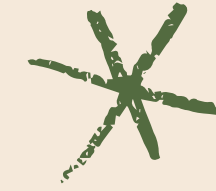




# BETTER THAN “NORMAL”



Assessing and adapting to changing programming needs in youth services



Are you struggling to get your storytimes “back to normal”? Are you frustrated by ever increasing demands for programming, accompanied by lower attendance numbers and shrinking budgets?

In this presentation, Youth Services Librarian Jennifer Wharton will explore how the Matheson Memorial Library has assessed its resources and the needs of the community, both before and after COVID, and moved to a new programming model that can be adapted to different communities.



**Matheson Memorial Library**

101 N. Wisconsin St. Elkhorn, WI 53121

262-723-2678 [www.elkhorn.lib.wi.us](http://www.elkhorn.lib.wi.us)

# KNOW WHAT - AND WHO - YOU'RE WORKING WITH



Reviewing your assets and challenges

## PRE-COVID YEARS

Performers  
Age-specific storytimes  
School outreach  
"Party" program model

## 2020-2021

Closing and reopening  
Virtual programming  
Staff changes

## POST-COVID WORLD

Trying to recreate pre-COVID years  
Strong push to go back to "normal"



# DATA, DATA, DATA



## STATISTICS



It's a spreadsheet!

## REVIEW



Weekly check-ins

## REPORTS



Publisher format

# KNOW WHAT - AND WHO - YOU'RE WORKING WITH

2022: The tipping point - Is it an asset, a challenge, or both?

## STAFF

What are your staff's strengths and weaknesses?

What do they need to be successful?

Note: Volunteers are not free staff!

## TIME

How many tasks are you and your staff balancing?

Do staff have time off-desk to plan and prepare programming?

## BUDGET

What is your budget?

Do you have access to accurate numbers?

Is it dependent on fund-raising?

# KNOW WHAT - AND WHO - YOU'RE WORKING WITH

## Assessing Your Community

### DATA

What organizations are active in your community?

What connections does your library have with the community?

### CHANGES

What has changed in your community since COVID?

How have local organizations adapted and changed?

### INTANGIBLES

How have people's needs and expectations changed?

What does the community expect of the library?

How do people feel about the library in general?

\* THE 4TH GRADERS GET IT!



What can you do with what you've got?

lllll

# THE 4TH GRADERS GET IT!

What can you do with the resources you have?

## IT'S JUST MATH

Are you getting diminishing returns for increasing effort?

How many patrons are benefiting from your services?

## EXPECTATIONS

Does your community have unrealistic expectations?

Does your administration have unrealistic expectations?

Can you future-proof yourself against increasing demands on shrinking resources?

## PRO-ACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE

Think ahead, don't react in the moment.

Frame your narrative before someone writes it for you.

Listen, don't justify.





# WELCOMING ALL



A new model of programming



leeee



# WELCOMING ALL

## Process vs. Product

### PROCESS ART



### PROGRAMMING

What does process programming look like?

How can you adapt and open up product-based programming?

### ACCESSIBILITY

Adapting process-based programming for patrons who need structure and guidance.

# WELCOMING ALL

## Planning the Programs

### THE CALENDAR

How can you plan ahead and still have a flexible structure?

Keep in mind your community - and your own - needs, wants, and interests.

### REGISTRATION

Pros and cons of registration

Different methods - what will work in your community?

Why or why not have registration?

### BUDGET

Budgeting for process-based and flexible programming is a little different. You'll need planning skills, storage space, and, yes, a certain amount of math.

Be creative! (but legal)

# WELCOMING ALL

## Program Ideas

### FAMILY-SPECIFIC

- Family storytime
- We explore nature
- Family craft night



### AGE-SPECIFIC

- Pokemon Club
- Fandom Club
- Bookaneers
- Fact Finders



### ALL AGES

- Project Explore
- Maker Workshops





\*  
**CHANGE IS HARD**

But once you let go of the past, you open  
the door for new possibilities!



\*  
*lellle*





# RESOURCES AND LINKS

- Statistics spreadsheet <http://tinyurl.com/4jp8h89w>
- Monthly and yearly reports in Publisher format  
<http://tinyurl.com/ykmp2pvm>
- Previous library programs <http://tinyurl.com/3k7pvkdc>
- More programming information <http://tinyurl.com/44ycbau4>

Contact me! [jwharton@elkhorn.lib.wi.us](mailto:jwharton@elkhorn.lib.wi.us)

