Library Takeover

Or, How Madison Public Library Relinquished Control of Community Programming

Michael Spelman, Public Services Manager, Central Library

Laura Damon-Moore, Community Engagement Librarian, Central Library

Kylee Stoor, Community Engagement Librarian, Central Library
Learning Outcomes

• Learn how MPL analyzed the local landscape as well as trends in 21\textsuperscript{st} century librarianship to determine the need for responsive, community-led adult programming

• Learn about Library Takeover, a programmatic outcome of MPL’s larger community analysis, and how the program is implemented

• Learn about the racial equity analysis process we used and how to apply it to a large-scale community program
Changes at MPL

• Desire to be responsive to community needs, rather than supply prescriptive programing
• Shift towards community lead initiatives
• Keep racial equity and social justice issues in mind when looking at services
• Looked at national and local data to develop and guide changes - Aspen Institute Rising to the Challenge and MPL Tell Us community conversations two examples
Aspen Institute

• People develop their personal and civic identities; less checking out materials
• Strategically allocate resources and embed these resources in addressing critical community needs
• Become platforms that individuals and communities can use to create the services they need
• Become responsive and work with people on issues, not on issues independent of them
WI Council on Children & Families

2013 Baseline Report:
• Dane County unemployment rate: 25% for Black; 5% for White (National: 18% to 8%)
• Dane County poverty rate: 54% for Black; 9% for White (National 28% to 11%)
• Students who don’t take ACT in Dane County: 70% for Black; 36% for White (WI 50% to 41%)

Needs:
• Job/employable skill training
• Build a fairer, more just and thriving community by narrowing the gaps in the opportunities and outcomes between families of color and the larger community
● It’s not another survey! - it’s a community conversation
● Designed to be accessible, personal, comfortable, and fun
● We focused on communities least represented in our libraries and in the city
1. What are the **communities** represented in this room?
2. What do you need to feel **supported** by your community?
3. What local organizations or groups directly improve your **quality of life**?
4. What are the three **biggest issues** facing your community?
5. What are some **ideas** to address these issues?
6. How would you know that things have **gotten better**?
Results of Data Intake

- Data based decision = administrative buy in
- Rewrote job descriptions & hired new people
- Formed Community Engagement Team
- Focused work on community lead lifelong learning
- Team given space/time to meet stakeholders and develop relationships.
Idea!

- Emphasis on “community-led, lifelong learning”
- Priorities from Tell Us Conversations
- Work on Library as Incubator Project
- Youth-led
- 12-week training period
- Picked the event idea during the training period
- Initially started out as pairs of youth+library staff

- Adult-led
- 6-week training period
- Applied for the program with event ideas in mind
- Participants were asked to apply as a team of 3-5
Racial Equity & Social Justice Initiative

Mission
To establish racial equity and social justice as core principles in all decisions, policies and functions of the City of Madison.

Priority Areas
● Equity in city operations
● Equity in city policies and budgets
● Equity in the community

Multi-agency team
Creating the conditions for change
Drive the narrative and elevate racial equity
Racial Equity Analysis

Series of structured questions to ensure that a plan, policy or procedure

- Considers race explicitly
- Includes voices of people most affected
- Considers unintended consequences

Set Equity Goals
Develop Strategies
Identify Points for Analysis
Integrate Community Engagement/Accountability
  Who benefits?
  Who is burdened?
  What data is needed or might be missing?
  Are there unintended consequences for people of color?
Changes after equity analysis

- We need to pay people! ($300 honorarium for peoples’ time).
- Transportation, childcare, and food needed to be provided. Location of bootcamp should be flexible.
- Specify that organizations, other city departments, etc. are NOT eligible to participate.
- Streamlined application process (fewer questions, print + online + phone options).
- Where are we advertising the opportunity? Ideas of places and people to reach out to.
Application & selection process

- 6-week recruitment period in summer/early fall 2016
- Received 39 idea submissions from ~30 teams
- Application = 8 questions
- Selection process:
  - 1st pass, Library staff removed non-qualifying applications
  - 2nd pass, Library and City staff applied points to each application
  - 3rd pass, local event planners ranked their top 10
  - Library staff spoke with 5 semifinalists, ended up with 3 finalists
Bootcamp and beyond

• 6-week event planning bootcamp in fall 2016. Topics:
  o Event goals/outcomes
  o Production/logistics
  o Marketing
  o Financials/budgeting
  o Evaluation

• Teams had $2500 to fund their event, childcare/bus passes/food provided for bootcamp

• Mentors, bootcamp presenters and team members were all paid individually

• Events took place prior to June 2017
Event #1: ACCESS DENIED

What does accessible nightlife look like? First we're going to talk about it, then we're going to dance about it.

Access Denied is a dance party preceded by a panel discussion on Madison nightlife. We will dig into the ways people -- specifically people of color, women, transgender people, queer people, disAbled people, people with addictions, and youth -- are kept out of spaces intended for partying and entertainment. Everyone is welcome. Food and drinks will be available.
Event #2: SHARE THE WORD

Share the Word is a gathering of Madison-area poets, writers, spoken word performers, hip hop artists, and storytellers that will bring the Madison writing community together to share ideas, showcase their works, and spawn innovative collaborations.

Central Library

Friday, May 5
5:00pm - 7:30pm
Event #3: NAMASTE MADISON

Celebrate the contributions of Indian-Americans in the greater Madison area on May 13, 2017 at Madison's Central Library. We will have:

- children's activities
- panel discussions
- STE(A)M demonstrations
- poster exhibit
- Indian food
Program outcomes

• The program participants (Library Takeover teams) have continued to be engaged with the library even after their events took place.

• The Library Takeover structure (truly turning over “control” to the community) has helped inform the library’s plan for adult services, including programming.

• The program’s visibility has sparked much conversation and collaboration among community members; some of those ideas have been pursued either by the library or by community members on their own.
Opportunities for growth and improvement

- Ask teams when they apply to specify the library location they would prefer to use for their event.
- Examine the bootcamp - did it get people to where they needed to be to host their event?
- How can we streamline the program to make it sustainable without grant funding?
- Recognize and better convey library’s capacity - what can we offer and where are our boundaries?
Scaling it

- Smaller budgets - what can be done with $1000, $500, $100? Or no budget?

- Can you make room (in your building, budget, time) for a Library Takeover style program?

- Who’s an expert at event coordination/planning in your community who can help train participants?

- Key changes you could make (audience or theme)

Ultimately, it’s about publicly, LOUDLY, committing library resources - whatever those may be -- so that community members have an opportunity to host their own events, and embracing community ownership of the library.
Contacts for follow-up

Michael Spelman:
• mspelman@madisonpubliclibrary.org

Laura Damon-Moore:
• ldamon-moore@madisonpubliclibrary.org

Kylee Stoor:
• kstoor@madisonpubliclibrary.org