvenile collection due to the positive themes mentioned before.

**Recommended for:** Kids who like fiction based in a realistic world, especially those who love dog books.

**Things to watch out for:** Everything was told from the point of view of the dog, but there was some mild violence (PTSD related with a knife, Daisy does get injured), references to dog fighting, allusions to dogs being put down and puppies being accidentally taken and possibly dying, and a reference or two to swearing if no actual language.

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**More Goings On Around the State....**

**Winfield**

Winfield had an excellent turn out for their November Game Day. The kids all had a great time playing chess, Jenga, and many more fun games!

**American Girls Club: Holiday Etiquette Lesson** was taught tea party-style by Ms. Kathie Martin of the Etiquette School of Birmingham. There was a display of etiquette books and each girl also received a festive calendar for 2018.

**During Homeschool Happening: Fantastic Fun with Cool Colors,** local artist Deborah Miller explores the wonderful world of color.
Webinars

DEC. 6: Introduction to Finding Grants. Are you new to the field of grantseeking? Discover what funders are looking for in nonprofits seeking grants and how to find potential funders. GrantSpace: [http://grantspace.org/training/calendar/online](http://grantspace.org/training/calendar/online)


DEC. 12: Dealing With Difficult People in the Workplace: Join Sarah Houghton, for a Q&A conversation on how to deal with difficult personalities in the workplace. Register to submit your questions. In this Q&A-style webinar, you drive the conversation by submitting your questions. Let Sarah help you resolve your toughest challenges. SirsiDynix: [http://www.sirsidynix.com/events/all-webinars](http://www.sirsidynix.com/events/all-webinars)

DEC. 13: Activate, Collaborate, and Educate: Health Outreach and Programming in Your Community. This session will provide an overview of ideas to conduct health outreach and create health programs for libraries and community/faith based organizations. The sample topic for this session is Tween/Teen Substance Use Awareness to offer libraries and other organizations ideas for National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week (January 22-28, 2018). Information on where to locate free materials for hosting a local event will be shared. National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM): [https://nnlm.gov/training](https://nnlm.gov/training). You will have to create a free account to register.

DEC. 13: From Library to Innovation Learning Space. In this webinar, learn from a panel of visionaries who will share their expertise in turning an underused, outdated library into a thriving 21st century learning hub. From building dynamic media centers to creating makerspaces, they will discuss their successful transformations as well as the goals, processes, and outcomes of the projects. Library Journal: [http://lj.libraryjournal.com/webcasts/#_](http://lj.libraryjournal.com/webcasts/#_)

DEC. 13: STEM Events for Your Library's 2018 Programming. Join the STAR Net team as we provide background information on 2018’s high-profile STEM events and unique ideas and helpful resources for integrating them into your programming schedule. [http://www.starnetlibraries.org/resources/webinars/](http://www.starnetlibraries.org/resources/webinars/)

DEC. 14: Designing Learning Spaces for a Creative, Collaborative Future. Join Naomi Harm as she explores how educational leaders and collaborative teams can design and create new learning spaces for the brain-targeted teaching classroom. Naomi will also share various collaboration activities that can be introduced in these new spaces using 1:1 technologies. Simple K12: [http://www.simplek12.com/upcoming-webinars/](http://www.simplek12.com/upcoming-webinars/)

Yakety-YAK Needs YOU!

Do you have youth program pictures you’d like to share? Do you have a specialty or topic that you would like to write an article about? Have you had a successful youth program that can easily be scaled for small libraries with few $$$ and staff? If so, please send your step-by-step of why you did it, how you did it, and any special information. Please include several pictures. Email ideas to gsheldon@apls.state.al.us.

Other Stuff

YALSA/Dollar General Summer Learning Grant and Summer Intern Grant. YALSA will be giving out two types of grants to help libraries prevent the summer slide in teens most vulnerable to summer learning loss, including teens who speak English as a second language, teens in socio-economically challenged communities, and teens who are at risk of failing school. You must be a personal member of YALSA to apply. [http://summerreading.ning.com/page/summer-learning-grants](http://summerreading.ning.com/page/summer-learning-grants)

2018 Programming Opportunities from STAR Net: From Engineers Week to the launch of the NASA’s InSight Mars Lander, 2018 has an abundance of high-profile events that could tie into your library’s programming... and the time to start planning is now! Be sure to register for our December 13th webinar which will provide background information on the events below.

- Engineers Week (February 18-24, 2018)
- Earth Day (April 22, 2018)
- InSight Mars Lander Launch (May 5, 2018)
- Parker Solar Probe Launch (July/August, 2018)
- Lights On Afterschool (October, 2018)
- International Observe the Moon Night (October, 2018)

New Exhibition Opportunity from NCIL: The National Center for Interactive Learning (NCIL) at the Space Science Institute (SSI) is seeking eight library and museum partner sites to host the inaugural national tour of the interactive traveling exhibition Discover Exoplanets: the Search for Alien Earths. Public libraries and small museum partners in rural areas and those serving rural populations and underrepresented groups are especially invited to apply. Applications must be completed and received by no later than 11:59 pm on January 5, 2018. Also, stay tuned for a registration announcement for the pre-application webinar which will be held on December 6, 2017. For Guidelines: [http://www.starnetlibraries.org/portfolio-items/discover-exoplanets/](http://www.starnetlibraries.org/portfolio-items/discover-exoplanets/)