

Homeschooling: Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service for Homeschooled Students

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/jlams>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

() "Homeschooling: Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service for Homeschooled Students," *JLAMS*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/jlams/vol5/iss2/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in JLAMS by an authorized editor of Scholars Archive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@albany.edu.



JLAMS

A Peer-Reviewed Journal of the New York Library Association

Homeschooling: “Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service for Homeschooled Students”



**Spring
2008-2009
Vol. 5, No. 2**

Library and
Administration
Management
Section (LAMS)
Officers

President
Rebecca Lubin

President Elect
Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

Secretary
Patricia Kaufman

Ed Falcone
Joshua Cohen

Treasurer
Frank Rees

Membership
Julie Johnson

Web and JLAMS
Richard J. Naylor

To submit an article read the JLAMS
editorial policy on our website at:
http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=813

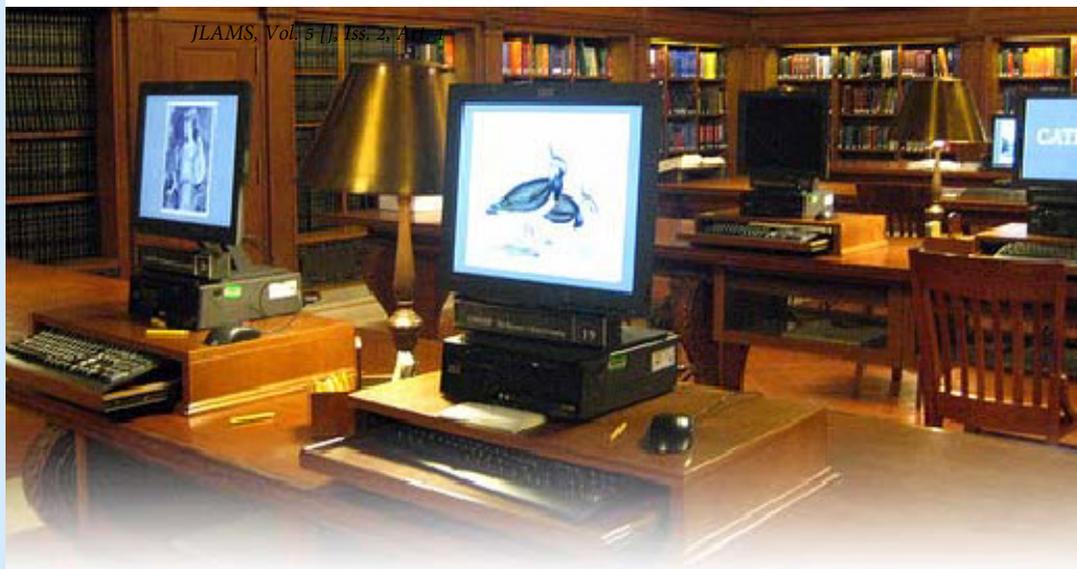
Then fill out the "JLAMS Publications
Proposal Worksheet" located on our
website and in the back of this
publication.

CoverPhoto by NJLA: New Jersey
Library Association@Flickr

New York Library
Association
252 Hudson Avenue
Albany, NY 12210-1802
518-432-6952/800-252-NYLA
email: info@nyla.org
web: www.nyla.org

President
Josh Cohen
(845) 471-6060
jcohen@gmail.com

Executive Director
Michael J. Borges
director@nyla.org



CONTENTS

- 3 [President's Message](#)
- 4 [Editor's Column](#)
- 5 [Homeschooling: "Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service for Homeschooled Students"](#) by Dr. Bea Baaden, and Prof. Jean O'Neill Uhl.
- 15 [Perceptions and Awareness of Library Services](#) By Gina Loprinzo



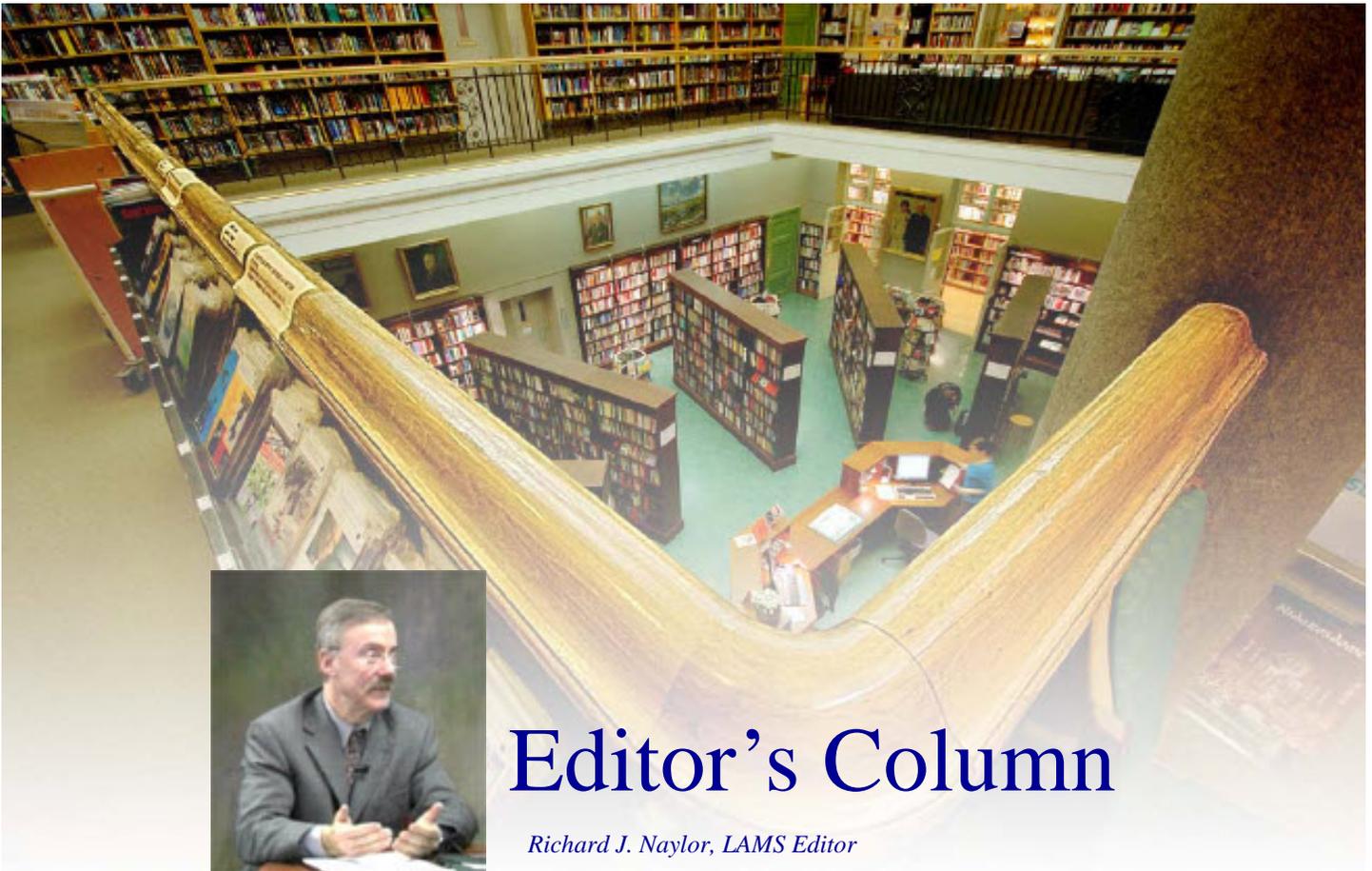
President's Message

Rebecca Lubin, LAMS President

JLAMS, the electronic Journal of the Library Administration and Management Section of the New York Library Association, begins its fifth year, and as LAMS President, I'm privileged to introduce the Spring 2009 JLAMS.

JLAMS provides a valuable outlet for the dissemination of articles, academic papers, and essays of interest to administrators and managers of all types of libraries: academic, public, school and special libraries. As administrators and managers, we have a lot in common, but we have few places to share what we know. JLAMS was the first peer-reviewed journal in NYLA, and the goal was to set a high standard for future publications. Readers of JLAMS are well-served by the fine work done by Editor Richard Naylor and his team of referees, as are those whose contributions are published here. Submissions are always welcome. For information on article submissions, editorial policy, a submission form and more, visit the JLAMS website page at http://www.nyla.org/index.php?page_id=922.

JLAMS is made possible by NYLA membership. LAMS receives funding based upon the number of people who select LAMS as their primary NYLA section, as well as by those who pay an additional \$5.00 to add LAMS as a secondary section. Please keep this in mind when renewing your NYLA membership. And thanks for your support!



Editor's Column

Richard J. Naylor, LAMS Editor

Welcome to the ninth issue of JLAMS. Our peer reviewed journal on library management issues both practical and theoretical.

In each issue the number of our articles varies by the submissions we get that are approved by our Referees and this time we only had two make it. They should be, however, of practical interest to many library managers.

Our first article is entitled “**Homeschooling: Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service for Homeschooled Students**” by *Dr. Bea Baaden, and Prof. Jean O’Neill Uhl.*”

Most public librarians face the challenges of first understanding their role in serving this population and secondly figuring out how best to serve those needs in the context of their other programs and services.

Our second article is “**Perceptions and Awareness of Library Services** By *Gina Loprinzo* who conducted a survey to gauge the public’s knowledge and propensity to use many categories of materials. The original goal of the study was to gain insights into which services would most benefit from additional advertising.

Once again we must thank our authors for their hard work and creative writing without which we would have nothing to publish. We are all very busy and they have responded to a request for even more effort, not only submitting articles by being willing to make the changes requested by reviewers.

We must also thank our referees who reviewed the articles and made suggestions for improvement. We have had the help of excellent people from throughout the state. The peer review process is an important part of the writing, as it enriches and improves the ideas put forth, and as it suggests areas for further research. I would also like to thank NYLA Intern Shawn McConnell for help with the new cover and intro design.

We invite all librarians and information science professionals in our state to submit articles and ideas for articles and we again ask for your help by volunteering to be a referee.

Peer Reviewed Article

Homeschooling: “Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service for Homeschooled Students”

by Dr. Bea Baaden, and Prof. Jean O’Neill Uhl

Abstract: As the number of homeschooled students rises in this country, needs for resources, instruction and support also has risen. The homeschooled students, while not participating in the school classrooms and by extension the school or public libraries, have needs that should be satisfied by library services. These include access to materials and technology, information literacy skills instruction, reading and writing support, curriculum materials and methods, reference services, as well as areas to “make and take”, facilities for quiet study or to meet with mentors or tutors. In addition, homeschooled students need the kind of library skills instruction that all students in traditional school libraries receive. The purpose of this study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of library support to home-schooled students in Nassau-Suffolk, Long Island and to make recommendations based upon analysis. The major question examined is: How are homeschooled students served through their local public libraries? Also the study examines the perception of homeschooling families by public librarians. There are three main conclusions that derive from the study: the librarians’ reactive rather than proactive response to the homeschooled population; the lack of consistent leadership in development or outreach of library programs specifically for the homeschooled; and the public librarians’ perception that there is no difference between the homeschooled population and the rest of the patrons who use the library. The analysis leads to suggestions and recommendations.

Introduction

As the number of homeschooled students rises in this country, the need for resources, instruction and support also have risen. The schools and public libraries on Long Island in New York offer traditional types of library services. Historically, public libraries are extensions of school districts in their service to students, and the nature of these liaisons between schools and the public library is to collaborate in the best interests of the student. But the homeschooled students, while not participating in the school classrooms and; therefore, the school or public libraries, still have needs that should be satisfied by library services. In fact, New York State (NYS) requires homeschooled children in grades seven and eight to participate in library skills instruction on a regular basis (NYS Home Instruction Regulations 100.10 e ii. 2007). As the children of taxpayers in New York State, homeschoolers are entitled to similar services as their traditionally schooled counterparts.

Dr. Bea Baaden, Assistant Professor, Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University can be reached at: Bea.Baaden@liu.edu and Prof. Jean O’Neill Uhl, is Assistant Professor Instructional Media Center, Long Island University can be reached at: Jean.Uhl@liu.edu

Homeschooling: “Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service

Homeschooled students need access to materials and technology, information literacy skills instruction, reading and writing support, curriculum materials and methods, and reference services, as well as physical areas to “make and take,” facilities for quiet study or to meet with mentors or tutors. In addition, homeschooled students need the same professional instruction provided to students in traditional schools by NYS certified school media specialists.

The homeschooled are also a diverse group. There are two general reasons why parents choose to home school their children. One category is pedagogical. These are typically parents who are dissatisfied with the class size, environment or curricula found in the traditional school. The other category is ideological. These parents choose to home school for religious reasons. Although most homeschoolers had been white and middle income, according to recent research, the demographics represent people from all ethnic and class groups (Nemer, 2002). The number of homeschoolers in the United States is rising. There are approximately 1.5 million homeschooled students in the United States as of 2007 (Bielick, 2007). In NYS, there are 18,099 homeschooled students; 10,254 in grades K-6 and 7,845 in grades 7 – 12 (Martin, 2009). It is estimated that there are approximately 1400 homeschooled children on Long Island, with a variety of situations and reasons for not being in a traditional school setting.

There appears to be a lack of current research as to the quality and quantity of library services to the homeschooled, particularly in the Long Island, New York geographic area. This exploratory research study is intended to discover the nature and extent of library services offered by public libraries to the homeschooled. A secondary reason for this study is to suggest the kinds of programming that will be of the most benefit to the homeschooled population, as well as to aid in collection development.

Literature Review

An initial literature review has indicated that analysis of this topic has been diminutive in recent years. There have been studies on student outcomes and descriptive analyses of home schooling but less consideration has been given to library service. The article, “Public Library Services for Home Schooling” by Denise G. Masters, defines home schooling as “the situation where parents or guardians choose not to send their children to public or private schools, but prefer to educate their children by themselves, usually at home” (Masters, 1996). She cites studies that indicate that public libraries have a responsibility toward all of their patrons, including homeschoolers (Avner, 1989; Geist, Smith, & de la Pena McCook, 1994; LaRue & LaRue, 1991). In a recent article, “Welcoming Homeschoolers to the Library,” Hilyard notes that the public library is “the obvious place for homeschooling families to obtain books to supplement curriculum” as lending books and providing reference assistance are important services that public libraries offer (Hilyard, 2008). She notes that “some libraries dread the homeschoolers, fearing a drain on the collection, complicated interlibrary loan requests, and demands for extended loan periods” (Hilyard, 2008). Hilyard presents a series of essays that describe programs that do more for homeschoolers than the traditional services and notes that these kinds of partnerships enrich not only the families but also the library staff that work with them.

A model for libraries serving homeschoolers successfully is the Johnsburg, Illinois Public Library which, following a \$55,000 grant to establish a homeschooling center has created a website and collection specifically to address the needs of the homeschooled (Slatterey, 2005). The tactics and strategies for service offered by this library will provide a lens through which homeschooling services in the public libraries of Long Island are examined. Important strategies that this library uses are: a voluntary parent advisor to the library, easy interlibrary loan, development of a specific Homeschool Resource Center, an increase in number and circulation of materials specifically geared towards homeschoolers, quarterly e-notices to homeschooled families, a library staff who has become familiar

with the needs of homeschoolers, thus lessening bias and recognizing differences in homeschoolers, especially the use of the library during public school hours, access to information regarding legal issues, and a more diverse collection in terms of differing learning styles.

There are a number of sources about homeschooling, but most are slanted towards the perspective of the homeschooler, such as *Teach Your Own: The John Holt Book of Home – schooling* (2003). One book that has been cited in most of the research about homeschoolers and library services is *The Librarian’s Guide to Homeschooling Resources* (Scheps, 1998). In very short chapters in this resource guide, Scheps notes the issues in serving homeschoolers, such as staff bias against homeschoolers, moral or religious censorship issues, the need for materials for all-encompassing lessons and the heavy use of interlibrary loan. Scheps feels that librarians will be better disposed to communicate with homeschooling families if they are more informed about the philosophy of homeschooling. She also developed a checklist of “reasonable services” homeschoolers would like libraries to provide and then a list of resources including important national, state, regional and provincial organizations, correspondence schools, and publishers and distributors of resources (Scheps, 1998).

Studies indicate that almost all homeschoolers use the public library several times a month, but that a low percentage either never or rarely attends children’s programs (Wikel, 1995). Most of the above information is about ten years old.

Purpose of the study

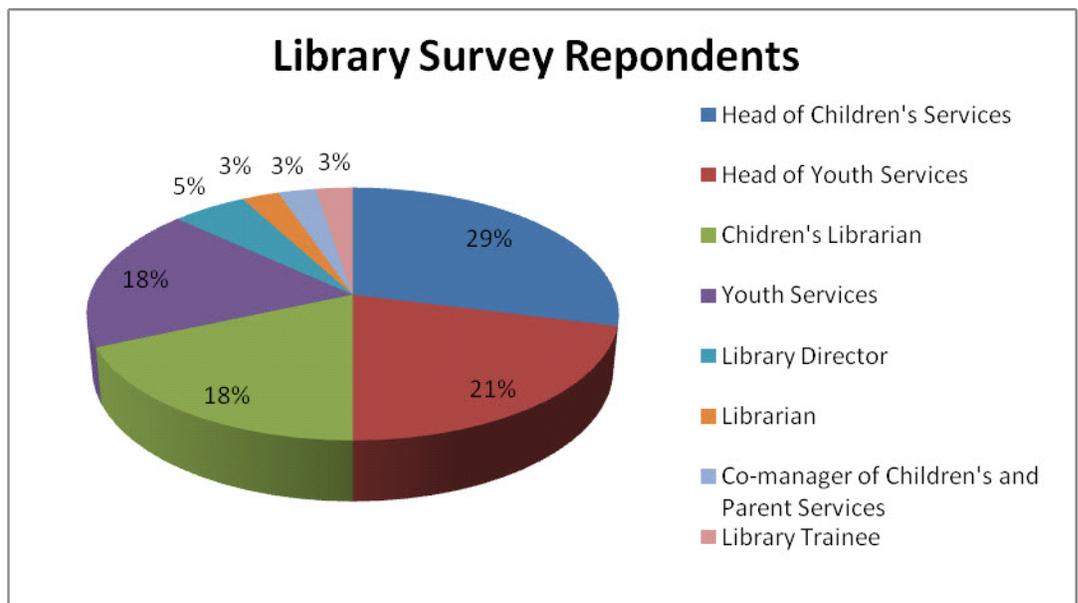
The purpose of this study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of library support to home-schooled students in the Nassau-Suffolk, Long Island area and to make recommendations based upon analysis. There are 55 school districts and 63 public libraries in Suffolk County. There are 47 school districts and 54 public libraries in Nassau County. Because of the size and varied demographic components, this sample will give a comprehensive representation of the geographic area. An electronic survey (see appendix 2 for survey questions) was distributed through the county library systems to children’s services and youth services librarians. There were 38 responses from the 117 libraries in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. In this sample, public school districts range from districts with 86.2% of the students participating in free/reduced lunch programs that indicate high poverty levels and where only 32% of the students receive Regents diplomas, to a district where 0.3% of the students qualify for free lunch and 100% receive Regents diplomas (Long Island School District Budget, 2008).

Methodology

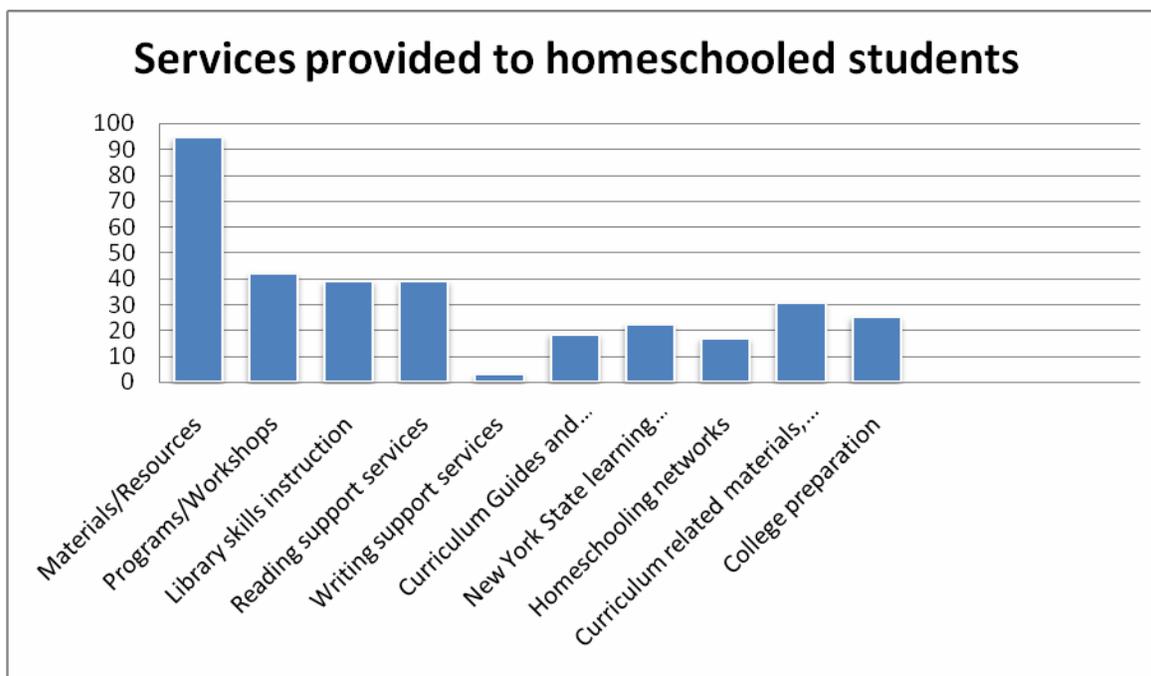
The major question examined is: How are homeschooled students served through their local public libraries? A secondary result of the survey is to determine what the perception is of homeschooling families by public librarians. The survey asks the title of the person responsible for the homeschoolers in their libraries about how many homeschoolers he or she perceived were being served in his respective library; requests completion of a checklist of the nature of services that are provided to homeschooled students, ranging from materials/resources, library skills instruction and support services; what parts of the facility were provided for homeschoolers; a description of the kinds of materials or support for homeschoolers; and finally an open-ended question as to what the librarian thinks is most important in providing service to the homeschooled. The researchers coded the results of the survey according to the questions asked. (see appendix 1 for survey questions)

Results

The titles of the 38 librarians who responded ranged from Head of Children’s or Youth Services to Children’s Librarian. One respondent’s title was Co-Manager of Children’s and Parenting Services. Of the 38, eight (19%) noted they were children’s librarians, 11 (29%) were head of children’s services, seven (21%) were head of youth services, seven (18%) were youth services librarians; two (5%) were directors, one (3%) was a librarian and one (3%) was a library trainee.



Most respondents noted that they worked with infants and toddlers, pre-school and elementary school populations, while others worked with either middle or high school populations. Only 44% of the respondents noted that they worked with the high school population. 97% of the respondents noted that there was no librarian with specific responsibility for the homeschooled population. (See appendix 2 for



list of participating libraries).

Respondents were asked how many homeschooled students they believed lived in the library district in which they worked. Answers ranged from 0 – 50 homeschooled children, with 10 of the 37 respondents noting they had somewhere between 15 and 25 homeschooled children. Only one district reported that it had no homeschooled children.

When asked the nature of the services that are provided to homeschooling children, the overwhelming response, 94.4 %, noted that they provided materials and resources (See chart 2). The few comments that were provided in the open ended “Other” section substantiate what prior research has observed about public librarian’s attitude towards the home schooled: “These are the same services we offer all children and teens;” “we don’t specifically have homeschooled services, the ones checked are for the general patrons of the library;” and “as a public library we serve whoever comes in.”

A question was asked about the provision of parts of the facility specifically for the homeschooled. 85% of the respondents noted that computers were provided, while 7% said that there was a designated meeting or work space and audio-visual equipment that the homeschooled could use. Once again there was no distinguishing between the homeschooled and the general services that are offered for all patrons. Comments included: “they can always use our tables, which are frequently used by all the children;” “...can have whatever space is available;” “anyone can reserve a tutor room;” “workspace is available for all patrons;” “homeschooled kids have access to what any kid has access to.”

In answer to a question about whether the library provides materials or support for parents or tutors of the homeschooled, 65.7% responded that they did, although there was no consensus on the types of materials or support. Almost every answer was different. The types of materials or support provided include:

- Subscription to tutor.com (a comment was included: “this is something all of the children can use though, not just homeschooled children.”)
- Books, magazines, DVDs
- Internet
- Books on homeschooling in the collection (comment: “we don’t carry textbooks”)
- Homework and free tutoring on one afternoon a week while school is in session
- Interlibrary loan of materials
- Parenting and growing up materials and a parenting collection with “specific titles to enable parents as their children’s teacher”
- Several homeschooling magazines and pamphlets
- Networking, programming, meeting space, study area
- Materials from the circulating collection
- Laptop computers
- Bulletin board with program information (this library is a “member of an enrichment coalition for all students within our district”)
- Educational catalogs
- Enclosed tutoring areas
- Homeschooling representation in the 4EC, a coalition of organizations dedicated to cross-community enrichment
- Live Librarian (homework help)
- Reading and research materials

One of the open-ended questions in the survey asked the opinion of the responding librarian about the adequacy of the library service provided to the homeschooled. 32 of the 38 responded with a comment. 19 of those responding offered a “yes,” but sometimes with a qualification: “we always try to

accommodate all of our patrons;” “we would provide more...if we were asked to help the students;” “I guess our service to this particular population is OK...the parents come in more often for assistance/resources than the children do;” “but it is hard to connect with these parents;” “I haven’t had any complaints from them, so it’s hard to say if we are providing an adequate service to them;” “nobody has complained that I know of;” “we have only been asked to support their curriculum with readers’ advisory.” Once again, it seems as if these librarians were reactive rather than proactive as the following comments show: “I would do more if asked;” “we will provide them with whatever they need, if they let us know what that is;” “I would like to believe if they have unmet needs, they would communicate them to us.” One also noted that “We don’t receive much feedback from parents asking that we provide additional resources. We offer databases that anyone can utilize...we offer books on the subject of homeschooling. I am not sure what additional material would be helpful.” Yet one librarian also noted that the library “probably provides more support to this population in terms of accommodation, providing resources, and general reference assistance than to the public school population.” Those librarians who answered this question negatively noted that “we need more staff to provide more services. We can have art and music programs;” “...they keep pretty much to themselves and I’m hesitant to approach them when they come in because I don’t want to insult them in any way;” “if I were made more aware of the existence of a larger number of students I believe more outreach on the library’s part would be necessary;” “not really...the space is adequate, we have enough computers, group and quiet study rooms but we lack text books and Curriculum Guides;” “homeschooled students are an invisible population.” One librarian said that “I will be increasing the amount of services provided and this is something I have recently discussed with one homeschooled family.” Another noted that people move to her district “because of the reputation of the school district. People who are interested in homeschooling, as a rule, do not pay the high homes prices ... if they intend to home school.”

Another noted that “We have tried to connect with the homeschooling network in our community, however, it is strongly religion based, and we have been told that all [their] materials come from the network, and the on-line web sites that are used also are religion based.”

The last question in the survey asked what the responding librarians think is most important in providing service to the homeschooled population. 32 librarians offered comments:

- Being flexible and striving to meet their needs, while keeping in mind that this is a population that may require more library services than some other populations
- To get more materials when asked; knowing what they need from us
- Being non-judgmental; being open; understanding, compassion, materials and service
- To meet their needs; implementing their suggestions as they apply to the library
- Providing whatever material is deemed helpful. I am sure we can all be educated on this subject; having a collection that provides rich resources for support; up-to-date, current books and materials, curriculum info and info on alternative schooling options made available in the Parenting Collection
- A welcoming atmosphere and friendly service
- Knowing how many families home school in your community, finding out from them what they really need and share ideas so we can provide for them as best we can
- Parents have to talk to me, I don’t know what they need
- Readers’ advisory...supporting core subject areas such as science, math and history
- The need for more curriculum support...would need to know the state standards and what tests the child should take
- Social interaction for children and adults; they need to have the chance to be together

- Providing extensive resources; obtain materials they need
- Integrating the homeschooled population with the public school children in programs
- Knowledgeable staff with a caring and concerned attitude
- The same services we provide for the entire public; as with all patrons to offer new materials in all formats to enhance learning
- Acting as a liaison between homeschooled families
- We should (and intend to) have school text books available as well as Curriculum Guides
- Providing space for small groups to work
- Parents should bring them to the programs; advise on program suggestions and we would take a look at their recommendations
- Books and websites that enhance their learning ability at home with programs at the library where the students can interact, i.e. bookclubs, crafts and entertainment programs
- “We are here!”

Open – ended answers about what was most important to provide for service to the homeschooled can be grouped into the following patterns: attitude, resources, social interaction, spaces and programming. Most of the respondents seem concerned about how their libraries deal with this special population, but as the above answers note, there is no consistency about what would constitute good library services except as they relate to the general population.

Discussion and Suggestions

There are three main conclusions that can be derived from this study. The first is that the public librarians in this study are not proactive in their services to the homeschooled. They are very much reactive in their approach and services offered. This is different from the way public libraries approach other special populations, such as the senior citizens, second language learners, or baby/ toddlers. The data from this study suggests that public librarians feel that their services to the general population will suffice for the homeschooled.

Secondly, for the most part, there is a lack of consistency in who has responsibility to lead the development of programs or outreach to the homeschooled population. There does not seem to be any structure in place or mechanism to identify which of their patrons might be part of the homeschooled population. No particular librarian in the library actually is responsible for services. All the librarians provide services as they would to the general population.

Third, and probably, most important: is the general view taken by the public librarians responding to this study: that there is no difference between the homeschooled population and the rest of the patrons who use the library. The view is that the homeschooled have the same kinds of needs as everyone else and so the services offered are the same kinds of services offered to everyone.

These implications lead us to the following suggestions. First, there needs to be a greater awareness on the part of public librarians in Nassau and Suffolk Counties for the needs of the homeschooled. The kinds of services and outreach offered by the Johnsburg, Illinois public library still provide a good model for a more extensive breadth of library services than are currently offered by most children’s or young adult departments. Some ideas include offering more curriculum-related materials, as well as providing textbooks, services throughout the school day, a repository of important laws and regulations, streamlining interlibrary loan, modifying loan periods, and providing notices of services and programs

Homeschooling: “Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service

that might be of special interest to the homeschooled, as well as offering some of these programs during the school day.

Second, it is important to have one librarian whose job responsibility is to serve as a liaison with homeschoolers. This person will also be responsible for disseminating knowledge about homeschooling and homeschoolers with the rest of the library staff, including putting in place a mechanism to assist in identifying the district’s homeschooled families. In turn, this would lead to more consistency of awareness and service for homeschoolers. As well, this will provide homeschooling parents, who also pay taxes for public libraries, to actually have a person with whom they can communicate. Perhaps this librarian can aid homeschooling parents in monitoring whether students are in fact getting the 100 hours of library service that NYS requires for 7th and 8th grade students.

Third, public librarians are caring individuals concerned about providing services for all their patrons. This study shows that this is of primary concern to the public librarians who responded to the survey. But there needs to be a greater awareness for the fact that the homeschooled are indeed a special population. Therefore the kinds of services offered to the general population often do not suffice. Rather than waiting to be asked for a service, the public librarians need to be proactive in their services to the homeschooled. Therefore, public libraries should be proactive in creating a supportive and service-oriented environment that is geared to the educational needs of the homeschooled.

This study was limited in its survey of a small sample of public libraries. Additional research from the viewpoint of the homeschooling families is needed. There is a rich opportunity for public libraries to provide exemplary services for this special population within their current structure and collection of resources.

Appendix 1

The survey was formatted for respondents to answer electronically (surveymonkey.com)

The following questions were asked.

1. What is your title?
2. What population of library users do you primarily serve? (check all that apply) infant/toddler, pre-school, elementary school(k-5), middle school(6-8), high school(9-12)
3. What is the name and location of the library where you work?
4. To the best of your knowledge, how many homeschooled students live in the district where you work?
5. Is there a librarian with specific responsibility to support the homeschooled population of the library district?
6. If yes, what is that person’s title or position in the library?
7. What is the nature if the services that are provided to homeschooled students in your library district? (check all that apply) materials/resources, programs/workshops, library skills instruction, reading support services, curriculum guides and textbooks, New York State learning standards, homeschooling networks, curriculum related materials, college preparation
8. Regarding the facility, which of the following is provided to the homeschooled population? (check all that apply) a designated meeting/workspace, computers, audio-visual equipment, other
9. Does your library provide materials or support for parents or tutors of the homeschooled?
10. If yes, describe the materials or support service provided.
11. In your opinion, is the library service to homeschooled students adequate? Please provide insight, opinion and comments in the space provided
12. What do you think is most important in providing service to the homeschooled population? Please comment.

Appendix 2

List of participating public libraries

Nassau:

Malverne
 Rockville Center
 West Hempstead
 Lynbrook
 Plainedge
 Franklin Square
 East Rockaway
 North Bellmore
 Syosset
 Freeport
 Island Trees
 Elmont
 Gold Coast (Glen Head)
 Westbury
 Garden City
 Locust Valley
 Henry Waldinger (Valley Stream)
 Shelter Rock (Albertson)

Suffolk:

Brentwood
 North Babylon
 Deer Park
 Riverhead
 Westhampton
 Sayville
 Copaigue
 Mattituck
 Cold Spring Harbor
 John Jermain (Sag Harbor)
 Port Jefferson
 Quogue
 Hampton Bays
 Floyd (Setauket)
 Montauk

Works Cited

- Avner, J. A. (1989) Homeschoolers: A forgotten clientele? *School Library Journal* 35(11) 29-33.(EJ 398 079).
- Geist, P., Smith, P.D. and de la Pena McCook, K. (1994). Florida librarians respond to home education. *Florida School of Library and information science research group*. (ED 378 971) Publisher info? City, state?
- Hilyard, N. B. (2008). Welcoming homeschoolers to the library. *Public Libraries* 47(3) 17-28.
- Holt, J. and Farenga, P. (2003). Teach your own: The John Holt book of homeschooling. De Capo Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Issue Brief. (2007) 1/5 million homeschooled students in the United States in 2007”, *National Center for Education Statistics*. United States Department of Education.

Homeschooling: “Exploring the Potential of Public Library Service

- Kleist-Tesch,(1988). Homeschoolers and the public library. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*. 3(11).
- La Rue, J. and LaRue, S. (1991). Is anybody home? Schooling and the library. *Wilson Library Bulletin*. 66(1), 32-37, 136-137. (EJ 433 298)
- Author. (2008). Long Island School District Budget Results. Retrieved, date, from <http://www.longislandschools.com/districts>
- Martin, E. (2009). Phone interview with Associate in Educational Research, Office of Information and Recording, NYSED. (1/6/2009)
- Masters, D. G. (1996). Public library services for home schooling. *Eric Digest*. Retrieved, date, from <http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-3/public.html>
- Nemer, K. M. (2002). Understudied education: Toward building a homeschooling research agenda. *National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education*. Teachers College, Columbia University. Is this a book, pamphlet, article? Unsure if citation is correct.
- NYS Home Instruction Regulations 100.10 e ii. (2007) www.leah.org/nysregs.html. (Unsure if citation is correct)
- Scheps, Susan. (1998). The Librarian’s guide to homeschooling resources. American Library Association, Chicago. Author name spelled inconsistently in paper and in citation.
- Slattery, A. (2005). In a class of their own. *School Library Journal*. 51(8) 44-46.
- Wikel, N. (1995). A Community connection: The Public library and homeschoolers. *Emergency Librarian*. 22(3) 13-15.

Peer Reviewed Article

Perceptions and Awareness of Library Services

By Gina Loprinzo

A *bstract:* Many studies have been done to gauge patrons' perceptions of library services, but very few measure patron awareness of these services. In order to enable their patrons to take advantage of all they have to offer, public libraries must determine which areas need improvement or better marketing. In this study, a survey was completed by a random sample of 66 adult patrons of a suburban public library in New York State. Results of the survey showed that overall perceptions of services and staff are positive, but awareness of many services could be increased. Suggestions are made for ways to increase awareness, such as better signage, improved web resources, and staff involvement.

Introduction

Over the years, public libraries have come to mean much more to their communities than just a place to borrow books. They now provide many valuable services, such as Internet access and classes on subjects ranging from information literacy to defensive driving, to name a few. Since library services have changed so drastically in a relatively short time, many people may not be aware of all they have to offer. Therefore, libraries must try to gain an understanding of what services are important to the communities they serve, as well as which currently offered services are being overlooked by their patrons. This will enable libraries to concentrate their promotional efforts on the areas where marketing is most needed. In order to determine where their marketing efforts may be lacking, libraries must come up with a way to gauge their patrons' perceptions and awareness of the various services they have to offer. However, studies done to determine users' perceptions of library services usually focus on the quality and/or value of the services, and neglect to measure patron awareness. Many of these studies, such as ones conducted by Kayongo & Jones (2008), Ladhari & Morales (2008), and Thompson, Kyrillidou, & Cook (2008), use the LibQUAL+™ instrument. According to their website, LibQUAL+™ is a "suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality" (*Welcome to LibQUAL+™*, 2008). Unfortunately, by not gathering data about patron awareness, studies such as these may not be providing a complete picture.

Gina Loprinzo is with the Kent Public Library. She can be reached at: email ginaloprinzo@verizon.net

One such example is a study done by the University of Tehran Central Library to determine how successful they were at meeting users' needs. The findings showed that "although University of Tehran Central Library has conducted several programs for improving its services, because of the lack of identifying the most important aspects of service quality in their customers' ideas, the efforts for providing customer satisfaction has failed to a great extent" (Nejati & Nejati, 2008, p. 580). So the first question for libraries to answer becomes, "On which services do our patrons place the most importance?"

Furthermore, patrons cannot be dissatisfied with services if they don't know about them. There may be instances where patrons are not aware of what are thought of as the most common of library services. It would make sense to concentrate on raising awareness of the services from which many would benefit if members of the community knew they existed.

Conversely, libraries may be wasting resources by promoting services that are already familiar to the public. Therefore, before formulating a plan to improve quality of services and increase user satisfaction, individual libraries must first gauge patron awareness of these services. This will help the libraries determine what services are being underused and enable them to find a focal point for their marketing/educational campaigns. As Balas (2000) points out, "It isn't enough for us to acquire and implement new technologies; we must also reach out to potential users so they know to come and use them (p.60)." In order to do this, the second question for public libraries to answer becomes, "With which services could the members of our community be more familiar?"

As stated earlier, though much has been studied regarding patron satisfaction, much less has been published about studies done to measure public awareness of library services. Approximately 10 years ago, the Library of Congress commissioned such a study which determined that "most adult Americans (59%) [knew] very little or nothing about their national library" (Anonymous, 1999, p. 25). Local public libraries need to ensure their patrons' awareness does not fall to this appallingly low level.

More recently, the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) commissioned an extensive survey across six countries to examine perceptions of library resources, which included questions about awareness of services. Responses were consistent across all six countries. Although 96% of respondents had visited a public library, only 30% had heard of online databases, and even less (16%) had ever used one. A mere 27% reported ever visiting a library's website (De Rosa et al., 2005).

In referencing OCLC's research reports, Tenopir (2006) points out, "the predominant perception of libraries is as a place to borrow printed books, even as libraries' electronic budgets begin to outpace print budgets (p. 36)." This may mean libraries are failing to keep their communities informed as to their role as a modern resource center. Perhaps more people would be using these resources if they were aware of them.

This study is being done to determine which services are being overlooked by the patrons of a suburban public library in New York State, as well as on which services they place the greatest value. The library serves a population of approximately 10,300 adults, of which about 54% (5578) hold library cards. The great majority of people living in the community who are over the age of 18 (88%) are high school graduates, with almost 60% completing at least some college (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

The data collected in this study will be part of a needs assessment, to be used to formulate a marketing strategy. By focusing on those services of which patrons may be unaware, the library will ideally be of more benefit to more people.

Method

Recruitment:

A random sample of library patrons was recruited to participate in the study. Participants were recruited in a number of ways. In some cases, individuals were approached as they entered the library. In other instances, patrons noticed the surveys that were placed in various locations throughout the library, and took it upon themselves to participate. Still others came upon the survey online while visiting the library's website.

A total of 66 individuals participated in the survey, although some respondents did not answer every question. Completion of the survey indicated participants' confirmation that they were 18 years of age or older, as well as their willingness to have their data used for research purposes.

Research Instrument:

The online survey and the paper survey contained basically the same questions (see Appendix). The only difference was that the online version did not include the question, "What was the purpose of your visit to the library today?" The first part of the survey listed 27 different library services. For each service, participants were asked to indicate whether they have ever used the service before, whether they were aware the service was available at this particular library, whether they feel the service is a useful one, and how likely they would be to use the service in the future.

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked questions about how often they visit the library and its website, how much importance they place on library services, and how familiar they feel they are with the library's services. The last question was open-ended, inviting participants to make comments or suggestions.

Procedure

Permission was obtained from the library director to place surveys in the library and a link on the library website's homepage. In order to protect individuals' privacy, surveys that were completed on paper were placed in a drop box located in the library. The online surveys were anonymously completed through Survey Monkey, an Internet-based survey software program. Surveys were collected over a four-week period.

The data retrieved from the surveys were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed to determine which services the library's patrons find to be useful, as well as which services could be better promoted. It was also examined to ascertain in which ways patrons become aware of library services and programs. All of this information will be used to formulate future marketing promotions and plan patron education campaigns.

Results

Perception of Services

In reviewing the data, it became evident that the residents of this suburban town place great value on library services. Out of the 64 participants who responded to the question, "How much importance

would you place on library services for the community?” 90.6% (58) said they felt they were very important, while the remaining 9.4% (6) said they were fairly important. Nearly all of the respondents felt library services were important for their own use as well.

When asked about particular services, participants responded positively overall. For all of the services listed, an overwhelming majority felt they were useful to the community, with the exception of “gaming,” where 12 out of 54 who answered felt it was not a useful service. However, all of the people who responded that they have used this service in the past felt it was a valuable service, and all but one said they would likely continue to use it in the future.

For each of the 27 library services listed on the survey, a great majority of respondents felt the services were useful, even though they may or may not have used the services themselves. For example, although only one person who responded had taken advantage of the defensive driving classes offered at the library, over 98% said they felt the service was useful to the community. The survey showed similar results for the other services that have been used infrequently, with the number of people who feel the services are useful being much higher than the number who have used them in the past.

In addition, many respondents felt services were useful to the community even if they had no intention of using them in the future. For example, 43 people said they would definitely not take advantage of English as a Second Language classes in the future; however, 86% of these respondents (37) said these classes were useful for the community.

To get an idea of how satisfied patrons are with the services at the library, the surveys were examined to determine how likely participants would be to continue using a service they have used in the past. Table 1 shows the number of people who have used each of the library services before, and how many would be likely to use the services in the future. These data can be used to determine which services may need evaluation, while taking into consideration factors that may affect users’ decisions. For example, patrons with grown children may not take advantage of story time as they once did. Other services may be perceived as being needed only once, such as a defensive driving class.

Awareness of Services

Most participants felt they were aware of what the library has to offer. When responding to the question, “How familiar are you with the library’s services?” only 12 (18.7%) admitted they were “not very familiar” with them, while the remaining felt they were “fairly familiar” (51.6%) or “very familiar” (29.7%). However, in another section of the survey, where participants were asked to indicate whether they were aware of the various services offered at the library, out of the 66 participants, almost half (30) indicated they were unaware of at least 10 of the 27 services listed, with several more leaving parts of this section blank. It is interesting to note that only 8 of these 30 respondents felt they were “not very familiar” with the library’s services.

Out of the 27 library services listed, there were only 4 services that were familiar to more than 80% of those who responded. These included some of the most commonly used services: interlibrary loan; story time; used book sales; and computer/Internet access. There were nine services that were unfamiliar to more than half of the respondents (see Table 2).

The data were examined to determine whether people who were unaware of a particular library service might be potential users of that service. It was noted that, of the 29 people who were unaware that downloadable audiobooks were available, 10 responded they would likely or definitely take advantage of them, and 5 were undecided. There were similar results for other services as well. For defensive driv-

ing classes, 39 people said they were unaware of this service, yet 17 of them said they might use it in the future, and 6 were undecided. Table 3 shows the potential new users of each service, by illustrating the number of people who were unaware of each service, and the number out of these respondents who indicated they would consider using the service in the future. Only those services with a significant number of people who were unfamiliar with them (more than 10) are included in **this table**. There are 15 services listed for which at least half of the people who were unaware of the service could be potential users of that service.

According to the data, the services that were used most infrequently in the past were not necessarily the ones that were unfamiliar to the respondents. For example, although only six respondents had participated in book discussions in the past, 45 people said they were aware that this service was available. Out of all the respondents, 12 people said they would likely take advantage of this service in the future, and an additional 22 were still undecided. It is unclear why some individuals have not used certain services of which they were aware and in which they have an interest.

Obtaining Information About Services

As mentioned above, most people felt they were familiar with the library's services. Of the 19 people who responded that they were "very familiar" with them, 68.4% indicated they visit the library at least once a week, while 72.2% said they visited the library's website that often. When asked where they most often obtain information about library services, the most common answer among this group was "signs/brochures in the library" (57%), followed by the library's website (50%) and library staff (36%). It should be noted here that many participants who filled out the paper surveys checked off more than one response to this question, while online participants did not have this option. The online survey included an "other" option for this question, but no one took advantage of it to include more than one choice.

In comparing this data to the responses from the 12 participants who indicated they were not very familiar with the library's services, it is seen that a lower number (5 participants or 41%) visits the library at least once a week. In fact, the same number said they visit less than once a month. In addition, everyone in this group indicated they rarely or never visit the library's website. Like the participants who felt they are familiar with library services, this group most often obtains news about library services from signs/brochures in the library (58%), but they also rely on family and friends for the information (42%).

These results are consistent with the responses from the 30 people who were unaware of at least 10 library services, with about half indicating they most often obtain information about the library from signs and brochures, and nine depending on friends and family. Of these respondents, about half indicated they visit the library about once a month or more, while nine visited only occasionally (less than once a month).

All of the survey participants said they felt fairly comfortable (19%) or very comfortable (81%) approaching library staff. In fact, many commented on the staff's approachability and helpfulness in the open-ended section of the survey.

Discussion

This study was done to measure patrons' perceptions and awareness of the services offered by their public library. The overall perception of the library seems to be a positive one; however, the study has shown that the patrons of this library could be better informed about the services their library offers.

The results of the survey make it clear that this community values its library in general. The fact that they whole-heartedly support library services whether or not they use the services themselves is evidence of this. Patrons seem to be generally satisfied with the services they have used in the past. For the most part, participants responded positively about continuing to use the services that can be thought of as ongoing services (ones that people tend to keep using over time). It must be understood that some services will have a constantly changing patron base, as children get older (e.g. story time), and skills are learned (e.g. computer literacy classes). This may account for some of the negative responses in this category. Even so, with the exception of a few, the majority of people who have used each service said they would be likely to use the service again.

Although respondents on the whole felt they were familiar with the library's services, the results of the survey paint a different picture. Not surprisingly, the most "traditional" library services, such as interlibrary loan and "hold an item," were familiar to a great majority of participants. However, it was surprising to note how many patrons were unaware of some of the more common library services of today, with which library staff may assume their patrons are familiar. For example, over 25% of the survey participants were not aware of the library's online catalog. Almost as many people were unaware that they could request an item online; yet almost all said they would consider doing so in the future. Therefore, it may be advisable for staff to refrain from making assumptions about which services are familiar to their patrons, and take any opportunity to educate patrons about the services available to them.

Looking at the number of people who said they might use the services about which they were previously unaware, it becomes apparent that the library needs to reach out to patrons who are not as informed about library services as they could be. The question is how to identify these potential users.

The answer may lie with library staff. The fact that the community views the staff in such a positive light is a tremendous asset to the library. Of course, staff members cannot talk about all services to all of the patrons with whom they come into contact. However, sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement to get a patron to ask about something in which they have an interest. A small button saying, "Ask me about...(a particular service)" can help spark a conversation. A similar sign on the circulation desk can produce the same results. These can be rotated at regular intervals to promote various services.

Although people who are not as familiar with library services do not visit the library or its website as often as people who are more aware of them, what they have in common is how they most often obtain information about library programs. The majority of both groups tend to rely on signs and brochures in the library. Does this mean the library should plaster its walls with signs about its services? Unfortunately, this would likely cause the average patron to tune them out. On the survey, one participant commented that the bulletin boards needed to be better organized and pleasing to the eye. This may be the first step to increasing patron awareness about library services in general. Well-designed and strategically placed signs can help get the word out to patrons who have already made the first step of walking through the door.

At this library, a folder containing brochures about various services is given to patrons applying for a library card for the first time. Much of this information was assembled over the last several years. Therefore, there are a number of people who have had cards for many years, who may never have gotten

Don't Cut It Alone

this information. Another way to increase awareness of services is for library staff to offer these folders (or individual brochures) to people who come to the desk with inquiries and to those renewing the registration on their old cards.

Perhaps the easiest way to organize information about library services for patrons outside the library is on its website. Since this was the second most common way people said they obtain their information about the library, it makes sense to use it to the best possible advantage. The library has an existing calendar of events, which is very helpful, but perhaps an additional “at your library” page, with more detailed information about library services would be advantageous. Or, a particular program or service could be highlighted on a special “what’s happening” page each week.

Of course, this does not help the people who said they have never visited the library’s website. However, all it might take to reach out to these patrons is to place a sign in the library, with the invitation “visit us online” and the library’s web address.

The results of this study can help this particular library get an idea of which of its services may be underused. By focusing on those services that are shown in Table 3 to have high percentages of potential new users, the library can hope to reach the greatest number of people who are not taking advantage of all they could be.

Here, again, staff members are probably the library’s greatest assets. By tuning into patrons’ needs and interests, staff members can make suggestions and educate users as to what programs and services from which they might benefit. For example, a patron who comes in talking animatedly about the book he or she just finished reading may be interested in joining a book club. It only takes a moment to find out if that patron is aware of that type of program.

The first step in a library’s efforts to understand and therefore best serve their communities is to measure patrons’ perceptions and awareness of the services they offer. A simple study such as this one can be done at any library that wants to assess how its community views it. This study has shown that the patrons of this suburban library greatly value its services, but can be much more familiar with them. The knowledge gained will help identify those areas that need improvement, so their patrons can take advantage of all that is available to them.

References

- Anonymous. (1999, April). LC awareness. *American Libraries*, 30(4), 25. Retrieved September 5, 2008, from Research Library database.
- Balas, J. I. (2000, September). If you build it, will they come? *Computers in Libraries*, 20(8), 60-62. Retrieved September 5, 2008, from Research Library database.
- De Rosa, C., Cantrell, J., Cellentani, D., Hawk, J., Jenkins, L., & Wilson, A. (2005). *Perceptions of libraries and information resources: a report to the OCLC membership*. Retrieved September 14, 2008, from http://www.oclc.org/reports/pdfs/Percept_all.pdf
- Kayongo, J., & Jones, S. (2008). Faculty perception of information control using LibQUAL+™ indicators. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 34(2), 130-138. Retrieved September 5, 2008, from ScienceDirect database.

- Ladhari, R., & Morales, M. (2008). *Perceived service quality, perceived value and recommendation: a study among Canadian public library users. Library Management, 29(4/5), 352-366. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from Emerald database.*
- Nejati, M., & Nejati, M. (2008). Service quality at University of Tehran Central Library. *Library Management, 29(6/7), 571-582. Retrieved September 13, 2008, from Emerald database.*
- Tenopir, C. (2006). Perception of library value. *Library Journal, 131(20), 36. Retrieved September 5, 2008, from ABI/INFORM Global database.*
- Thompson, B., Kyrillidou, M., & Cook, C. (2008). Library users' service desires: a LibQUAL+ study. *The Library Quarterly, 78(1), 1. Retrieved September 13, 2008, from Research Library database.*
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *QT-P20. Educational Attainment by Sex: 2000: Kent town, Putnam County, New York.* Retrieved November 23, 2008 from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=06000US3607939331&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U_QTP20&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U
- Welcome to LibQUAL+™!* (2008). Retrieved September 14, 2008, from <http://www.libqual.org/index.cfm>.

Appendix

Survey Cover Letter and Instrument

Hello. My name is _____. As part of a research course, I am conducting a study to measure patrons' perceptions and awareness of the services offered by the public library. The title of the study is "What are patrons' perceptions of library services, and how aware are they of the services at the Kent Public Library?" I am hoping this study will help the Kent Library to better serve its community.

Participation in this research study is strictly voluntary, and there will be no negative repercussions if you choose to decline or discontinue participation once started. By completing and returning the attached survey, you are indicating your willingness to have your data used for this study, and that you are at least 18 years of age.

The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Please be completely honest in your answers. All responses will be kept completely confidential, and you will not be individually identified in any way. You may return your completed survey to the drop box to the left of the circulation desk. If you have any questions, feel free to see me or contact me at the library at

Thank you for your time!

Table 1*Participants' likelihood of using a service again.*

Service	Have used before	Likely to use again	*Percentage who would use again
Interlibrary loan	56	54	96.4%
Book discussions	6	4	66.7%
Hold an item	59	56	94.9%
Story time	33	20	60.6%
Used book sales	46	42	91.3%
Gaming	12	11	91.7%
Reading Buddies	16	7	43.8%
Dog Therapy	7	4	57.1%
Homework Help	10	4	40.0%
Art exhibits	21	17	81.0%
Meeting/conference rooms	17	13	76.5%
Tax preparation	2	0	0%
Computer/Internet access	39	31	79.5%
Wireless Internet	21	20	95.2%
Online newsletter	23	18	78.3%
Online catalog	40	38	95.0%
Manage account online (check due dates/renew)	37	34	91.9%
Request-a-title online	38	35	92.1%
Online databases	27	26	96.3%

Don't Cut It Alone

Paying fines online	8	6	75.0%
Book review blog	6	5	83.3%
Downloadable audiobooks	8	5	62.5%
Defensive Driving classes	1	0	0%
English as a Second Language classes	3	1	33.3%
Computer literacy classes	7	3	42.9%
Craft classes	13	9	69.2%
Seminars (health, investment, etc.)	8	4	50.0%

Note. “Likely to use again” includes participants who responded “probably” or “definitely” would use the service in the future. Some participants were undecided or did not respond to every question. *Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 2

Participants’ Responses to Question: “Were You Aware of This Service at the Library?”

Service	Yes	No	Response count	Percentage unaware
Interlibrary loan	60	1	61	1.6%
Book discussions	45	14	59	23.7%
Hold an item	61	0	61	0%
Story time	58	2	60	3.3%
Used book sales	57	3	60	5.0%
Gaming	27	30	57	52.6%
Reading Buddies	40	19	59	32.2%
Dog Therapy	19	40	59	67.8%

Don't Cut It Alone

Homework Help	41	17	58	29.3%
Art exhibits	39	20	59	33.9%
Meeting/conference rooms	44	14	58	24.1%
Tax preparation	13	44	57	77.2%
Computer/Internet access	56	1	57	1.8%
Wireless Internet	36	19	55	34.5%
Online newsletter	31	23	54	42.6%
Online catalog	41	14	55	25.5%
Manage account online (check due dates/renew)	38	15	53	28.3%
Request-a-title online	42	11	53	20.8%
Online databases	35	19	54	35.2%
Paying fines online	24	31	55	56.4%
Book review blog	12	41	53	77.4%
Downloadable audiobooks	26	29	55	52.7%
Defensive Driving classes	17	39	56	69.6%
English as a Second Language classes	15	39	54	72.2%
Computer literacy classes	31	24	55	43.6%
Craft classes	25	31	56	55.4%
Seminars (health, investment, etc.)	32	24	56	42.9%

Note. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 3*Number of Potential Users Who Were Unaware of Library Services.*

Service	Number unaware	Potential new users	Percentage
Book discussions	14	8	57.1%
Gaming	30	11	36.7%
Reading Buddies	19	4	21.1%
Dog Therapy	40	8	20.0%
Homework Help	17	6	35.3%
Art exhibits	20	11	55.0%
Meeting/conference rooms	14	7	50.0%
Tax preparation	44	11	25.0%
Wireless Internet	19	13	68.4%
Online newsletter	23	13	56.5%
Online catalog	14	9	64.3%
Manage account online (check due dates/renew)	15	11	73.3%
Request-a-title online	11	10	90.9%
Online databases	19	12	63.2%
Paying fines online	31	16	51.6%
Book review blog	41	24	58.5%
Downloadable audiobooks	29	15	51.7%
Defensive Driving classes	39	23	59.0%
English as a Second Language classes	39	2	5.1%
Computer literacy classes	24	11	45.8%

Don't Cut It Alone

Craft classes	31	12	38.7%
Seminars (health, investment, etc.)	24	15	62.5%

Note. Number of potential new users includes those respondents who said they would definitely use the service, would probably use the service, or were undecided about the service.

*Percentages listed indicate number of potential users out of those who were unaware of that service, and are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Seminars (health, investment, etc.) Yes No Yes No Yes No 1 2 3
4 5

Please circle your answers, indicating: whether you have used these library services in the past; whether you were aware that the services were offered at Kent Library; if you feel the service is useful to the community; and how likely you would be to use each service.

1 = definitely not; 2 = unlikely; 3 = not sure/undecided; 4 = probably; 5 = definitely would

Services:	Have you used this service before?		aware of this service at Kent Lib?		Do you feel that this service is useful?		How likely would you be to use this service?				
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Interlibrary loan	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Book discussions	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Hold an item	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Storytime	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Used book sales	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Gaming	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Reading Buddies	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Dog Therapy	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Homework Help	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Art exhibits	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting/conference rooms	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Tax preparation	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Computer/Internet access	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Wireless Internet	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Remote Services:											
Online newsletter	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Online catalog	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Manage Account online (check due dates/renew)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Request-a-title online	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Online databases	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Paying fines online	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Book review blog	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Downloadable audiobooks	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Classes:											
Defensive Driving	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
English as a Second Language	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Computer literacy	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Crafts	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Seminars (health, investment, etc.)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

What was the purpose of your visit to the library today? _____

How often do you visit the library?

___ at least weekly ___ at least monthly ___ less than once/month ___ never

How often do you visit the library's website?

___ at least weekly ___ at least monthly ___ less than once/month ___ never

Where do you most often learn about library services/events?

___ Newspaper ___ Signs/brochures in the library ___ Library staff ___ Friends/family
___ Library website ___ Other (please specify) _____

How much importance would you place on library services for your own use?

___ None at all ___ Not very important ___ Fairly Important ___ Very Important

How much importance would you place on library services for the community?

___ None at all ___ Not very important ___ Fairly important ___ Very important

In your opinion, how familiar are you with the library's services?

___ Not at all ___ Not very familiar ___ Fairly familiar ___ Very familiar

How comfortable are you approaching library staff?

___ Not at all ___ Fairly uncomfortable ___ Fairly comfortable ___ Very comfortable

Do you have any suggestions or comments about the services offered at Kent Library?
