

# **OUTREACH SERVICES:**

## **Promoting Library Resources, Building Community Presence**

VLA 2016 Presentation  
Pearl & Adam  
York County Public Library

Contact  
[reference@yorkcounty.gov](mailto:reference@yorkcounty.gov)

# FINDING THE RIGHT HOOK(S)...



- “Hooking” the patron—constant game we play as library staff: how do we get current patrons to use the library and/or use library resources? How do we grab the potential user?
- Emphasis on print and digital advertising in many locations—flyers, website ads, newspaper blurbs and Facebook updates
  - Passive—relies on patrons noticing information or finding their way to the location of the ad
- Outreach Services as a potential promotional avenue for the library

# OUTREACH SERVICES

## ■ **Initial Model**

- Connecting patrons to materials
- Limited off-site Programming

## ■ **Expanded Model**

- Connecting patrons to materials AND resources
- Digital resource demonstrations and training
- Various off-site programming
- Presence at community and school events
- Working with local partnerships

# WHY EXPAND EFFORTS?

- **“Extending Access”**: Reach sections of the community that might not typically use the actual library.
- **“More than Just Books”**: Broaden the advertising of library resources and services.
- **“Strengthen the Brand”**: Being visible in the community may bring about positive short-term and long-term impacts.

# YORK COUNTY LIBRARY OUTREACH SERVICES

2014-  
Present

# COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

## 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates for York County, VA

	Estimate
<b>Total:</b>	67,837
<b>White alone</b>	48,671
<b>Black or African American alone</b>	8,194
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</b>	254
<b>Asian alone</b>	3,438
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</b>	56
<b>Some other race alone</b>	58
<b>Two or more races</b>	3,021
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	4,145
<b>Median household income</b>	\$84,580
<b>Mean household income</b>	\$102,872



215 sq mi total (105 sq mi land, 110 sq mi water)

# YCPL OUTREACH

- **Early 2014:** Creation of Outreach Services
  - Exclusively Mobile stops—local rehabilitation centers and senior living communities
  
- **Spring/Summer 2015:** Expansion on the Brain
  - New Hire / Evaluation of Current Efforts
  
- **Fall 2015-Fall 2016:** New Opportunities
  - Partnerships, Programming, Event Presence

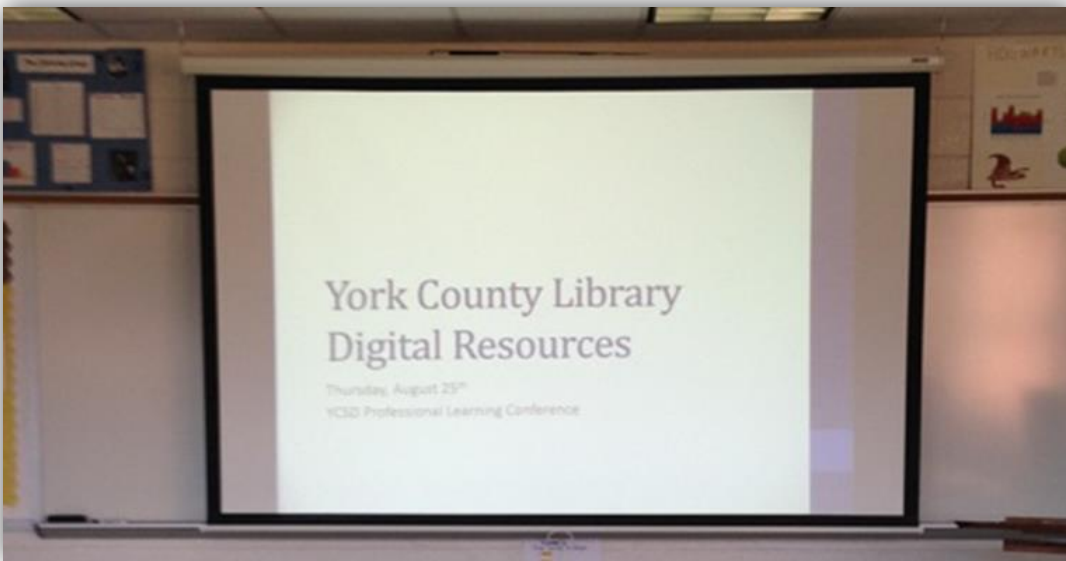


**ORIGINAL:**  
**SENIOR**  
**STOPS**

**NEW:**  
**\* DIGITAL**  
**RESOURCE**  
**PRESENTATIONS**

**\* TECHNOLOGY**  
**HELP SESSIONS**





**WORKING  
WITH  
SCHOOL  
DIVISION**

**LED TO**

**\* OVERDRIVE  
TALKS TO  
LIBRARIANS**

**\* BACK-TO-  
SCHOOL VISITS**

**\* PROFESSIONAL  
LEARNING  
CONFERENCE  
PRESENTATIONS  
AND KIOSK**



## YORKTOWN MARKET DAYS

\* PROMOTE  
ONLINE  
RESOURCES

\* PROMOTE  
SUMMER  
READING  
PROGRAM

\* PROGRAMMING  
SURVEY



# CHALLENGES

# STAFFING

- Our Challenge: Finding Willing Person to fill a Work-as-Required, low pay position
  - Secondary Challenge: Balancing schedule needs when pulling Reference staff out of rotation to work an Outreach event
- General Challenge: Budget Concerns, Position Availability
  - Questions to Consider
    - Can you afford a FT or PT outreach employee?
    - Can you pull someone from your existing staff (“other duties as required”)?
- *We Recommend*: Full-time positions go hand in hand with staff retention. Make it happen if at all position.
  - It costs time and money to hire and train Outreach staff—even more so if the position has higher turnover.
  - Quality, motivated employees don’t tend to last in poorly-paid, low hour positions.

# LOGISTICS/MATERIALS

- **Our Challenge: Acquiring needed equipment and technology**
  - **Transportation:** Repurpose book courier van.
  - **Technology:** Investment in laptop for circulation duties, Wi-Fi hotspot; obtained hand-held scanner from storage.
- **General Challenge: Cost / Availability of Transportation and Materials**
  - **Secondary Challenge:** Convincing others to acquire the necessary equipment and transportation
- *We recommend:* Determine what is essential for your department or staff and emphasize it as a long-term investment for outreach success.
  - Use what's already available to you at the library, and find out what resources may be possible through your local government vehicle fleet and/or IT department (if applicable).
  - Look for community partners to help with off-setting costs.
  - Research technology brands to pick reliable devices.



# POLICY ISSUES

- If you offer material for circulation, it's important to consider:
  - Will you extend regular library policy to Outreach patrons, or will you modify existing policies as needed?
  - What needs to be rigidly enforced, and what can you be flexible about?
  - What will be your procedure for dealing with lost items?
- Our challenge: In recent months, we've had to deal with abuse of the extended checkouts and fine-free status on the part of active and mobile seniors signing up at Senior Stops and then raising ruckus at actual library locations.
- *We Recommend:*
  - Adapt Policy to Delivery Schedule: Limited visitation schedules tend to go hand-in-hand with giving outreach patrons extended checkouts and fine-free status.
  - Reassess policy every 6-12 months to make sure that everything is going smoothly.
  - Don't turn a blind eye to fine-free status & extended checkout abuse—deal with it on a case-by-case basis.

# DEFINING SUCCESS & EXPECTATIONS

- Outreach success should be measured in more than just numbers.
  - Libraries can be numbers-driven institutions—don't apply same "statistics-driven" expectations to Outreach programs and visits as there's more at play than simply gathering attendance stats.
  - Keep things in perspective—you can't control who comes to Outreach events, but you have the potential to make an impact every time.
- Adjust expectations accordingly, especially when trying new things.
- Branch out—work with community partners to connect with different areas of your service area.

**OUTREACH SERVICES**  
**CONSIDERING YOUR NEXT MOVE**



# GETTING STARTED

- Assess the Now
  - Leadership
  - Staff and Potential Staff Assets
  - Current Outreach Efforts
  - Budget
  - Informal Community Needs Analysis
- Develop Short-term/Long-Term Goals

# GENERAL TIPS

1. Think of different ways to connect your library's resources and services to the needs of the community.
2. Identify key library players and keep an open channel of discussion.
3. Pursue community partnerships.
4. Use what you already have on-hand to minimize certain costs.
5. Invest in signage.

# CONCLUSIONS

## ■ Multifunctional Role of Outreach

- Helping patrons meet educational and intellectual goals
- Reaching potential patrons in “the wild”
- Advertising library resources and services

## ■ Larger Impact

- Evidence of active presence in the community
- Use to advocate on behalf of the library
- Meet strategic plan goals

**QUESTIONS?**

# DISCUSSION

- Small-Group Dialogue:
  - Converse with awesome people about topics like:
    - What each library system does for Outreach
    - Services and Programs: What's worked and what hasn't
    - Potential outreach ideas to try out / Helpful recommendations
    - Outreach as a promotional tool
  - Discussion Questions available as a guide!