

ARSL 2017 Report

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ARSL was a blast; I came back with so much I want to try! I think the sessions that I can most readily apply to my library were the ones on after hours programming, legal research, and a community garden.

My first year I took the time to get to know my patrons and community. This year, I've been experimenting and introducing new ideas to see how they might work out. **After hours programs** is something I've considered before, but didn't have a solid knowledge of logistics. The library in Iowa that led this session answered many of my questions. My main takeaways were:

- Check city regulation and fire code on people in the library after hours
- Can limit to 18 years and up
- Waivers to sign
- Consider emergencies/how monitor who's in and out.
- Don't charge a "fee", and call it a "suggested donation" amount
- Check on school calendar for their sports/extracurriculars

Events that they've done include yoga, wine tasting/painting if ordinances allow, mini golf, laser-tag, video game trucks, hot chocolate and Netflix if licenses allows, jewelry making, wine crafts, last call coloring at a bar (21+), and readers meetup with apps. I am now planning on collaborating with our local catering company to provide appetizers after hours for a reader's meetup where we talk about new books. My version would come with a few perks! Patrons that participate would not only get delicious catered food, but the opportunity to see brand new books not even on the shelf yet! They would also have the opportunity to check them out right then and there, no waitlists no holds. I'm toying with the idea of making it a fundraiser event; we shall see!

The **legal resource** session appealed to me because we are a block away from the jail, and we are often the first place people come after being released. Usually they want to use the phone; however, there are many times that they have questions about how they can find information that pertains to their situation. From the session we received many free and fee based resources that would help a non-lawyer navigate the legal system. The law librarian presenting said 97% of low income persons involved in civil disputes do not consult with a lawyer, and are not aware of resources available to them to help. The handout of sources included:

- A nonprofit legal services corporation that often provides advice and aid to those meeting the income requirements.
- Court procedure manuals whose language is targeting non-lawyer community members; we don't want the reason a person loses to be a default judgement because they didn't think they had to come to court that day.
- Go to the clerk of courts and ask what we as a library can do. Many clerk of courts, for example, cannot directly tell people which form they need to fill out, as that's considered by some states to be practicing law. However, the law librarian presenting suggested a way around that; the clerk directs people to the library suggesting that legal information may be found there. Somehow, enough information is exchanged between the clerk and library that the person ends up with the correct forms.
- Law students can take a case under the supervision of a practicing lawyer.
- Lawyers have a requirement to have 'x' number of pro bono assistance hours.

While we can't interpret any law content, we can show them resources that might be helpful to them in their case.

The **community garden** located in a community park resulted from city funds and grants in health literacy, gardening, construction, and permaculture. It grew from there to be a certified retirement community space, and to have the ability to harvest rain for reuse. The library created guidelines people had to sign and abide by to help keep the project sustainable. There were plots of garden boxes that were rented out, and two days a month "busy bee" days were scheduled where community members worked together on the garden as a whole. Community buy-in was very important to give the city a reason to continue providing funds for the garden. It hosted nature classes, art displays, canning classes, life skills for students, and often times the food was donated to a food bank or farmers market. The garden also provided the opportunity for community service hours to those that needed it. I'm unsure how sustainable this idea would be in our community; would people stop weeding and working in the garden after a while? My thought is to start small and try out a community herb garden. We can see about changing the landscaping a bit from foliage to food. I also would consider collaborating with groups like the Girl Scouts and 4-H, or create a new junior gardener's club under the supervision of our master gardeners group.

So much information, so little time! Thank you WVLS for the ARSL scholarship package!