Joint Use Libraries: Agony and Ecstasy

Presenters
Cathy Park – Director of Harris County Public Library (cpark@hcpl.net)
Judy Murray – Vice President of Instruction – Tomball College (judy.i.murray@nhmcd.edu)
Earl Campa – Vice President for Student Success – Cy-Fair College (earl.campa@nhmccd.edu)

Facilitator
Wendy Schneider – Co-Director – Tomball College/Community Library
Tomball College
Why Did this Happen?

Clear Lake
County Commissioner & City Officials

Cy- Fair
County Commissioner, NHMCCD Chancellor and the College President

Tomball
County Commissioner, NHMCCD Chancellor and the College President
## Who Was Involved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>CFC</th>
<th>TC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NHMCCD and Colleges</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris County Public Library</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris County Officials</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery County Public Library</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence of the Community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Faculty and Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Staff</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Officials</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends Groups</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Were the Challenges To Success?

- Developing working rapport among the planning team
- Limited Time to complete physical design, operations, technical issues, staffing, circulations, and collections
- Blending the operations of a public library and community college into a seamless integrated community library for students and the public - circulation processes, collection systems, policies, procedures, and technical operations
What Were the Challenges To Success?

• Working with residents in focus groups to explain the benefits of placing the public library on the community college campus instead of a larger library at the existing site

• No single organization in control – constant collaboration and approval needed

• Writing and obtaining approval of the contract
How Did You Turn Challenges Into Opportunity / Success?

- Establishing the common goal of a totally seamless integrated library providing excellent service to the entire community

- New facilities vs. established facilities

- Keeping all team members focused on planning the building and operations for the common goal

- Innovative service approach of both institutions

- Developing a working rapport among the planning team with the willingness to openly and respectfully discuss concerns
How Did You Turn Challenges Into Opportunity / Success?

- College’s goal of providing a true community learning center
- Establishing and addressing the potential deal breakers
- Always looked for a solution
- Looked beyond the traditional approach to design
What is the Key to Success?

• Working together

• All concerns are communicated

• Operational Steering Committee and Executive Steering Committee comprised of key staff members

• Regular communications between the college president and HCPL director

• Behavioral hiring technique
What is the Key to Success?

• Cy-Fair director attends HCPL manager’s meetings and college director’s meetings

• Children’s and young adult librarians attend HCPL meetings

• Staff trained on HCPL circulation and database systems

• Staff attends training for both HCPL and NHMCCD

• HARMONIC
What Were the First Year Challenges?

• Hiring and training staff so they could operate as a fully functioning team
• Librarians having faculty status with other responsibilities in addition to library responsibilities
• Librarians having offices outside the library
• Resolving new issues, policies, procedures as they evolve
• Tomball – integrating two separate staff in one building – communication
• Tomball – resolving issues between co-directors
What does Success look like?

- Three significant library buildings:
  - 42,000, 72,000 and 78,000 square feet
- Separate children’s and teen’s room in each building
- Self check out machines in each facility
- Cafés in the Cy-Fair and Clear Lake libraries
- Drive through book drop and full services drive through service window at Tomball
- Computer training labs at each facility
- Friends’ bookstore at each facility
- Study rooms, conference rooms at each facility
- Over 510 public access computers and over 400,000 items for checkout
What does Success look like?

- Study rooms and conference rooms at each facility
- Over 510 public access computers and over 400,000 items for checkout
- Great weekly hours of operations:
  - Cy-Fair = 84.5 hours
  - Tomball = 71 hours
  - Clear Lake = 63 hours
- Cy-Fair and Clear Lake open 7 days a week
- Tutoring
- Career counseling
- Assistive technology lab at Cy-Fair
Was It Worth It?

• “Great job! Great Service! My kids and myself love the kids library.”
• “We love your hard work and dedication to getting our books to us on time.”
• “Love this branch. The reference, kids, and holds areas are wonderful.”
• “I love this library! You go!!”
• “I love this library’s books.”
• “I appreciate how courteous and helpful everyone is in this library”
• “I love this library especially being able to use my computer to request them.”
• “This is the best library I have been to.”
Was It Worth It?

• “I think this library is excellent and great for the public. I like the idea of having access to the college books as well. Thanks!”

• “The library at Tomball College is the best library I have ever had the pleasure of visiting. When I first entered, I was overwhelmed and though about leaving but the staff was extremely friendly and more than helpful. If we could enter our library in a beauty contest I’m sure we would take first place. Thank you for a wonderful library.”
Was It Worth It?

The following was written by a review committee with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools:

“Cy-Fair College is commended for the collaboration and integrated model it has designed and successfully implemented for its library, and more exclusively, its Learning Commons. Planned jointly with the Harris County Public Library system and Cy-Fair College, the Learning Commons is already a model of integrated learning that expands the concept of community and makes seamless, indeed interchangeable, the roles of the teacher and learner.”

“The learning space brings together a wide array of student support services, knowledgeable staff, state-of-the-art technology and collaborative stewardship of state, local and federal funds to redefine for all of us the true meaning of ‘community’ in community colleges.”
TOMBALL CAFE
CHILDREN’S LIBRARY
TOMBALL CHECKOUT/CIRCULATION DESK
CLEAR LAKE ENTRANCE
CLEAR LAKE

Children’s Library

Mural
CY-FAIR RESEARCH & TUTORING
CHILDREN’S LIBRARY
SELF SERVICE RESERVE
SELF CHECKOUT