Building communities @ your library

These libraries have many community programs

by Jill McKinstry and Anne Garrison

ACRL President Betsy Wilson hosted a lively discussion at the ACRL President's Discussion Forum during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Washington D.C. The forum highlighted three academic libraries that have shown leadership in partnering within their communities to build more enriching environments. The success of the featured partnerships demonstrated unlimited potential for librarians to show leadership in reaching out to groups beyond the campus borders. With vision and commitment, collaborative outreach programs can translate into concrete activities that are exciting, energizing, and, often unexpectedly rewarding to all.

Wilson believes that collaboration is critical to the success of libraries today. As community leaders turn to libraries for help in solving social problems, we are in a unique position to share the depth and breadth of our knowledge base and training.

Julie Todaro, dean of library services at Austin Community College and the creative energy behind the discussion forum, reminds us that the theme of information literacy is the basis for many of the current community partnerships, such as "service learning," "engaged learning," "K–16 efforts," and other cooperative outreach programs.

In celebrating these partnerships, this report will focus on three libraries' unique contributions to educating and building critical competencies for the 21st century. Trudi Bellardo Hahn, manager of User Education Services at the University of Maryland (UMd); Elizabeth Ader Henry, assistant director for Public Services, University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Libraries; and Isabel Espinal, Outreach Librarian, University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass) summarized the programs at their institutions.

University of Maryland

Building on a campus initiative for community outreach, User Education Services took advantage of an idea for collaboration that was born out of a request to bring young people into the university library. The goal was to plant the idea in young students from Prince Georges County that attending a university might be possible (http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/UES/community_outreach.html and http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/UES/visitors.html). UMd hosts the following programs:

- **America Reads (http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/americareads.html).** More than 100 six and seven year olds visit the library in groups of 15 to 30. These students, tu-

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The benefits of collaborative partnerships are: good public relations; increased visibility and connections on campus; enhanced library staff morale; greater opportunity to contribute to your community; and better recruitment for the university.

tored throughout the year by campus undergraduates, come to the library for a one-on-one, one-to-two hour session with a librarian. During their visits they are read to by librarians, treated to performances by library assistant/library school students, and receive a free paperback book (donated by a local company).

• **Solving a World Problem.** The university library annually hosts 100 middle schoolers from a local communications magnet school. Each child gets an annual assignment to do research and then write a paper that will "solve a world problem." One step in the process is that they spend an entire day, 50 at a time, participating in an elaborate instruction program put on by university librarians.

• **School library media specialists.** UMd is a partner in an IMLS grant with the Maryland State Department of Education, UMd College of Information Studies, UMd College of Education, and Prince Georges County Public Schools to establish a program to encourage library school students to become school library media specialists. The libraries' role is to provide training in information resources for the students who are involved in the program, as well as for teachers in the schools where the students are placed for an internship experience.

• **Northwestern High School.** UMd has a long-standing relationship with Northwestern High School in College Park, Maryland, and the libraries now participate in a program to encourage at-risk Hispanic students to think about going into college prep courses. This year the students read the book *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago, then went to the library and learned to conduct research on the author and on Puerto Ricans in the United States (http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/MCK/nwhs.html and http://www.lib.umd.edu/UMCP/MCK/nwhs2.html).

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Tips before you leap

- Think long term.
- Don't raise expectations that you are not willing to continue to fulfill.
- Build close personal relationships with key people.
- Gather evaluation data and testimonials from participants and share them with all partners.
- Do a process analysis after each event.

University of Missouri–Kansas City

Collaborative partnerships at UMKC, an urban campus of students 27 to 28 years old on average, have been in effect from 1 to 35 years. They have engendered high visibility, increased credibility, and good will in the broader community. They serve as building blocks for further outreach activities and bring priceless benefits, including new endowments and excitement for all participants. UMKC's have collaborations with the following:

• **University Academy School.** UMKC works closely with this charter school. These junior high/high school faculty members are given adjunct faculty status and therefore have access to library resources, including circulation, electronic databases and an online catalog, and library instruction for themselves and their students. Currently there are 218 students in grades 7, 8, and 9 in a student-centered environment that focuses on critical thinking, cultural diversity, and leadership.

• **Hickman Mills School District Management School.** UMKC works with this school to provide access to library resources for students and faculty, including circulation, electronic databases and an online catalog, and library instruction. The management school serves all grades (K–12) and is for students who, because of behavior difficulties, have been permanently expelled from Missouri public schools, which means they are

denied enrollment in any Missouri school by virtue of the Missouri Safe Schools Act.

• **UMKC High School College Program.** UMKC works with local high schools to provide library instruction particularly for those students enrolled in the UMKC High School College Program. The high school program offers 619 classes for college credit throughout the greater metropolitan area and the western corridor of Missouri in 55 high schools. The library supports this program by providing full access to the resources and services of the library for these 7,000 students and 225 adjunct faculty.

• UMKC works with the **Truman Presidential Library**, the **UMKC History Department,** and **local high school history teachers and students** to facilitate access to 2 million pages of presidential documents and 1,500 books relating to the presidency that were transferred from the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum to UMKC's Miller Nichols Library.

To celebrate the establishment of the collection, the Truman Library and UMKC hosted an event on February 25, 2000, at the Miller Nichols Library. Students from Paseo High School, the Barstow School, and UMKC engaged in a research workshop using materials in the collection. The workshop illustrated the unique and challenging character of original historical documents, and helped students analyze the information from the collection to make their own judgments about past events.

Miller Nichols Library faculty continue to partner with UMKC faculty in the History Department and local high schools in using this collection. Library faculty and staff, for example, have created a complimentary Web site featuring recordings of presidential speeches from the library's special sound recording collections (http://www.umkc.edu/lib/spec-col/Truman/PresSpeeches/presspeeches.htm).

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

UMass has an extraordinary number of partnerships as well as a wonderful Web presence, setting the context of these services into their strategic plan and explaining specific services for the business community.

In 1997, with the new director, there was a new planning process instituted, including outreach, diversity and multiculturalism, and a focus on library as place. An outreach working group was formed and in 1998 the libraries' administration created new positions—outreach specialist and communications specialist—and established a Library Outreach Committee. A plan was released in August 2000, highlighting many outreach activities that are not new, but providing a new emphasis on the packaging and communication to others on campus (http://www.umass.edu/outreach/).

• **UMass Amherst Libraries Off-Campus Outreach Situation and Plan, August 2000** (http://www.umass.edu/outreach or_libraries_stratplan_00.htm).

• **UMass Amherst Libraries Planning for Outreach** (http:/www.library.umass.edu/plan).

• **Business Resources at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library for Massachusetts Residents and Organizations,** including recent Business Outreach Events (http://www.library.umass.edu/subject/business/community.html).

• **MassBedrock: Massachusetts Business and Economic Development Reference Online Center for Knowledge,** a digital library designed to offer multiple access points to selected business data and service referrals (http://www.massbedrock.org).

• **Multicultural outreach and events as a way to build community,** including Hispamérica conference and Latino Heritage Month (http://www.library.umass.edu/latino/) and the Multilingual Poetry Fest 2000, using a LSTA grant from Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (http://www.library.umass.edu/events/poetry/). UMass Libraries also sponsors the ALANA (African, Latino, Asian, and Native American) Library Career Dinner, building community by inviting students of color to enter the professional community of librarians. A welcoming, academic library environment is an ideal place for recruitment.

The staff reactions to these partnerships are positive and many staff librarians and nonlibrarians participate on a volunteer basis. For some projects, new staff have been added based on project funding. But what continues to be a challenge is how to best integrate partnerships into existing work.

A very important benefit has also been the opportunity to learn about our communities, their needs and their wants.

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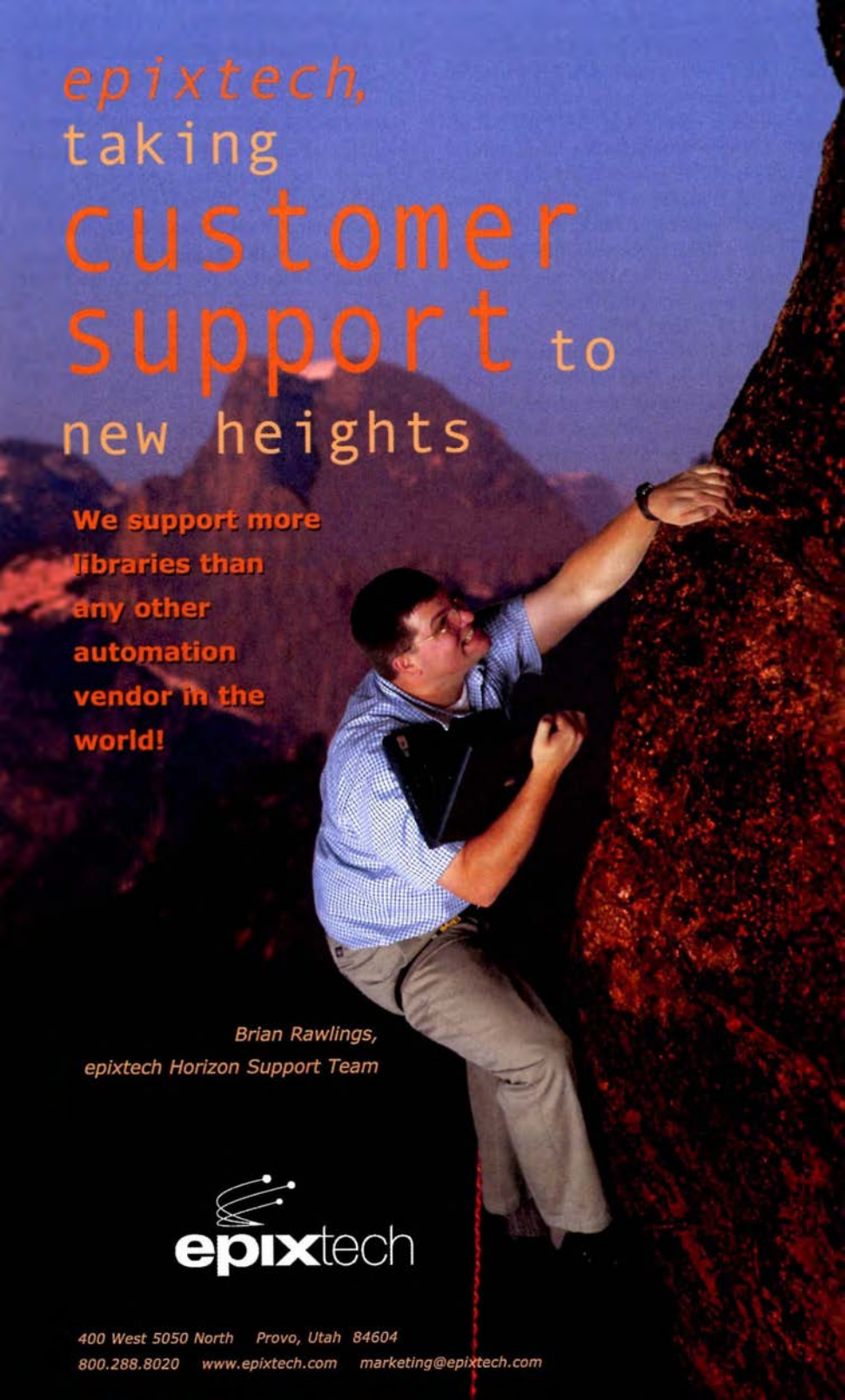
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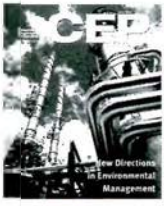

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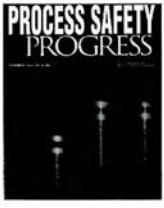

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tomation at the University of Ghent in Belgium, delivered the closing plenary address on the Open Archives Metadata Harvesting (OAMH) protocol and implications for scholarly communication. His presentation can be found on the CNI Web site at www.cni.org.

Van de Sompel described the OAMH protocol as "a low-barrier interoperability specification for the recurrent exchange of metadata between systems." The OAMH protocol allows for federated services such as SDI, alerting, and linking services; database synchronization; and harvesting the deep Web. The OAHM protocol advances the interoperability of electronic preprints as a means to promote their global acceptance as a "decomposed" scholarly communication system.

Van de Sompel posited that in the current scholarly communication system, it is increasingly difficult for libraries to fulfill their fundamental role of safeguarding equality of access to scholarly information. He encouraged libraries to rethink themselves and to become proactive in exploring alternatives for scholarly communications, like the OAI (see http://www.openarchives.org/).

Concluding that there are new opportunities for shaping a sustainable scholarly communication system, van de Sompel outlined the advantages libraries bring to the mix. Libraries are close to authors; are in a good position to archive institutional materials; are quick to embrace new technologies; have very knowledgable people; provide a level of redundancy in services that is no longer required in a digital environment; and safeguard equity of access through global representation.

Van de Sompel warned that libraries as organizations are slow moving, hosted by slowly moving institutions; that libraries are slow to recognize that a new technology may allow for new modes of operating; and that the information world runs on Internet time.—*Betsy Wilson* ■

("Teaching students. . ." continued from page 143)

4. Leilani Hall, "A homegrown program for raising faculty information competence," *Computers in Libraries* 19, no. 8 (1999): 28–34.

5. Pixey Anne Mosley, "Creating a library assignment workshop for university faculty," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 24, no. 1 (1998): 33–41.

6. Gloria J. Leckie, "Desperately seeking citations: Uncovering faculty assumptions about the undergraduate research process," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 22 (1996): 201–08.

7. Janet R. Cottrell, "Information literacy, computer literacy, and good teaching practices: Firm foundations for faculty development." *Academic Exchange Quarterly* 3 (Fall 1999): 43–51. ■

("Community sciences . . ." continued from page 162)

• **MedLine.** This is the primer biomedical database from the National Institutes of Health, which comprises the Index Medicus, Dental Literature Index, and the International Nursing Index. It provides the most comprehensive coverage from more than 3,500 journals in all areas of medicine. *Access:* http://www.nlm.nih.gov/databases/freemedl.html.

• **UnCover.** Table of Content and fee-based fax document delivery service to more than 18,000 journal titles from 1988 to the present. Use the UnCover "C"omplete service for older material. UnCover also offers articles from more than 2,500 journals via UnCover Desktop Image Delivery. *Access:* http://uncweb.carl.org/. ■

("Building community . . ." cont. from page 167)

Understanding our potential future users' results in better programs and services. Partnerships often save money and labor and attract increased funding.

Final recommendations

A final recommendation is the *University of Connecticut Libraries Partnerships* guide. It includes "Selected Examples of Current Partnerships"; "Forming New Partnerships: A Guide"; "Library Criteria for New Partnerships"; "Reviewing Existing Partnerships"; and a "Partnership Proposal Form" (http://spirit.lib.uconn.edu/information/PartnershipDocument.html). ■