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How the public library contributes to community building: a case study

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HOW THE PUBLIC LIBRARY CONTRIBUTES TO
COMMUNITY BUILDING: A CASE STUDY

by
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ABSTRACT

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HOW THE PUBLIC LIBRARY CONTRIBUTES
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The purpose of this study was to investigate how one local New Jersey public library

contributed to the revitalization efforts of its community by building social networks that

benefitted all members of the community. Because the nature of the study dealt with

conditions that were social, the qualitative method of research was chosen. A personal

interview was used to collect information on how the library built social networks

within the community it served by identifying and connecting the library's assets to the

community's. The data were compared to a model developed from a previous study, *The

Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building* (2005), conducted by John

Kretzmann and Susan Rans from the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at

the Northwestern University in Evanston Illinois. The study concluded that a small

public library can contribute to the development efforts of a community if the library

takes a holistic, comprehensive approach to its out reach and library service efforts.

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I would also like to thank my husband, Carl and my children, Samantha and Matthew for not only supporting my long-term commitment to higher education, but for being genuinely interested in every lesson I set out to learn. I hope I have been a good influence on all of you.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Significance of the topic

The recent decline of available tax dollars in county and municipal governments

has caused many local elected officials to question the necessity of many community

institutions and services. Yet, at the same time, local officials continue to grapple with the

inherent problems associated with neighborhoods that lack the social interaction required

to make a community thrive.   Successful community development depends on the

effective use of a community's existing assets. However, in recent years, the increasing

availability of the Internet combined with the proliferation of large chain bookstores and

cafes have led many to believe that the public library is no longer an essential part of the

community. To reinforce the importance of the local library, library administrators must

show how public libraries help revitalize communities.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how one local New Jersey public

library contributed to the revitalization efforts of its community. Public libraries engage

communities through multiple levels of involvement. By discovering and mobilizing the

preexisting layers of assets present in every community, public libraries can create a

strong social infrastructure that promotes reinvestment and development. Libraries build

social networks by connecting civically engaged individuals, voluntary associations,

institutions, and businesses. Libraries also promote development when they expand the existing physical infrastructure of a community by creating a public space that welcomes the unique talents and interests of its local neighborhoods.

When assessing a community's preexisting assets, the library should begin with the skills and resources of its individuals. Every community has gifted and caring members which contribute to the stability of the community. The library can harness these resources by bring people together. The foundation of a strong social network is made of individual connections.

Because individual connections are reinforced through affiliations, civic-minded individuals within communities usually make their own connections with like-minded people by forming voluntary associations. Voluntary associations help build long-lasting relationships. The library can strengthen the foundation of a social network made up of individuals by introducing members of various voluntary associations to each other.

In addition, every community, regardless of its economic conditions, contains public institutions that support its individuals and voluntary associations. Local institutions such as schools, parks, and churches all play a role in the development of the community. By collaborating with other local public institutions, the library can create social connections by coordinating its services with other public institutions which can facilitate an overall reduction of costs.

Because money spent within a community brings vitality to its surroundings, a reciprocal relationship between the library and the business community can also strengthen a growing economy. The library can directly support the local economy by

providing employment opportunities to neighborhood residents and by purchasing goods and services from local merchants. The library can also indirectly contribute to the local economy by bringing foot traffic to neighborhood commercial districts and by offering valuable services to business communities for free.

In a community where public spaces are limited, the public library can also help to expand the existing physical infrastructure. The local library can provide an inclusive meeting space that connects people to their community. Unlike other public spaces which are often used by a limited portion of the population, the public library can accommodate all community interests and activities. The mere physical presence of a well-placed library can encourage communication between groups that normally do not come into contact with each other.

Lastly, the library can contribute to the cultural identity of a community by embracing the diverse characteristics of all the residents it serves. When the library reflects and appreciates the interest and concerns of all its neighbors, the library creates a sense of pride and joint ownership which helps the community to thrive.

Objective

The objective of the study was to investigate the steps the Glassboro Public Library in Glassboro, New Jersey was taking to build social networks within the community to promote reinvestment and development. The following questions were addressed:

How the library connected with individuals within the community who have expressed an interest in local events?

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How the library connected with voluntary associations within the community that focus on local interests and concerns?

How the library coordinated its efforts to provide services to its patrons with other institutions that provide services to the community?

How the library connected with the business community to support and strengthen the local economy?

How the library planned to function as a community meeting space?

How the library reflected the diverse characteristics of all the residents it served?

Definition of Terms

Definitions for the following terms came from:

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (11th ed.). (2003). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Community. An interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location.

Culture. The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

Individual. A single human being as contrasted with a social group or institution.

Neighborhood. The people living near one another.

Voluntary association. An association of people with shared interests that is supported by voluntary action.

Definitions for the following terms came from:

Kretzmann, J., & Rans, R. (2005). *The engaged library: Chicago stories of community building.* Chicago: The Urban Libraries Council.

Local economy. A complex web of unique local resources, enterprises, and dynamics that generate wealth and distribute benefits in a community.

Neighborhood identity. The distinguishing characteristics, such as the stories and history, of a community.

Physical infrastructure. The green spaces, roads, facilities, transportation centers, and gathering places of a community.

Social capital. The social networks, norms of reciprocity, mutual assistance, and trustworthiness in a community.

Social network. The interaction of individuals or groups in a community.

Definitions for the following terms came from:

Young, H., & Belanger, T. (Eds.). (1983). *The ALA glossary of library and information science.* Chicago: American Library Association.

Administration. Considered to be a broader term than "management." May be defined as the process of coordinating the total resources of an organization toward the accomplishment of the desired goals of that organization through the execution of a group of interrelated functions such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling.

Administrators. Those persons in an organization with the primary responsibility for executing the process of administration.

Institution. An established corporate body with social, educational, religious, or other purpose, whose functions require a plant with buildings and equipment, such as parks, schools, museums, and churches, etc.

Local library. A library that primarily serves the needs of a particular limited district.

Public library. A library provided wholly or partly from public funds, and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but is freely available to all.

<div align="center">Assumptions and Limitations</div>

For the purpose of this study it was assumed that the community building efforts of the Glassboro Public Library in New Jersey and the Chicago Public Library System featured in *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building,*(2005) case study were based on each library's respective mission and goals. The scope of the study was limited to only one local South Jersey library's community building efforts which were compared to the guidelines presented in *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building,* (2005) a case study commissioned by the Urban Libraries Council and the Chicago Public Library.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Social capital is a social resource created through formal and informal

relationships among the people in a community. The key characteristics of social capital

are: citizenship; neighborliness; trust and shared values; community involvement; social

networks; and civic participation. Social capital is valuable because it enables

communities to achieve goals that are beneficial to both the community and the

individuals who reside within the community (Goulding, 2004, p. 3 - 4). When combined

with human capital and physical capital, social capital can help communities to thrive.

Communities with strong reserves of social capital have been described as "housed,

healthy, hired and happy" (Woolcock, 2001, as cited in Goulding, 2004, p.11).

Throughout the last half of the twentieth century, the United States saw a decline

of social capital within its neighborhood communities. In 2000, Harvard University

social policy professor, Robert D. Putnam described the decline of social capital in his

best selling book, *Bowling Alone*. The book's title referred to the disintegration of social

relationships and civic engagement in American community life. Putnam contended that

an increased trend towards privatization combined with a lifestyle that blurred the

boundaries between work and home life was pulling people away from regular contact

with friends, neighbors, and coworkers (p.115).

Since social capital is viewed as a desirable resource that helps communities prosper, community planners have begun to consider new ways to help revive social capital within their neighborhoods. Social capital is built on a foundation of trust which is created through a community's engagement in social networks. Social capital requires public meeting spaces to grow. The mission of the public library is to provide a public space that brings a diverse group of people together to learn, seek information, and find recreation. Therefore, public libraries are now asserting their value as public spaces by promoting their potential for building social capital which in turn helps communities thrive (Goulding, 2004).

History of Social Capital

The belief that the social characteristics of a community impacts all facets of community life is not new. Recognition of the connection between social norms and economic activity can be traced back to the political economic theory of the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment. Knowledge of the theory is also well-represented in the works of the nineteenth century classical sociologists Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx. However, the first documented use of the term can be traced to an article written in 1916 by L. J. Hanifan, an American school reformer (Hillenbrand, 2005, p. 4).

After the early part of the twentieth century, the term all but disappeared from the discipline of sociology and did not reemerge until the nineteen-eighties. Modern-day use of the term took hold in the works of sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman (Hillenbrand, 2005). Bourdieu theorized that social capital bridges two divergent social actions, economism which reduces all social actions to economic transactions and

semiologism which reduces all social actions to exchanges of communicative acts

(Borgatta, 2000, vol. 4, p. 2638). Coleman conceived social capital as a social structural

resource that has economic benefits for the individual. He viewed social capital as a by-

product of activities undertaken for other purposes (Borgatta, 2000, vol. 4, p. 2638). In

the nineteen-nineties, the concept of social capital was appropriated by economist Francis

Fukuyama for his thesis, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Hillenbrand, 2005 ; Zia,

1995, p. 486). By the turn of the twentieth century, the concept of social capital had

mainstreamed into the public consciousness through Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone*

(2000). Presently, the concept of social capital has transcended its traditional bases in the

academic disciplines of sociology, economics, and political science and is now being

applied to a wide variety of policy fields such as family; community studies; education;

work and organizations; health; and governance (Hillenbrand, 2005).

<div align="center">Social Impact of Public Libraries</div>

The public library has a historical mission of social involvement. Initially, the

purpose of the public library was to safeguard democracy, diminish socially destructive

behavior, and bring socially acceptable recreation to the populace (Hillenbrand, 2005, p.

5). Jesse Shera stated that "the objectives of the public library are directly dependant

upon the objectives of society itself"(as cited in McCabe, 2001, p. xiii). The social

agenda of the public library was originally focused on the democratic principle of

educating civically responsible citizens. McCabe defined this goal as civil librarianship,

or the act of strengthening communities through the development of library services that

meet social as well as individual needs. McCabe found that the current public library

service approach of supplying a product was failing to achieve the public library's original mission. He called for a renewal of a public library service approach that emphasized library services as a community resource as opposed to merely delivering a product (2001, p. 77, 79, 143). Former American Library Association President, Nancy Kranich supported McCabe's view when she stated that the public library was "poised to usher in a new era of civic awareness and community revival" (2001, p. 40).

Social Impact Studies and Audits of Public Libraries

The purpose of social impact studies and social audits is to demonstrate rather than assume the value and significance of public library services (Hillenbrand, 2005, p. 6). Generally, social impact studies and social audits tend to be done more frequently in countries that have socialistic economic systems because policy makers and academic commentators believe that state institutions can create conditions that generate social capital. Conversely, countries with capitalistic economic systems tend to believe that social capital begins at a grassroots level, so studies that focus on the social impact of libraries are done less often (Goulding, 2004, p. 4). A review of social impact studies and social audits indicated that the public library was viewed as a valuable institution that generates public trust.

In 1998, R. Linley and B. Usherwood conducted a public library social audit for the Center for the Public Library in the Information Society, Sheffield University. The researchers hoped to develop a tool for measuring the social impact of public library activities. The researchers interviewed library staff, elected officials, focus groups of local residents, users and nonusers of public libraries located in the City of Newcastle

upon Tyne and the County of Somerset, United Kingdom. The study revealed that the public libraries affected their communities in the following areas: personal development; social cohesion; community empowerment; local image; and health and well-being. The researchers concluded that "libraries enrich the lives of many people," and that the social audit technique "makes that enriching process visible" (Linley, Usherwood, 2000, p. 72; Hillenbrand, 2005, p. 6).

In 2002, A. Black and M.. Crann of the Leeds Metropolitan University's School of Information Management in the United Kingdom, conducted a mass observation study of the public library using qualitative methodologies. The researchers hoped to reveal what the public library did well, what it did not, and what the library meant to both users and nonusers. The study was viewed as a sociological study of libraries that would reveal as much about society as it did about libraries. The researchers also hoped to demonstrate the validity of the Mass Observation method (MO) when applied to the study of libraries. The data were obtained from 231 participants, 64 men and 167 women, and were gathered by the "autobiographical diary" method. The MO methodology required a panel of volunteer observers to keep a diary of their responses to periodic questionnaires. The researchers were aware that their contributors did not represent a cross-section of the British people. Nonetheless, the study revealed that public libraries were filled with ambiguities. For the most part public libraries were viewed as welcoming, safe places that the people loved and trusted. But, public libraries were also seen as declining or stagnating institutions that needed to "catch up with the times" (Black, Crann, 2002, p. 150). The researchers concluded that the public library was a sociologically complex

institution. They also stated that they found the Mass Observation approach to studying library use to be a practical and useful one (Hillenbrand, 2005, p. 6 ; Black, Crann, 2002, p. 145-157).

In 2006, Public Agenda, a research institute, in collaboration with the Americans for Libraries Council and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation conducted a massive opinion research study on public libraries in the United States. The purpose of the study was to determine what people think about the public library. The combination of survey, interview, and focus group methodology was used to gather data. Telephone interviews with a national random sample of 1,203 adults were conducted between March 2 and March 14, 2006. The survey was preceded by seven focus groups conducted in seven states and thirty-four in-depth interviews with a variety of national and community leaders. The study found that " [. . . .] libraries are highly valued public institutions serving multiple needs that, the public notes, will certainly continue to be relevant with changing times" (Public Agenda, 2006, p. 13). However, the study also revealed that most people did not realize that public libraries were financially vulnerable to the diminishing public resources in local and state budgets. Conversely, the thirty-four interviews with national and community leaders showed that civic leaders, who also saw great strength in the public library, were aware of the library's funding problems. The researchers recommended "that libraries would do well to trumpet their esteemed place in communities and become more vocal about the resources necessary to support their newer, 'nontraditional' work" (Public Agenda, 2006, p. 60).

Public Libraries and Community Building

Literature showed that library professionals approached the goal of community building from different perspectives, but all agreed that the public library must play a role in community building and must make its efforts known. At the 2001 American Library Association Annual Conference, members of the library profession received a wake-up call when guest speaker Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone* (2000), spoke of his concern about the depreciation of social capital in American communities. Putnam did not realize at that time that he was speaking to members of a key community institution whose goal of civic awareness and involvement matched his own (Kranich, 2001, p. 40). The experience prompted attending ALA President, Nancy Kranich to remark:

> The challenge for librarians is to extend their reach well beyond simply
>
> educating and informing individual citizens to efforts aimed consciously
>
> at increasing social capital for the whole community and society. They
>
> must work to boost civic engagement in their communities and make sure
>
> the people know about that work. (2001, p. 2)

The lessons learned from this conference, underscored the need for public libraries to demonstrate how they contribute to community building by providing public spaces where citizens can build the partnerships that create social capital. According to the *Encyclopedia of Community,* public libraries are "a place where we can make connections to information, knowledge, and to other people – a place where community can happen, and thrive" (Christensen, 2003, vol. 4, p.1533).

Sarah Ann Long, President of ALA in 1999, stated that because libraries were already naturally positioned to act as community gathering places which promote dialogue and collaboration, they were well positioned to make substantial contributions toward meeting community needs (Long, 1999, as cited in Hillenbrand, 2005, p. 8). However, librarian Kathleen de la Pena McCook expressed concern over the possibility that libraries may be left out of the community building process by community developers, urban planners and government agencies (2000, p. 5). McCook stressed the importance of the library having "a place at the table" when community development decisions were being made. She envisioned a pseudo political role for librarians as consultants to community developers to solidify the library's role as an active participant in community development (McCook, 2000, p. 69).

Conversely, librarian Ronald McCabe contended that the strength of the community continued to rely upon the renewing of the library's core mission of educating an engaged populace to reenforce a democratic society (2001). Long combined these two views when she pointed out that libraries should bring more than librarians to the table. As community meeting places, libraries should function as catalysts that bring an informed community to the table (Long, 2000, p. 7). Kranich reinforced Long's community centered approach by defining libraries as spaces that facilitated and collaborated to build networks and public trust. Kranich stated that the public library was both a real and virtual community common (2001, p. 40). Literature indicated that leaders in the library field no longer limited the mission of the public library to merely delivering information to the populace. The public library is now envisioned as a public

space that can build communities by creating an open environment where informed

citizens can gather to develop partnerships that can help give them a voice within their

communities.

Public Libraries and Asset-Based Community Development

Community building efforts that focus on the needs and will of the people are not

the exclusive domain of the public library. Community centered planning originated in

the field of community development.   In 1993, research team John Kretzmann and John

McKnight published *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, a bestseller in the field

of community development. In response to the book's success, Kretzmann and

McKnight launched a community organizing project in conjunction with The Asset-

Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute for Policy Research at the

Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. The Neighborhood Circle project was

made-up of twelve local groups guided by a national training director. ABCD principles

emphasized that all individuals and associations in a community have valuable gifts to

contribute to community building. ABCD core values focused on: keeping citizens

central; developing local economies; cooperation rather than competition; being

inclusive; inviting innovation; developing sustainable initiatives; and supporting place-

based neighborhood work. Since its inception in the mid-nineteen-nineties,

Neighborhood Circle developed seventeen demonstration sites in nine states around the

country (Institute, n.d., para. 1-2).

In 1991, Chicago opened one of the world's largest libraries, the Harold

Washington Library Center. Since 1995, the City built and opened thirty-two full service

libraries. Currently, the Chicago Public Library system has seventy-nine libraries (Chicago Public Library, 2005). In the mid-nineteen-nineties, the Chicago Public Library system adopted an approach to public library services based on the principles of the Neighborhood Circle project. Through this approach, the Chicago Public Library's branches helped meet the needs of their communities by developing mutually beneficial partnerships within their neighborhoods.

In 2005, Co-director John Kretzmann and researcher Susan Rans from the Asset-Based Community Development Institute returned to the Chicago Branch Libraries to document the results of the libraries' multiple layers of community involvement. The results of their study were compiled in *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building* (Kretzmann, 2005). The study recounted the stories of several neighborhood library branch managers who revitalized their communities by building public trust through communicating, connecting, and collaborating with the neighborhood citizens. Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library, Mary Dempsey, explained:

> We go in first and then the police station comes. That sends a wonderful
>
> message: the first thing we are building for your neighborhood is a library.
>
> (Kretzmann, 2005, p. 30)

Public Libraries and Social Networks in Practice

Social networks are the partnerships that form when civically engaged citizens meet in an open environment. Communities need social partnerships on all levels to keep them strong. Social networks have a reciprocal effect on the groups and individuals they connect. Creating social networks is the way libraries help build communities, but social

networks also help communities build libraries. In 2003, social policy researcher, Robert Putnam wrote a follow-up book to his best selling *Bowling Alone,* (2000) entitled *Better Together* (Putnam, Feldstein, 2003). This second book was a more positive look at how some communities renewed themselves by building social networks in diverse situations. Chapter 2 told how the city of Chicago revitalized its eclectic neighborhoods by transforming the city's library system from a group of disconnected storefront libraries into a collection of neighborhood libraries that honored and reflected the identity of the communities they served (Putnam, Feldstein, 2003). The book stressed that "[. . . .] people support that which they help to create" (Bisesi, 2004, p. 32).

When the community is involved in its transformation, a sense of pride and ownership follows. Library director David M. Paynter told the story of how a community worked together to build a new library in his account of "The Wilmington Experience,"(2001). In 1997, seven neighborhood associations in New Hanover County, North Carolina formed the Northeast Library Action Committee to transform a 41,000 square foot vacant grocery store into a community library. NELAC gained the support of the county commissioners by pledging to raise one million dollars in private funds. NELAC formed partnerships with the business community, volunteer organizations, neighborhood institutions, and other associations to raise the needed funds. "As of the opening on September 29, 2000," NELAC "had raised $1,204,891, with gifts ranging from $2 to $100,000" (Paynter, 2001, p. 41). NELAC never had more than eight people serving on its board at one time, but they managed to harness the efforts of countless volunteers who came from every socioeconomic level of the county. Many lessons were

learned but, one of the most important was, "[. . . .] not to rely on capital improvement plans, which in many smaller communities exist more on paper than in reality, but instead on citizen effort" (Paynter, 2001, p. 42).

Because community centered development is the approach currently favored by community developers, the public library needs to spread the word that it can be an effective partner in community building. Librarian Marylaine Block recommended using the library's social networks as a marketing tool. "The marketing effort that concerns me the most is convincing the local power structure that we are the 'go-to' people for information" (Block, 2001, p. 48). Block stated that if the library hoped to be regarded as a full partner in community building, then the library cannot come to the table empty-handed. "[. . . .] we need to know their information needs before they do, and get the resources into their hands that will facilitate their decision-making before they realize they need it" (Block, 2001, p. 48). Public library professionals can no longer afford to make connections in their communities as mere advocates for the library. Public libraries must promote their potential as community builders. Urban Libraries Council board Chair, Betty Jane Narver, agreed with Block when she stated, "If you show up as an advocate, you don't get invited again, [. . .] If you show up as a player, you get invited again, because people want to know how you can help" (as cited in Block, 2001, p. 50).

Conclusion

The concept of social capital has retained its basic tenets throughout its various incarnations. Academic scholars from a variety of disciplines in many nations still

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believe that communities benefit from the formal and informal relationships their citizens form.

In the United States, policy fields such as community studies have adopted the concept of social capital. Community building policy makers accept the theory that social capital is a by-product of the trust that forms within a community when its citizens develop a network of partnerships. As a result, policy makers believe that encouraging social networks can contribute to the revitalization of communities. But, social capital in its purest form can cause exclusivity if policy makers at the top level of society fail to construct social institutions that engage members from all levels of society. Because the United States was founded on the principles of democracy and a free-market economy, policy makers in this country must factor in the influence of academic researchers, elected officials, free-market forces, and the will of the people when forming public policy. Simply stated, social capital in a free and open society requires an all-inclusive public space to create social networks that welcome every member of society. Determining which institutions are best-suited to fill this role, is the challenge that policy makers in the United States face.

The public library in the United States was founded on the principles of democracy and civic involvement. Studies revealed that the public library is viewed as a valued institution that generates public trust. Studies also showed that civic leaders believe the public library strengthens communities. The democratic principles, dedication to civic involvement, and open environment of the public library have convinced library professionals that the public library is an ideal institution to create

mutually beneficial partnerships that welcome members from all levels of society. Therefore, library professionals feel they must promote the potential of the public library as a full partner in community building.

Community policy researchers have developed a set of principles for community building that seeks to put the needs and the will of the people at the center of community development. The Asset-Based Community Development plan is based on the belief that all individuals and collective groups in a community have valuable gifts to contribute to the community. In the ABCD approach, community building starts by mobilizing layers of assets that are already present in every community. The ABCD approach allows policy makers to consider the will of the people, the input of civic leaders, and free- market forces when making decisions that effect every level of society. Like social capital, the ABCD approach requires an open environment to develop mutually beneficial partnerships that are all-inclusive.

Over the last ten years, the Chicago Public Library system has incorporated ABCD principles into its library service approach. The Chicago Public Library's branch libraries created public trust by building bridges between their citizens that met the needs of the diverse neighborhoods they served. *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building,*(2005) presented the approach in practice. Therefore, *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building,* (2005) case study was the measure used in this study to determine whether a selected New Jersey public library can build social networks that contribute to the development of the community.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overall Design and Justification

This study falls in the category of applied research. The survey or descriptive

research method was used to investigate how one local New Jersey public library

contributed to the revitalization efforts of its community. Because the nature of this study

dealt with conditions that were complex and social in nature, the qualitative method of

research was chosen. The case study method was selected to test a model of community

building guidelines described in *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community*

Building, (2005) case study against the community building efforts of a designated New

Jersey public library. Yin defined case study research as "an empirical inquiry that: 1)

investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when 2) the

boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; " (as cited in Powell

& Connaway, 2004, p. 61). Due to the subjective, ongoing nature of community

building, the case study method was the most viable method to use.

Data Collection Technique

A personal interview was used to collect information on how the selected library

developed mutually beneficial partnerships within the neighborhoods it served. The

personal interview helped the researcher gather detailed information. Once granted, the

personal interview guaranteed a response that represented the researcher's chosen sample.

The personal interview also encouraged responses that revealed complex or emotionally laden information. The interviewee was given the opportunity to respond in a thorough and thoughtful manner. Because the interviewer was able to ask for clarification or correct misunderstandings, the personal interview contributed to a more thorough interpretation of the collected data.

Sample and Population

Glassboro Public Library in Glassboro, New Jersey was chosen as the sample library. Glassboro is located in the southern portion of the state and covers 9.22 square miles. Glassboro Public Library was an association library that was founded fifty years ago by the Women's Club of Glassboro. In 1956, the Women's Club donated $2000 to establish a library. Glassboro State College, now Rowan University, helped furnish the library. The library was originally located in the Public Works building on south Main Street. In the following years the Women's Club continued to support the library. In 1963, the First National Bank of Glassboro donated $16,000 for mortgage payments, and the library moved to the corner of High and Center Streets which is the present location of the Glass Museum. In October of 1970, Mamie Newcomb became the library's first full-time librarian. In 1979, the library moved to its present location, 2 Center Street, which is a converted Acme Market. In 1996, the library became a branch of the Gloucester County Library System and was refurbished by the borough of Glassboro. Over the last ten years it has emerged as the second busiest branch of the library system. It circulates approximately 100,000 items each year and houses over 53,000 library items

which include books, videos, CDs, DVDs, and other items (Branch Manager, personal interview, January, 12, 2007).

Glassboro has a total population of 19,068. The male versus female ratio is approximately fifty-fifty. The median age is 27 years old. Approximately 6% of the population is under the age of 5, while 78% of the population is over the age of 18. Almost 10% of the population is age 65 or older (U.S. Census, 2000).

Approximately 98% of the population is of one racial heritage. Almost 75% of the population is white. The black or African American population is the largest one race minority group which comprises 20% of the population. The second largest one race minority group is Asian which constitutes 2% of the population. Only 2% of the population has a racial heritage of two or more races. The Hispanic or Latino population make-up this group and represent approximately 4% of the population. Four percent of the population were foreign born, and 8% of the population speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census, 2000).

Approximately 82% of the population has a high school degree or higher. Twenty-four percent of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher. Ten percent of the population are civilian veterans, and 18% of the population have disability status (U.S. Census, 2000).

Approximately 70% of the population over the age of 16 is currently in the labor force. Median household income in 1999 dollars is $44,992. Median family income in 1999 dollars is $55,246. Per capital income in 1999 dollars is $18,113. Approximately

9% of the families and 15% of the individuals live below the poverty level (U.S. Census, 2000).

The majority of the labor force works in the retail trade. There are 73 retail establishments in the town. The second largest labor force works in the accommodation and food services industry. There are 46 accommodation and food services establishments. There are 31 health care and social assistance establishments and 39 establishments listed as other services in the town (U.S. Census, 2000).

There are 3,678 single-family owner-occupied homes in the town. The median value is $114,100. The median of selected monthly owner costs is $1,269 with a mortgage and $473 without. There are 6,225 occupied housing units. Three- thousand eight- hundred ninety-seven units are owner occupied, and 2,328 are renter occupied. There are 330 vacant housing units. The average household size is 2.66, and the average family size is 3.17. Approximately 46% of the female population and 52% of the male population are currently married (U.S. Census, 2000).

Variables to be Studied

The community building guidelines proposed in *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building,* (2005) case study recommended building social networks through the mobilization of a community's preexisting layers of assets. The model identified a community's preexisting assets as: civically engaged individuals, voluntary associations, public institutions, local economy, public spaces, and cultural identity. The comparison between the model's guidelines and the efforts of the Glassboro Public

Library considered the following variables:

How the library built connections among civically engaged individuals within the community.

How the library built connections between voluntary associations and other voluntary associations or individuals within the community.

How the library collaborated with other institutions within the community that provide services for the citizens of the community.

How the library connected with the business community to support and strengthen the local economy.

How the library functioned as an open public space.

How the library reflected the diverse characteristics and interests of all the residents in the community it serves.

Methodology

The case study method was used to compare the Glassboro Public Library's community building efforts to the guidelines recommended in *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building,* (2005) a research study commissioned by the Urban Libraries Council and the Chicago Public Library. The Engaged Library – Model of Community Engagement (Table 1), a research model for identifying and connecting a library's assets with a community's assets, was created based on the guidelines of the Chicago study. Interview questions were developed from the recommended goals stated in The Engaged Library – Model of Community Engagement (Table 1) The Interview Schedule was reviewed by the researcher and the Thesis Advisor. An e-mail was sent on

TABLE 1

The Engaged Library – Model of Community Engagement

Recommended goals for identifying and connecting your library's assets to your community's existing assets.

Six layers of assets already present in most communities.

1. The skills and resources of its Individuals
- Make concerted effort to discover who is who in the community,
  reading local papers, asking long-time residents, attending civic events.
- Find out who the leaders of the community are.
- Find ways to create connections between gifted individuals – individuals are the heart and soul of a community.
- Find out what the concerns of the neighborhoods are.
- Connect with the local elected officials.
- Connect with the young people of the community.
- Create a community-minded culture among staff and volunteers,
  learn names, attend civic events, pay attention to community needs and concerns.

2. The power of relationships in Voluntary Associations
- Find the local voluntary associations within the community.
- Determine what services the library can offer to each association;
  programs, materials, meeting space, social connections.
- Determine what the assets of each association can offer the library.
- Introduce members of various associations to each other and prominent individuals within the community – make connections between associations.
- Join as many associations as you can, and invite members of various associations to participate on library boards and committees.
- Know the history of the various associations in the community – they are a source of neighborhood identity and pride.
- Know the concerns and interests of the various associations.

Types of associations: Faith based groups, Health groups, School groups, Outdoor groups, Block clubs, Service groups, Social groups, Youth groups, Arts organizations, Other.

3. Institutional Partnerships
- Coordinate – do not duplicate services.
- Join boards and committees whenever possible.
- Supply reliable information – stop rumors (particularly important during redevelopment planning.)
- Introduce existing community institutions to library services.
- Introduce institutions to each other.
- Collaborate to improve the quality of community life.

Possible Institutions and services to collaborate on:

Colleges – ESL classes, GED programs, college clubs, cultural events, book donations, tutoring.

Schools – after school programs; library tours; collaborations on collections for curriculum, summer reading, project topics, computer use; students clubs; board meetings.

Churches – children's programs, cultural research, charity drives, community service requirements, history research.

Art Centers – research and materials, story times, programs, displays.

Community Parks – community service projects, information, geographical research, zoning information.

Police Department – crime prevention workshops, security, youth programs, referral information.

Fire Department – workshops, information distributions, guest speakers.

Hospitals – programs, literature and information distribution, guest speakers, referral information.

Social Service Agencies – referral information, job seeking materials and workshops, housing information, information distribution, income tax help.

Museums – historical societies, shared collections, workshops or programs, research help, local history and/or documents storage, preservation efforts.

Foundations – grant information.

Non–profits – information distribution, referral information, programs, research.

Media – publicity, research, community information.

4. Support for the local Business Community
   ▸   Relationships must be reciprocal – cannot ask for a hand-out for the library.
   ▸   Use local businesses whenever possible.
   ▸   Hire local whenever possible.
   ▸   Support, do not compete with your downtown area.
   ▸   Promote library's business sources and meeting space.
   ▸   Collaborate on programs and fund raisers.
   ▸   Join Chamber of Commerce and/or business associations and attend meetings whenever possible.
   ▸   Give out business cards and offer library's services and collect business cards from others.
   ▸   Take advantage of corporate connections if possible.
   ▸   Be creative about what the library can contribute, some contributions are not obvious – say yes whenever you can – businesses often have the most creative and innovative ideas. You can learn customer relations and marketing techniques from them.

5. The Library Building as community center
  ▸ Creates free, open public space where everyone is welcomed.
  ▸ Expands on existing public spaces which are often overburden and over-crowded.
  ▸ Provides community meeting space for all members of the community.
  ▸ Brings groups with different interests together for the common good – builds bridges between groups – diverse community's interests can intersect at the library.
  ▸ Improves infrastructure of community – provides an anchor for downtown areas or recreational centers.
  ▸ Provides hope for communities in need of redevelopment, library improves quality of life in a community.
  ▸ Sparks investment in the area.
  ▸ Library must be a good neighbor – communicate and coordinate with local officials and institutions to build a better community.
  ▸ Library must work with city or town planning department – library can help build community if it knows what is going on.
  ▸ Library must coordinate with other public spaces – position library near other public spaces like parks, schools, playgrounds, etc.

6. The Library as a reflection of the community
  ▸ Discover and contribute to the unique capacities and conditions of the community.
  ▸ Reflect neighborhood culture – but also reflect the unity of the community.
  ▸ Know the community's history and stories that define it and find ways to tell those stories to the community and to those outside of the community.
  ▸ Consider history and cultural influences when building collections and creating programs.
  ▸ Create displays that reflect community identity.
  ▸ Create a culturally sensitive staff.
  ▸ Provide local community information – know the concerns and needs of the community neighborhoods.
  ▸ Know and welcome the community's youth and seniors.
  ▸ Create a sense of ownership and pride in the library.

January 5, 2007 to the Branch Manager of the Glassboro Library requesting an interview.

A positive response was sent to the researcher from the Branch Manager on January 8,

2007. Two interviews were scheduled and confirmed for Friday, January 12, 2007 at

10:15 AM and Tuesday, January 16, 2007 at 2:00 PM. Both interviews with the Branch

Manager were conducted in the library's meeting room and took approximately one hour

each. The interview sessions were tape recorded by the researcher with the interviewee's

permission. The researcher agreed to omit the interviewee's name from the study. The

interviewee agreed to allow the researcher to identify the library, the library's history and

location, and the interviewee's position and tenure at the library. The Branch Manager

has worked at the Glassboro Public Library since 1995. She was originally sent from the

county system's main branch library three days a week to purchase books and provide

staff supervision when the association library lost its director. During that time, a

community task force in Glassboro was evaluating ways to consolidate expenses. The

task force recommended that the Glassboro Public Library join the Gloucester County

Library System. In 1996, when the association library became a member of the county

library system, the library's interim staff supervisor became the Branch Manager and has

continued in that capacity.

<div align="center">Validity and Reliability</div>

The study was determined to be valid and reliable because it was based on the

model used in a previous study, *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community

Building,* (2005) conducted by John Kretzmann and Susan Rans from the Asset-Based

Community Development Institute at the Northwestern University in Evanston Illinois.

Variables and Interview Questions were based on the Chicago case study. The

researcher's case study results were limited to and valid for one library only.

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CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Procedures and Methods

The taped recorded interview with the Branch Manager of the Glassboro Public

Library was transcribed word for word. The original transcription included commentary

in brackets that indicated the tone and mood of the verbal exchange. The transcription

did not include the interviewer's reflections on or interpretations of the interview. An

edited version of the transcription appears in Appendix C. The researcher edited the

original transcription to assure the anonymity of the interviewee as promised. All

nonessential and personal exchanges were deleted along with the commentary in brackets.

For the purpose of analysis, the data collected from the interview were organized

into six categories that match The Engaged Library – Model of Community Engagement,

(Table 1) a research model created for this study based on the guidelines recommended in

The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building, (2005). The analysis of

the data were qualitative and descriptive. Inductive reasoning was used to build a

comprehensive profile of the selected library's approach to community building based on

the Branch Manager's responses.

The results of the analysis were presented in six tables that match the six layers of

assets already present in most communities listed in The Engaged Library – Model of

Community Engagement, (Table 1) The analysis compared desired goals, which were

based on the recommended goals stated in Table 1, to the Branch Manager's responses to questions designed to reveal the library's level of engagement within the community it served. The comparisons were evaluated and rated by the researcher according to the level of effort made to achieve each goal.

First Layer of Assets: The Skills and Resources of its Individuals

All communities contain individuals who are civically engaged. Discovering and making connections between individuals within the community who possess creative energy helps build relationships that benefit all members of the community. The questions pertaining to the first layer of assets were designed to determine how the library identified the civically active individuals within the community and built connections among them. The first layer of assets contains seven goals. Table 2 lists the goals, the researcher's questions pertaining to the goals, summaries of the Branch Manager's responses, and the researcher's comments. The researcher's evaluation follows the comparison of goals to responses.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Model to Interview Questions: Layer 1

Six existing layers of community assets

Layer 1: The skills and resources of its Individuals

Comparison question 1.

Goal	Make concerted effort to discover who is who in the community.
Question	How do you determine who the socially active people are in your community?
Response	Reads newspapers; talks to people; finds out who is participating in programs.
Comment	Names three out of three suggestions offered in study.

Comparison question 2.

Goal	Find out who the leaders of the community are. Connect with the local elected officials. Connect with the young people of the community.
Question	Can you give me some general categories that describe them?
Response	School Board members; PTA members; Site Council members; Town Council members; Members of various committees.
Comment	Identifies five sources of community leaders. Connects with local elected officials through various councils and committees. Makes no conscious effort to connect with the young people of the community.

Comparison question 3.

Goal	Find out what the concerns of the neighborhoods are.
Question	How do you find out what their concerns are for the community?
Response	Know who they are through newspapers, literature, and community activities; know their priorities from their backgrounds and activities.
Comment	Makes conscious effort to know the people of the community and to ascertain their concerns through their backgrounds and activities.

Comparison question 4.

Goal	Find out what the concerns of the neighborhoods are.
Question	How do you let them know how the library can help?
Response	Know who they are; know their priorities; when you talk to them, mention how the library can be helpful, make a connection.
Comment	Has an informal plan based on making a connection between community member's priorities and the library's assets.

Comparison question 5.

Goal	Find ways to create connections between gifted individuals – individuals are the heart and soul of a community.
Question	Do you ever introduce any of these people to each other?
Response	Sometimes, mostly at meetings.
Comment	Is not consciously making connections between all of the socially active people in the community.

Comparison question 6.

Goal	Create a community-minded culture among staff and volunteers. Learn names, attend civic events, pay attention to community needs and concerns.
Question	Does your staff help you learn what's going on in the community?
Response	Sometimes, some are better connected than others; mostly children's staff.
Comment	Input is limited to few staff members who are socially engaged within the community. Input is mostly verbal. No formal training or instruction for staff.

Evaluation

Excellent Effort	
Good Effort	Identifying socially active people, community leaders, neighborhood concerns; Connecting with local elected officials; Promoting library's role in the community.
Weak Effort	Connecting with young people; Creating connections between gifted individuals; Creating a community-minded staff.

Second Layer of Assets: The Power of Relationships in Voluntary Associations

Voluntary associations form when civic-minded individuals within a community make connections with similarly concerned individuals. Discovering and making connections between voluntary associations builds long-lasting relationships that help strengthen the social network throughout a community. The questions corresponding to the second layer of assets were developed to ascertain how the library identified the voluntary associations within the community and built connections among the associations and the individual members of the various associations. The second layer of assets contains seven goals. Table 3 lists the goals, the researcher's corresponding questions, summaries of the Branch Manager's responses, and the researcher's comments. The researcher's evaluation follows the comparison of goals to responses.

TABLE 3

Comparison of Model to Interview Questions: Layer 2

Six existing layers of community assets

Layer 2: The power of relationships in Voluntary Associations

Comparison question 1.

Goal	Find the local voluntary associations within the community.
Question	How do you find the voluntary associations that are active in your community?
Response	Participates in local Chamber of Commerce, on board of directors and as committee member; attends monthly meetings; participates in chamber programs that have guest speakers; attends chamber meetings that invite other Chambers to attend.
Comment	Locates a starting point and builds a network through participation.

Comparison question 2.

Goal	Find the local voluntary associations within the community.
Question	What are some of the groups that you know about?
Response	Chamber; Unity Day Program; Mayor's Employment Committee; representatives from local government; local borough offices; Boys and Girls Club; Main Street Organization.
Comment	Names four voluntary associations that she participates in and three connections to local government she makes through these associations.

Comparison question 3.

Goal	Know the concerns and interest of the various associations.
Question	How do you find out what their concerns or interest are?
Response	Talks and listens at meetings; observes how members participate in organizations; remembers personal information like job, family, interests, or hobbies.
Comment	Makes connection between members interests and concerns through participation in associations.

Comparison question 4.

Goal	Know the history of the various associations in the community – they are a source of neighborhood identity and pride.
Question	Do you ever do any research on the history or interests of any of the groups?
Response	Talks to people who live in town; talks to life-long residents; talks to people who know the history of the town.
Comment	An occasional verbal inquiry. No formal research on the subject.
Question	Does your staff?
Response	Children's staff goes out into the community and provides information on what they see and hear.
Comment	Personal communication only. No formal research done.

Comparison question 5.

Goal	Determine what services the library can offer to each association; programs, materials, meeting space, social connections.
Question	How do you let these groups know what the library can do for them?
Response	Takes note of priorities and concerns of community members when participating in community events and makes connection with what is going on at the library.
Comment	Good attention to concerns. Approach is observant when promoting library services. Does not look rude or aggressive. Is mindful of library's image.

Comparison question 6.

Goal	Determine what the assets of each association can offer the library.
Question	Do you ever think about what these groups could contribute to the library?
Response	Cooperates when groups offer help or ask for volunteer opportunities; matches group with service that fits best; encourages lasting relationships.
Comment	Makes effort to take help when offered and build a lasting relationship. Waits till groups approach the library. Does not directly solicit.

Comparison question 7.

Goal	Determine what the assets of each association can offer the library.
Question	How would you go about soliciting their help?
Response	Only with a previous connection; low-key approach; start with a discussion.
Comment	Does not consider very often, tentative, almost reluctant.

Comparison question 8.

Goal	Join as many associations as you can, and invite members of various associations to participate on library boards and committees.
Question	Have you joined any of these groups?
Response	Yes, as many as can be handled; reluctant to turn down an invitation; if asked, must say yes.
Comment	Makes effort to join as many as possible. (See question 2.) Works on many committees.
Question	Has your staff?
Response	Children's staff participate in school groups; make introductions to others; share information with manager.
Comment	Staff efforts confined to children's staff and focus mostly on schools.

Comparison question 9.

Goal	Introduce members of various associations to each other and prominent individuals within the community – make connections between associations.
Question	Do you ever introduce members of various groups to each other?
Response	Once, introduced a philanthropic group to a group that fit their profile.
Comment	No conscious, continuing effort.

Comparison question 10.

Goal	Find the local voluntary associations within the community. Join as many associations as you can.
Question	Are there groups you have heard about but haven't met, and how would you go about meeting them?
Response	Find someone who has a connection with one of the group's programs and ask for an introduction; go as a person who wants to help.
Comment	Uses existing connections to make new ones. Uses connections to promote library services to new groups.

Evaluation

Excellent Effort	
Good Effort	Finding associations; Joining and participating in associations; Determining concerns; Promoting library services; Accepting offers of help.
Weak Effort	Formal research of groups; Soliciting help for the library; Making introductions between associations and members of associations; Developing staff participation.

Third Layer of Assets: Institutional Partnerships

Public institutions such as schools, parks, and churches, help support a community's individuals and associations. They play a vital role in the development and stability of a community. Collaboration between local public institutions and the public library create social connections and reduce the overall cost of local services. The questions regarding the third layer of assets were devised to assess how the library collaborated with local institutions to strengthen social connections and streamline services. The third layer of assets has six goals. Table 4 lists the goals, the researcher's questions regarding the goals, summaries of the Branch Manager's responses, and the researcher's comments. The researcher's evaluation follows the comparison of goals to responses.

TABLE 4

Comparison of Model to Interview Questions: Layer 3

Six existing layers of community assets

Layer 3: Institutional Partnerships

Comparison question 1.

Goal	Coordinate – do not duplicate services. Join boards and committees whenever possible. Supply reliable information – stop rumors (particularly important during redevelopment planning.)
Question	What are some of the local institutions that you collaborate with?
Response	Rowan University – help and guidance with library students; distribution of information from the college. Head Start Program – visits, reading and story times. Genesis Center, a child development center – visits, reading and story times, talking with mothers, field trips to library. Preschools – visits, reading and story times. Local schools – visits, reading and story times, field trips to library. Historical Society – host programs at library. Work Force Office – job training seminars, library job resources, work program, promotion of other library materials such as recreational materials, programs, and computers. (Staffing situation has ended this collaboration) Literature for all organizations displayed at library. Organizations' activities and programs promoted when appropriate.
Comment	Effort is mostly limited to educational institutions. Staff participation is limited to Children's staff. Staffing shortages have affected Work Force collaboration. Makes effort to supply information on matters of local interest.

Comparison question 2.

Goal	Collaborate to improve the quality of community life.
Question	What are some of the community concerns that you address with them?
Response	Early intervention for children who have traditionally scored low in school; support for the parents of young children.
Comment	Addresses quality of life issues for the youngest and neediest community members. Efforts are mainly confined to educational institutions. Efforts are hampered by limited staff participation and staff shortage.

Comparison question 3.

Goal	Coordinate – do not duplicate services. Collaborate to improve the quality of community life. Introduce existing community institutions to library services.
Question	How do you determine what the library can do for them?
Response	Make an assessment based on need and on what the library can provide with existing staff and funds; works with ESL teacher in school district.
Comment	Particularly sensitive to foreign-born population's needs. Collaborates with agencies that work with the most vulnerable sectors of the community. Limited in the number of institutions that the library works with. Has no real plan to coordinate services. Is aware of limitations caused by lack of staff participation and limited funding.

Comparison question 4.

Goal	Coordinate – do not duplicate services. Join boards and committees whenever possible. Collaborate to improve the quality of community life.
Question	Do they do anything for the library as well?
Response	School supports library through National Honor Society volunteers; school makes announcements about library programs; serves on the school's Key Communicators Committee; Chamber makes announcements about library programs and materials; serves on the Chamber's committees; Rowan fraternities and sororities help with Unity Day; Rowan students volunteer and do projects; Rowan students donated mural in children's department.
Comment	Good reciprocation from collaborating institutions. Collaboration is limited to mostly educational institutions.

Comparison question 5.

Goal	Coordinate – do not duplicate services. Supply reliable information – stop rumors (particularly important during redevelopment planning.) Collaborate to improve the quality of community life.
Question	How do you determine which institutions to work with?
Response	Evaluate how best to serve each other; look for commonalities; funding and grants not available as they were in the past; opportunity with local health center missed because grant was not approved; collaborates with county social services in the health department.
Comment	Collaboration is negatively impacted by lack of funding. Collaboration with local agency impossible because of lack of funding. Aware of limitations and somewhat frustrated over them.

Comparison question 6.

Goal	Introduce institutions to each other.
Question	Do you ever introduce people from different institutions to each other?
Response	Yes, mostly at meetings.
Comment	No conscious effort to make connections between institutions.

Comparison question 7.

Goal	Join boards and committees whenever possible. Collaborate to improve the quality of community life.
Question	Does your staff help with this also.
Response	Minimally, mostly provide answers to questions about local events and people.
Comment	Lacks formal training for staff. Expresses an interest in having more training to develop a more community-minded staff.

Evaluation

Excellent Effort	
Good Effort	Addressing quality of life issues; Collaborating with agencies to serve the most vulnerable sectors of the community; Sensing the needs of community; Reciprocating with engaged institutions.
Weak Effort	Widening the scope of institutions that the library collaborates with; Introducing members of institutions to each other; developing staff participation; Coordinating services.
Not Applicable	Not responsible for loss of funding.

Fourth Layer of Assets: Support for the local Business Community

A reciprocal relationship between the public library and the local business community strengthens a growing economy. A well-placed local library brings foot traffic to the neighborhood's commercial district and provides valuable free services to the business community. The questions associated with the fourth layer of assets were created to discover how the library reached out to the local business community in a way that supported and strengthened the local economy. The forth layer of assets consists of ten goals. Table 5 lists the goals, the researcher's questions regarding the goals, summaries of the Branch Manager's responses, and the researcher's comments. The researcher's evaluation follows the comparison of goals to responses.

TABLE 5

Comparison of Model to Interview Questions: Layer 4

Six existing layer of community assets

Layer 4: Support for the local Business Community

Comparison question 1.

Goal	Support, do not compete with your downtown area. Give out business cards and offer library's service and collect business cards from others. Promote library's business sources and meeting space.
Question	How do you reach-out to the business community and let them know what the library can do for them?
Response	Goes to Chamber meetings; gives presentations at Chamber meetings; talks one on one at Chamber meetings; sends e-mails to Chamber Members when having programs; talks with Chamber Members when they come to the library; goes door-to-door in the downtown area, but less often now because some businesses are less amenable but is still trying to make personal connections with downtown businesses.
Comment	Great connection with Chamber Members. Good promotion of library services and materials within the business community. Good effort for face-to-face connection with downtown area.

Comparison question 2.

Goal	Promote library's business sources and meeting space. Collaborate on programs and fund raisers.
Question	What type of resources do you offer the business community?
Response	Databases are main resource; print sources on site and throughout the library system; programs sponsored by Rutgers University and Small Business Association; small business and writing business plans resources.
Comment	Good selection and promotion. Good services for businesses. Good collaboration on programs.

Comparison question 3.

Goal	Collaborate on programs and fund raisers. Relationships must be reciprocal – cannot ask for a hand-out for the library. Be creative about what the library can contribute, some contributions are not obvious – say yes whenever you can – businesses often have the most creative and innovative ideas. You can learn customer relations and marketing techniques from them.
Question	Do you collaborate with any of the local businesses for fund raisers or programs?
Response	Solicits donations from local businesses for Summer Reading program.
Comment	Mostly one-sided, asks for donations for the library. Makes no effort to provide services for fund raising causes outside of the library. Does not collaborate on raising funds for community projects.

Comparison question 4.

Goal	Use local businesses whenever possible.
Question	Do you use any of the local businesses for goods or services?
Response	County library system has restrictions on purchasing; uses local businesses for purchases that are not handled by main branch in the county system; staff gives business to all the local eateries even when they are not working; use to post café menu when café was opened.
Comment	Makes effort to keep purchases local when not prohibited by county system. Brings business to local downtown. Makes connection between local businesses and library staff.

Comparison question 5.

Goal	Collaborate on programs and fund raisers. Relationships must be reciprocal – cannot ask for a hand-out for the library.
Question	Does the business community support the library in any way?
Response	Through donations to the library for children's programs; through the good relationship and good things said about the library within the community.
Comment	Business community creates good will toward the library. Has no formal working relationship on community projects.

Comparison question 6.

Goal	Join Chamber of Commerce and/or business associations and attend meetings whenever possible.
Question	Are you a member of any local business associations and do you attend any meetings
Response	Yes, local Chamber of Commerce; attends meetings; attends some county Chamber meetings as well.
Comment	Great effort and participation.
Question	How about your staff?
Response	No.
Comment	Weak staff participation.

Comparison question 7.

Goal	Support, do not compete with your downtown area. Give out business cards and offer library's services and collect business cards from others.
Question	Do you ever introduce members of the business community to each other?
Response	Mostly at meetings.
Comment	Weak effort at building a social network for the business community.

Comparison question 8.

Goal	Take advantage of corporate connections if possible.
Question	Do you have any corporate business connections?
Response	No corporate connections on a local level; utilizes the sponsorships and services provided by library professional associations like ALA, NJLA, and PLA; attends meetings and conferences for professional associations.
Comment	No opportunities for corporate connections on a local level. Great initiative in using the services of professional associations.

Evaluation

Excellent Effort	
Good Effort	Reaching out to the business community through the Chamber; Promoting library services and materials; Providing library services and materials; Collaborating on library programs with the Chamber; Keeping minor purchases local and bringing business to the downtown area through the staff; Promoting good will toward the library within the business community; Joining and participating in Chamber; Using connection to professional associations.
Weak Effort	Providing support for local fund raisers; Collaborating on community fund raising projects; Building social networks for the business community; Encouraging staff participation in Chamber meetings; Encouraging staff participation in community fund raisers.
Not Applicable	Local corporate connections; Purchasing on a major scale.

Fifth Layer of Assets: The Library Building as community center

The public library provides an inclusive space that brings the people of the community together. A well-placed library encourages communication between groups of people that do not usually congregate in the same space. The questions relating to the fifth layer of assets were conceived to assess how the library functioned as a community meeting space. The fifth layer of assets has ten goals. Table 6 lists the goals, the researcher's questions associated with the goal, summaries of the Branch Manager's responses, and the researcher's comments. The researcher's evaluation follows the comparison of goals to responses.

TABLE 6

Comparison of Model to Interview Questions: Layer 5

Six existing layers of community assets

Layer 5: The Library Building as community center

Comparison question 1.

Goal	Creates free, open public space where everyone is welcomed. Provides community meeting space for all members of the community.
Question	Is the library used as a public meeting space?
Response	Yes, library used as meeting space; expresses wish that space was larger and more attractive.
Comment	Library provides meeting space. Meeting room has long table and folding chairs, refrigerator, and sink. Next door is children's meeting room. It has low tables and chairs.

Comparison question 2.

Goal	Provides community meeting space for all members of the community. Brings groups with different interests together for the common good – builds bridges between groups – diverse community's interests can intersect at the library.
Question	What are some of the groups that meet in the library?
Response	Boys and Girls Club; Literacy Volunteers; Cub Scouts; County Clerks Office; South Jersey Quilters; Greater Glassboro Chamber of Commerce; Gloucester County Green Party; NAACP - Act-So, an academic, cultural, and technological program for High School youth.
Comment	Good cross-section of groups. Provides meeting space for all. Does not consciously devise programs that appeal to a diverse group of people.

Comparison question 3.

Goal	Expands on existing public spaces which are often overburdened and over-crowed. Improves infrastructure of community – provides an anchor for downtown areas or recreational centers. Provides hope for communities in need of redevelopment, library improves quality of life in a community.
Question	What do you think your present library contributes to the community?
Response	Safe place for young people and homeless people; place for people to borrow materials, attend meetings and programs; convenient place to wait or stay between appointments; convenient place to use public restrooms.
Comment	Welcoming atmosphere. Good anchor for downtown area. Improves quality of the life for young and indigent.

Comparison question 4.

Goal	Library must work with city or town planning department – library can help build community if it knows what is going on.
Question	Are you involved in any town planning or redevelopment projects?
Response	Yes, appointed by the town council to the Main Street Board, Glassboro Economic Development Corporation.
Comment	Excellent effort to know what is going on and to help build the community.

Comparison question 5.

Goal	Provides hope for communities in need of redevelopment, library improves quality of life in a community.
Question	With a better library, what do you think the library could contribute to the community?
Response	Envisions a library that would have more available space for programs, tutoring, and special teen area; more computers; better access for people with disabilities.
Comment	Good effort advocating for a public space for all members of the community that would improve the quality of life within the community. Focuses on human needs rather than library needs.

Comparison question 6.

Goal	Library must be a good neighbor – communicate and coordinate with local officials and institutions to build a better community. Sparks investment in the area.
Question	Where would you like a new library to be built?
Response	Envisions library in downtown area; within walking distance for people with transportation issues; centrally located within the business area so people could coordinate errands.
Comment	Good effort sparking investment in area. Good effort coordinating with downtown area. No real public spaces like parks or schools in the downtown area, but area is within walking distance of neighborhoods and schools.

Comparison question 7.

Goal	Library must be a good neighbor – communicate with local officials and institutions to build a better community.
Question	What have you done to help with the planning and financing of a new public library?
Response	Proposed library planning program as part of the Main Street Board; participated in market survey to determine what the community wants in downtown area; investigating other sources of funding for new library; participating in building plan proposal; submitted name to State Librarian for the new Public Library Construction Board.
Comment	Excellent effort to work with elected officials to help build a better community.

Evaluation

Excellent Effort	Working with town planning departments; Working with elected officials and institutions to build a better community.
Good Effort	Providing meeting space; Including all members of the community; Addressing quality of life concerns; Advocating for better public spaces for all members of the community; Collaborating with business area to spark investment in downtown area; Coordinating building efforts with the downtown area.
Weak Effort	Building bridges between diverse groups through creative programs and use of space.
Not Applicable	Coordinating with other public spaces like parks, playgrounds, schools, etc. Downtown area does not contain such spaces.

Sixth Layer of Assets: The Library as a reflection of the community

The public library reflects the identity of the community by embracing the diverse characteristics of all the residents it serves. When the library acknowledges the interests and concerns of all its members, it creates a sense of pride and joint ownership within the community. The questions appertaining to the sixth layer of assets were constructed to evaluate how the library reflected the diverse characteristics of the community it served. The sixth layer of assets includes nine goals. Table 7 lists the goals, the researcher's corresponding questions, summaries of the Branch Manager's responses, and the researcher's comments. The researcher's evaluation follows the comparison of goals to responses

TABLE 7

Comparison of Model to Interview Questions: Layer 6

Six existing layers of community assets

Layer 6: The Library as a reflection of the community

Comparison question 1.

Goal	Consider history and cultural influences when building collections and creating programs.
Question	How do you determine what types of programs your community would like?
Response	Talks to people who use the library, library volunteers, staff, and people in the community who support the library but don't use it.
Comment	Good effort determining what people want or are interested in. Does not consider history or cultural influences as a guide when programing. Does not design programs with broad appeal that will attract different segments of the community and build connections between the different groups.

Comparison question 2.

Goal	Consider history and cultural influences when building collections and creating programs.
Question	How do you determine what type of materials your community would like to see in the library?
Response	Looks at what is being checked out; looks at what is being used but not checked out; asks page that shelves books; notices what is being left on the tables.
Comment	Good effort keeping track of what people are using. Does not consider history, culture, or demographics when considering materials.

Comparison question 3.

Goal	Create a culturally sensitive staff.
Question	How much input does your staff have on programing and materials?
Response	Receptive to staff's suggestions; interested in variety; encourages curiosity in subjects that interest others; encourages the development of a framework of knowledge among staff.
Comment	Good effort encouraging staff to participate. Good attitude toward variety and curiosity regarding all subjects. Does not look for cultural connections between the interests of the staff and the community. Does not encourage or suggest work-related research among the staff.

Comparison question 4.

Goal	Know and welcome the community's youth and seniors.
Question	How does the library make the younger members of the community feel welcomed?
Response	Feels the limitations of available space; feels the limitations of available computers; feels limitations of an untrained staff; works with Boys and Girls Club to make things better; admits its an area that needs work.
Comment	Good effort identifying problems. Is limited in resources to correct them.

Comparison question 5.

Goal	Know and welcome the community's youth and seniors.
Question	How does the library make the senior members of the community feel welcomed?
Response	Senior Center no longer next door; have had programs in the past; other branches in the system have more to offer seniors.
Comment	Does not make an effort to connect with or serve this group.

Comparison question 6.

Goal	Know the community's history and stories that define it and find ways to tell those stories to the community and to those outside of the community.
Question	Do you know the history of the area?
Response	Familiar with some of the history of the area; knows the history of the library; asks long-term residents about history of the area; keeps documents and local history at the library but not on display.
Comment	Good effort on finding and saving local history. Good effort on knowing library's history. Weak effort on showing or promoting history.
Question	How does the library help tell the stories of the past?
Response	Celebrated the 50th anniversary of the library; had one long-term local resident that used to do programs on local stories but no one recently; High School has a class on local stories that does theatrical or drama presentations but does not collaborate with them.
Comment	Tells the library's story. Does not tell the local stories. Does not collaborate with other institutions that tell the stories and preserve the past.

Comparison question 7.

Goal	Provide local community information – know the concerns and needs of the community neighborhoods.
Question	Does the library provide local community information?
Response	Yes, community organization and such, primarily in informal manner; referral information to proper agencies taken more seriously.
Comment	Provides local community information in an informal manner. Refers community members in need to local agencies when necessary. Shows great sensitivity to the needs of the community. Does not continually display local information.

Comparison question 8.

Goal	Discover and contribute to the unique capacities and conditions of the community. Reflect neighborhood culture – but also reflect the unity of the community. Create displays that reflect community identity.
Question	How do you think the library reflects the unique identity of the present community it serves?
Response	Tries to reflect it with collections, programs, and staff hiring; views attempts as a work in progress; makes effort to issue library cards to all members of the community; asks for input from local institutions; pays attention to the people who use the library; admits that input from local institutions is conflicting and confusing; realizes that some groups will not come into library; believes that the library must keep trying in order to succeed..
Comment	Recognizes the need to find and serve all cultures within the community. Makes all community members feel welcome in the library. Shows great sensitivity to the needs of different groups within the community. Makes a limited effort on collaboration with local institutions and associations to locate hidden groups within the community. Does not create displays that reflect community identity.

Comparison question 9.

Goal	Create a sense of ownership and pride in the library.
Question	Do you think the community feels comfortable in your library, as if the library belongs to them?
Response	Yes, people turn-out for library celebrations like the 50th anniversary celebration; celebrations have a community feel about them.
Comment	Creates unity and ownership through community celebrations. Does not make an effort to create ownership and pride through cultural and historical programs and materials.

Evaluation

Excellent Effort	
Good Effort	Determining what people want or are interested in regarding programing; Keeping track of what materials people are using; Encouraging staff to participate in selection process or program development; Encouraging staff to have a variety of interests and to develop a framework of knowledge; Identifying needs and interests of community's youth; Identifying library's present limitations on meeting needs of youth; Finding and saving local history; Knowing and telling library's history; Providing referrals to local agencies; Sensing the community's need for referral information; Recognizing the need to find and serve all cultures within the community; Making all members of the community feel welcome in the library; Showing sensitivity to the needs and concerns of different groups; Creating unity and ownership through community celebrations.
Weak Effort	Considering history or cultural influences when planning programs or developing collections; Designing programs with broad appeal that will attract different segments of the community; Creating a culturally sensitive staff; Encouraging work-related research among the staff; Serving the senior population; Telling the local stories and collaborating with other institutions that tell the stories and preserve the past; Displaying up-to-date community information; Collaborating with local institutions to locate hidden groups within the community; Creating displays that reflect community identity; Creating ownership and pride through cultural and historical programs and materials.
Not Applicable	Not responsible for lack of funding or building's physical limitations. Does not have complete control over collection development process, but does have input.

Summary of the Researcher's Evaluations

Table 8 contains a summary of the researcher's evaluations. The evaluations are

displayed in four groups: Excellent Effort, Good Effort, Weak Effort, and Not

Applicable. Each group contains the layer in which the effort appears, the accompanying

title for each layer, and the effort that was made.

TABLE 8

Summary of the Researcher's Evaluations

EXCELLENT EFFORT

Layer Four: Support for the local Business Community
▸   Joining and participating in Chamber.

Layer Five: The Library Building as community center
▸   Working with town planning departments.
▸   Working with elected officials and institutions to build a better community.

GOOD EFFORT

Layer One: The skills and resources of its Individuals
▸   Identifying socially active people, community leaders, and neighborhood
        concerns.
▸   Connecting with local elected officials.
▸   Promoting library's role in the community.

Layer Two: The power of relationships in Voluntary Associations
▸   Finding associations.
▸   Joining and participating in associations.
▸   Determining concerns.
▸   Promoting library services.
▸   Accepting offers of help.

Layer Three: Institutional Partnerships
▸   Addressing quality of life issues.
▸   Collaborating with agencies to serve the most vulnerable sectors of the
        community.
▸   Sensing the needs of community.
▸   Reciprocating with engaged institutions.

Layer Four: Support for local Business Community
▸   Reaching out to the business community through the Chamber.
▸   Promoting library services and materials.
▸   Providing library services and materials.
▸   Collaborating on library programs with the Chamber.

- Keeping minor purchasing local and bringing business to the downtown area through the staff.
- Promoting good will toward the library within the business community.
- Using connections to professional associations.

Layer Five: The Library Building as community center
- Providing meeting space.
- Including all members of the community.
- Addressing quality of life concerns.
- Advocating for better public spaces for all members of the community.
- Collaborating with business area to spark investment in downtown area.
- Coordinating building efforts with the downtown area.

Layer Six: The Library as a reflection of the community
- Determining community's interests regarding programming.
- Keeping track of which materials are being used.
- Encouraging staff participation in selection process and program development.
- Encouraging staff's interests and development of a framework of knowledge.
- Identifying needs and interests of community's youth.
- Identifying library's present limitations on meeting needs of community's youth.
- Finding and saving local history.
- Knowing and telling library's history.
- Providing referrals to local agencies.
- Discreetly providing information to community's neediest members.
- Recognizing the need to locate and serve hidden populations.
- Making all members of the community feel welcome.
- Showing sensitivity to the needs and concerns of different sectors of the community.
- Creating unity and ownership through community celebrations.

WEAK EFFORT

Layer One: The skills and resources of its Individuals
- Connecting with young people.
- Creating connections between gifted individuals.
- Creating a community-minded staff.

Layer Two: The power of relationships in Voluntary Associations
- Formally researching groups.
- Soliciting help for the library.
- Making introductions between associations and members of associations.
- Developing staff participation.

Layer Three: Institutional Partnerships
- ► Widening the scope of institutions that the library collaborates with.
- ► Introducing members of institutions to each other.
- ► Developing staff participation.
- ► Coordinating services.

Layer Four: Support for the local Business Community
- ► Providing support for local fund raisers.
- ► Collaborating on community fund raising projects.
- ► Building social networks for the business community.
- ► Encouraging staff participation in Chamber meetings.
- ► Encouraging staff participation in community fund raisers.

Layer Five: The Library Building as community center
- ► Building bridges between diverse groups through creative programs.

Layer Six: The Library as a reflection of the community
- ► Considering history or cultural influences when planning programs or developing collections.
- ► Designing programs with broad appeal that will attract different segments of the community.
- ► Creating a culturally sensitive staff.
- ► Encouraging work-related research among staff.
- ► Serving the senior population.
- ► Telling the local stories and collaborating with other institutions that tell the stories and preserve the past.
- ► Displaying up-to-date community information.
- ► Collaborating with local institutions to locate hidden groups within the community.
- ► Creating displays that reflect community identity.
- ► Creating ownership and pride through cultural and historical programs and materials.

NOT APPLICABLE

Layer Three: Institutional Partnerships
- ► Not responsible for loss of funding.

Layer Four: Support for local Business Community
- ► Making local corporate connections.
- ► Purchasing on a major scale.

Layer Five: The Library Building as community center
- ▸ Coordinating with other public spaces like parks, playgrounds, schools, etc. Downtown area does not contain such spaces.

Layer Six: The Library as a reflection of the community
- ▸ Not responsible for lack of funding or building's physical limitations.
- ▸ Does not have complete control over collection development process, but does have input.

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

A literature review of the significance of social capital revealed that social interaction is required to make communities thrive. However, research also indicated that communication technology coupled with retail oriented meeting spaces have disrupted social relationships in today's communities. In addition to the challenges associated with declining community participation, present-day elected officials are also faced with the responsibility of providing communities with services with less tax dollars to spend. In the midst of this social climate, library professionals suggested that public libraries must show how they contributed to the revitalization of communities by promoting social interaction.

Research stated that public libraries mobilize communities by building social networks between the preexisting layers of assets present in most communities. The purpose of this study was to investigate the ways in which one local South Jersey public library contributed to the revitalization efforts of the community it served. Glassboro Public Library was selected as the test-case to determine what steps the library took to build social networks within the community. The survey or descriptive method was used because the study was sociological in nature. The case study method was chosen because of the subjective, ongoing nature of community building.

The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building, (2005) a case study commissioned by the Urban Libraries Council and the Chicago Public Library was the measure used to determine whether the Glassboro Public Library built social networks that contributed to the development of the community. A research model, The Engaged Library – Model of Community Engagement, was developed based on the guidelines stated in the Chicago study. The research model stated recommended goals for identifying and connecting a library's assets to a community's preexisting assets. Interview questions were created based on The Engaged Library –Model of Community Engagement's stated goals. Information on Glassboro Public Library's community building efforts was collected through a personal interview with the library's Branch Manager. Because of the complex nature of the issue, the researcher solicited the interview subject's thoughts, behaviors, and feelings about the questions. The library's community building efforts were compared to the research model's stated goals for identifying and connecting a library's assets to a community's preexisting assets. The comparison was influenced by the researcher's admittedly subjective judgement, but the findings were the product of a systematic, analytical approach to a socially complex issue. The researcher concluded that the Glassboro Public Library made substantial efforts toward the revitalization efforts of the Glassboro community, but with some modifications to the goals stated in The Engaged Library – Model of Community Engagement, the library could take steps to promote greater social interaction among its community members.

Findings and Recommendations

An analysis of the Glassboro Public Library's strengths and weaknesses regarding the library's efforts to identify and connect the library's assets to the community's assets yielded the following findings.

The role that community service plays in the duties of the public library was clearly understood by the Branch Manager of the library. The Branch Manager and her library staff made a considerable effort to locate and serve the various individual and group needs of the community. The attention paid to the concerns and interests of the community was notable. The Branch Manager was consciously aware of the continuous need to strive for inclusiveness for all members of the community's population. The Branch Manager and her library staff also demonstrated a commitment to working with the local institutions to improve the quality of life within the community even though the Branch Manager believed that limited funding and library staff shortages often made the endeavor difficult. Lastly, the Branch Manager exhibited an exemplary understanding of the stake that the local business community and the elected officials have in the success of a popular downtown library.

Conversely, while the Branch Manager clearly understood the obligations of the library's place within the community, she had not yet recognized the need to build connections between the distinct sectors of the community to facilitate the formation of a social network that strengthens the foundation of the community. The Branch Manager's concept of community building was based upon the library's ability to raise funding for out reach programs as opposed to identifying and connecting a community's preexisting

social assets. There was no formal plan to chart or track the library's and the community's assets so they could be used to build social connections that would benefit all members of the community. There was also no formal plan for utilizing the library staff's connections to the community to improve the library's engagement in local interests and events. Lastly, there was little attention being paid to the historical and cultural influences that have helped shape the community and provide it with its source of identity and pride. It is the researcher's belief that the Branch Manager needed a more comprehensive approach to coordinate the library's efforts to reach out to the various sectors of the community and promote the library as a unifying asset within the community. Conclusively, the Branch Manager's community service efforts were on the right track, but she needed to revise her perception of community building and make a formal plan to make the most of the community's existing social assets. See Table 9 for the researcher's recommendations for the Glassboro Public Library's creation of an engaged community library.

Conclusion

The researcher concluded that a small public library can contribute to the development efforts of a community by building social connections that build bridges between the various sectors of a community if the public library takes a holistic, comprehensive approach to its out reach and library service efforts. A small public library, regardless of its budget limitations, can maximize the uses of its assets by matching the library's assets to the community's. A cooperative rather than compartmentalized approach to service can build social connections that can promote

TABLE 9

Recommendations

- Make a formal community engagement plan. Create a graph or chart that lists the socially active individuals, volunteer groups, and institutions within the community. List the interests and concerns of each entry, the services that the library supplies for each, and the contributions each one makes to the library. Use the chart to make connections between the interests of the various groups and individuals. Consult the chart before attending or hosting meetings, planning programs, or collaborating with institutions. Combine efforts whenever possible. Make introductions when appropriate. Add potential entries and connections when the opportunity arises.

- Enlist the aid of the staff. Hold monthly meetings to solicit the staff's input on what is going on in the community. Encourage the staff to help create and maintain the community engagement chart. Create non-salary related incentives for cooperation such as more flexible work schedules, more input on program planning, or more opportunities to network with other branches in the library system.

- Use a holistic approach to staff duties. Rotate duties whenever possible. Do not limit staff to working in separate areas of the library.

- Look for flexibility and diverse interests in new hires. Make sure new hires understand the main priority of the library is to serve the community. Everyone will be expected to do more than one thing.

- Document all efforts to introduce institutions with similar goals to each other and combine services. Use this documentation to justify the use of the library's funding.

- When developing programs, focus on the commonalities among people. Incorporate cultural influences or traditions into the programs as added interests. Commonalities build bridges between different groups.

- Reflect the community's identity by honoring the past. Collaborate with institutions that preserve or study the past.

- Help tell the stories of the community whenever possible. Enlist the aid of the senior and youth populations. Seniors have an interest in the past and youth have an affinity for stories.

- Make the library an up-to-date community information center. Designate a prominent display area for local community information. Make sure it is well-stocked and current. Keep community referral information organized. Make sure all staff members know how to dispense this information discreetly.

- Stay informed about the shifting demographics within the community. Collaborate and communicate with all institutions that work with new populations entering the community.

- Offer the use of the library's assets for community projects that do not directly involve the library whenever possible. Be a good neighbor.

- Let the socially active individuals, voluntary associations, community institutions, and members of the business community know what they can do for the library. Participation promotes pride and ownership.

unity within a community as well as cut cost. The key to success lies in having a clear plan on paper and a solid vision of what the library hopes to accomplish. Community leaders can reap the social and economic benefits of the stabilizing influence of a socially engaged library, if library administrators recognize the importance of developing and executing engaged library plans with the cooperation of community development planners and elected officials.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule

Warm-up questions to establish rapport

1. Can you tell me a little about the history of this particular branch of the library system?
2. Can you tell me about yourself, how did you come to be manager of this branch?

Questions on how the library builds social networks within the community.

1.) Individuals B making connections with socially active people in the community.

1. How do you determine who the socially active people are in your community?
2. Can you give me some general categories that describe them?
3. How do you find out what their concerns are for the community?
4. How do you let them know how the library can help?
5. Do you ever introduce any of these people to each other? If yes, ask for example.
6. Does your staff help you learn what is going on in the community?
*Don't forget to ask for examples when necessary or ask for clarification. Don't forget to ask if there is anything the interviewee would like to add before you move on?

2.) Voluntary Associations B making connections with people in socially active groups.

1. How do you find the voluntary associations that are active in your community?
2. What are some of the groups that you know about?
3. How do you find out what their concerns or interests are?
4. Do you ever do any research on the history or interests of any of the groups? Does your staff?
5. How do you let these groups know what the library can do for them?
6. Do you ever think about what these groups could contribute to the library?
7. How would you go about soliciting their help?
8. Have you joined any of these groups? Has your staff?
9. Do you ever introduce members of various groups to each other?
10. Are there groups you have heard about but haven=t met, and how would you go about meeting them?
*Don't forget to ask for examples when necessary or ask for clarification. Don't forget to ask if there is anything the interviewee would like to add before you move on.

3.) Institutional Partnerships B collaboration with other agencies.

1. What are some of the local institutions that you collaborate with?
2. What are some of the community concerns that you address with them?
3. How do you determine what the library can do for them?
4. Do they do anything for the library as well?
5. How do you determine which institutions to work with?

6. Do you ever introduce people from different institutions to each other? If yes, example.
7. Does your staff help with this also?
*Don't forget to ask for examples when necessary or ask for clarification. Don't forget to ask if there is anything the interviewee would like to add before you move on.

4.) Support for the local Business Community B contributing to the local economy.

1. How do you reach-out to the business community and let them know what the library can do for them?
2. What type of resources do you offer the business community?
3. Do you collaborate with any of the local businesses for fund raisers or programs?
4. Do you use any of the local businesses for goods or services?
5. Does the business community support the library in any way?
6. Are you a member of any local business associations and do you attend any meetings? How about your staff?
7. Do you ever introduce members of the business community to each other?
8. Do you have any corporate business connections?
*Don't forget to ask for examples when necessary or ask for clarification. Don't forget to ask if there is anything the interviewee would like to add before you move on.

5.) The Library Building as community center B what the library means to the town.

1. Is the library used as a public meeting space?
2. What are some of the groups that meet in the library?
3. What do you think your present library contributes to the community?
4. Are you involved in any town planning or redevelopment projects?
5. With a better library, what do you think the library could contribute to the community?
6. Where would you like a new library to be built?
7. What have you done to help with the planning and financing of a new public library?
*Don't forget to ask for examples when necessary or ask for clarification. Don't forget to ask if there is anything the interviewee would like to add before you move on.

6.) The Library as a reflection of the community it serves B what the library means to the people.

1. How do you determine what types of programs your community would like?
2. How do you determine what type of materials your community would like to see in the library?
3. How much input does your staff have on programming and materials?
4. How does the library make the younger members of the community feel welcomed?
5. How does the library make the senior members of the community feel welcomed?
6. Do you know the history of the area? How does the library help tell the stories of the past?

7. Does the library provide local community information? If yes, ask for example.

8. How do you think the library reflects the unique identity of the present community it serves?

9. Do you think the community feels comfortable in your library, as if the library belongs to them?

*Don't forget to ask for examples when necessary or ask for clarification. Don't forget to ask if there is anything the interviewee would like to add before you move on.

Concluding the interview

1. Is there anything that I didn't ask about that you would like to comment on?

*Don't forget to thank the interviewee for taking the time to answer your questions and try to accommodate any requests the interviewee might have.

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

E-mail sent to Branch Manager of Glassboro Library

[Delete],

      My name is Barbara Snyder and I am a graduate student in Rowan University's Library Science program. I had the opportunity to speak with you when I did my Practicum at the Mullica Hill Branch last fall. I also had the chance to hear you speak about making social connections within the community last summer when you came to Dr. Holly Willett's class on Serving the Library's Public.

      I am currently enrolled in the Graduate Thesis class with Dr. Marilyn Shontz, and I am working on my Master's Thesis. I am conducting a case study on how the public library helps build communities and I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you on the subject.

      My study is based on *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building*, (2005) a previous case study commissioned by the Urban Libraries Council for the Chicago Public Library. Through a comparative analysis, I hope to determine how the public library builds social networks within the community that encourage reinvestment and development. My questions would address how the public library makes connections with the involved individuals, voluntary associations, institutions, and local businesses in Glassboro that benefit all members of the Glassboro community. The exchange would also cover the importance of the Glassboro library as an institution within the community and examine how the library reflects the interests of the people it serves. The interview may take one or two hour-long sessions. The sessions can be scheduled over a period of days to accommodate your work schedule.

      Dates that I am available are Monday through Saturday the week of January 8 to January 13, and Monday through Saturday the week of January 15 to January 20. I can accommodate day or evening hours. While this interview may represent a significant break in your schedule, I believe my study is locally relevant due to the recent decline of available tax dollars from county and municipal governments. I would greatly appreciate your input on this timely project.

                                           Sincerely,

                                           Barbara Snyder

APPENDIX C

EDITED VERSION OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Transcription of Interview
Date: 1-12-07 Time: 10:20 B 11:25
Place: Glassboro Public Library, Meeting Room
Topic: The Engaged Library B Model of Community Engagement
         Warm-up questions 1 & 2; Sections 1-3 Engaged Individuals, Voluntary Associations,
         Institutions.
Interviewer: Barbara Snyder
Interviewee: Branch Manager of Glassboro Public Library

Warm-up questions [Nonessential Delete]

Okay, I'm going to get into these questions, and like I said before, they are going to be about making connections in the community.

Question on how the library builds social networks within the community.
1.) Individuals making connections with socially active people in the community.

1. *How do you determine who the socially active people are in your community?*
They are the ones who are talked about. They are the go to people when you are talking about things getting accomplished, they are the people who know something, and the names come up.
Do they come up in conversations or newspapers or . . . ?
I read the newspapers, the Gloucester County Times and the local news. So I make connections there. I also check with the schools. Find out who's doing what with the schools. And I talk to the people who are in regularly, I make connections through their conversations. I find out who's active in the community, who knows things, who's participating in programs that are making a difference in the community.
2. *Can you give me some general categories that describe them? Not, names or anything, just types like senior citizens, or mothers of young children?*
School Board people, PTA or PTO I think it's called in this community. There are site councils, you see their name there so you know they are leaders. People that are in town council. Even more than that, the ones that are serving on a committee. Those names become familiar to you so when you are introduced to them you make that connection, of their responsibility, their interests. You make sure that when you talk to them about the library that you see a way to make a connection.
3. & 4. *Great, that's my next question. How do you find out what their concerns are for the community and how do you let them know what the library can do for them?*
Well, by finding out who they are through the newspaper or the literature through the school or from the borough, be sure to know what their priorities are. When you have the opportunity to meet them, you mention how the library might be helpful to them. For example, I think there is a Track Organization, the track coaches meet here in the meeting room. In situations like that we make sure we have some material on

coaching. And sometimes it's knowing the ages of their family if they are talking about them. If someone is active in the elementary school, you have some idea of what ages their children may be and you can sort of mention a program that you have that may be helpful, or you ask if their child is going to be participating in the science competition. We have quite a few books that make suggestions for experiments for the science competition. *Kids are a great connection.* Yes, they are, they are a wonderful connection. For most people they are the most important thing in their lives. *Exactly. See that, two questions together, just like that.*

5. *Do you ever introduce any of these people to each other?*
Not often, but yes. It happens more in meetings where you know someone and you know the other person might be interested in meeting them. A chamber meeting or sometimes it's other library meetings. [Nonessential Delete]

6. *Does your staff help you with this?*
Sometimes, I key in on which ones have particular connections, some are better connected to the community than others. Either because they live here or they have children or grandchildren that are participating in the community. *Can you give me an example?* One of my library assistants has been in this community all her life, her husband as well, and her children went all the way through the school system. At one time I believe she participated in one of the political parties as a local chairperson, and now has grandchildren going through the school system. If I need to find out something about the school that isn't evident on the school calendar I'll ask her what the situation is.
I'm just going to run down these questions quickly and make sure I got them. (Repeat questions) Is there anything I didn't cover that you think I should know about this before I move on?
I can't think of anything off the top of my head. [Nonessential Delete]

2.) Voluntary Associations making connections with people in socially active groups.
These questions will be similar to the ones I just asked.

1. *How do you find the voluntary associations that are active in your community?*
When I first came here the Director suggested I participate in the Chamber actually I think it was a mutual decision and it seemed like that was a good place for the library to have representation. I have continued that association. *Is that the Chamber of Commerce?* Greater Glassboro Chamber of Commerce. So I know what the concerns of the local businesses are and I not only get to know them through monthly meetings and such, it is an opportunity, from time to time, we do programs with guest speakers or we invite other Chambers in and it just widens your network. Speakers can help with possible programs with your library. It also helps for them to see the library as connected to the community. [pause] [Nonessential Delete] So the Chamber I've been active in all along, and then a few years after I'd been here, not long, they (the Chamber) started a program called Unity Day and they decided to hold it behind the library. Well, it just seem natural that if it was going to be held in my backyard that I should know what's going on. *Right.* Maybe it was part curiosity but I wanted to be involved, because the library is a resource. We would be involved whether we

participated or not. *Yes.* It seemed like the right thing to do, and so we started having meetings about Unity Day. I don't know if I was originally there, but I stared to participate pretty soon afterwards. I saw it as, they needed to have access to my resources and I needed to know what was going on, and I wanted to be part of the community and this was a community celebration.

2. *So what are some of the groups?* The Unity Day, let me think where else, can I go get my notes? *Of course, sure.* Chamber of Commerce, and I've been on there board of directors or frequently on their membership committee that gave me the opportunity to call members of the community as a representative of the library and invite them to participate in the Chamber, but they also get to know me. And as you know, sometimes the Director is perceived as the library, it's a weird thing but it is. *Yes.* Quite a few years ago I started working with, originally it was known as the Mayor's Employment Committee and it sort of morphed into what is now the Civic Intern Program. Working with representatives again of the local government, and that was to work with young people, adolescents, in the community. To provide a meaningful experience. Originally we were working with the small businesses trying to prepare them to go out and find employment, find their first job. When that became very difficult because of the employment situation, we sort of changed the focus a little bit and started educating them about job opportunities in local government. By educating them about the services available in their local community. How they might participate in them when they became an adult or became older, and it also helped educate them about the democratic process. To participate in these committees, to volunteer and that sort of thing. It gave them the opportunity to participate with people who run the local government. The woman who runs the program is [Delete], she is also my liaison for the library board, the advisory board to the Council. As part of that we give tours throughout the community, through the county I guess you could say, because we give a tour through all the local borough offices. They have a tour through the water and sewer department . They tour the highway department, the recycling portion. And we also take a tour of the court house up in Woodbury. So, it's really, it's a great program. It's three weeks, they take a field trip a week, and they also have to attend a council meeting. During the week they have a field trip once a week and the other three mornings they work in one of the local offices, either the borough office or the park and rec office or the library. They worked in the planning office, the redevelopment office. They get a little taste of what it means to work, they have to be their on time, they have to do tasks on time. But they also get to see how the town provides services. I think there are a lot of adults that don't have that kind of background. There are usually a dozen or fifteen youths that participate and then they get a small stipend when they are done. The little carrot out there. *Yes.* It's a wonderful transition. The next year most of them are out there looking for jobs. Like I tell the people who work for me (the volunteers), if you show up on time, and you work hard while you're here you got a job reference for next year and that's the hardest part of getting a job, getting that first reference. That was the Civic Intern Program. And then there is the Boys and Girls Club, when they started talking about that, it is a part of our community that I feel very strongly needed some additional service. Before then we had a two year grant to provide a homework help center, but our grant ran out

and unfortunately it was not something we could do independently. They were looking for people to participate in a Boys and Girls Club, so I volunteered to be a participant in that and I continue my association with them. I don't know if you realize that they are located right at the other end of the building, so it's good that I'm involved with that too. It provides some challenges because of the level of activity there. Sometimes the other kids that hang around as a result of it being there, because we have a good relationship with the staff and the executive director, I know what's going on, they know what's going on with us. It helps with any problems that come up, we work together to solve them. And that's really, really important. About a year ago, I was invited to be a member of the Main Street Organization. Main Street Economic Development Corporation. The Main Street is an organization that helps revitalized the downtown. Of course, being here in the downtown, and being a very busy part of the downtown, I was really pleased that they had asked me.

[Personal Delete] So I was honored that they wanted me to participate in this and help them build their community. It also helps that I'm a voice for the library as they redesign the downtown area, and that they see the resources that we have. Again, it's an opportunity to make connections that I wouldn't have had otherwise. So it has been really helpful.

3. *Great, again it feeds right in, because the next question was how do you find out what their interests or concerns are for the community like you had mentioned before in the other one.*

Right. You find out a little bit about them by how they participate in organizations, you learn what things are important to them. But as you are talking to them and other people are talking to them, you learn a little bit about them, what their employment situation is, or their family situation is. Or hobbies that sort of thing and you highlight them and use them to make connections.

4. *Do you ever do any research on the history of any of the groups you come across? Or their interests, so you can determine how better to serve them.*

I think that I can say I talk to other people about them. I find people in town that know more about the situation. Things are just mentioned in passing and it's assumed you know the background and perhaps, I don't. I'll usually ask the people that I know that live in Glassboro a little bit about it and it fills me in on the background of it. It keeps me from making a mistake, from tackling, you know, a sensitive subject or something. I think that's important because I think sometimes that can happen. *Does your staff do that as well, do they ever do any kind of research on background or interests?* Ah, I do say that with my children's staff because they go out into the community and I'm more likely to talk to them about this sort of situation. And I encourage them to make connections and tell them what I know about particular people in the schools and ask them more detailed questioned afterwards because they are going out into the community whereas none of the other staff do.

5. *How do you let these people know what the library can so for them? Same question as before.*

I just try to catch what their priorities are what their situations are, what's important to them and somehow make a connection with what's going on in the library.

6. *Now this question is a little bit different. Do you ever think about what these groups could contribute to the library? The library's always thinking about service.* Right. *Do you ever think well, that this group could do this for the library?*
There have been times with volunteer groups such as the girl scouts. Several years ago they had come to me and said could we display these Christmas trees that the girls were putting together for the holidays and so I started having this relationship with the girl scout leader. Then afterwards there has been times when they have asked me if they could do some volunteer work. Well, the same thing, we had a cub scout troop that was meeting in our meeting room and they said can we do something for you, can we provide some landscaping out front. They got donated material and planted a lot of the material that is out front now. Same thing after the scouts took care of it for a couple of years then the master gardeners that are sponsored through Rutgers University asked if they could take over the landscaping and they did the same thing. They have provided programs and they have provided landscaping for the front of our library. It is much more attractive than it was before. *Rutgers?* The extension service, for the master gardeners program. *Oh, so mostly they approach the library.*
7. *My next question is that if you did think of a group that could help how would you go about soliciting them? Do you think you could solicit them?*
Usually it would be someone that I would know, that I had a connection with. And it would start out as a discussion, very low-key, finding out what types of things they might do or might consider. [Nonessential Delete] *Common interest, sort of, right?* Yeah.
8. *I think you have pretty much answered this. Have you joined any of these groups?*
As much as I can handle. But you really have to realize that when you get an invite it is a very positive thing and you really have to participate. It's fortunate that I get support from the administration. Of course, he says you can participate just make sure you get everything done that you have to get done. [Nonessential Delete] *So okay, and your staff, you had mentioned them and their connections mostly with schools.* Right, and the organizations they participate in? *Yes.* And sometimes there are situations when I mention would you introduce me to them because I really, that is someone I should know. And that has been helpful sometimes because they have the connection and it really is much better if I can be introduced to them. I'm just thinking of this particular situation, this person works at Rowan and now brings us the, you know, the booklet that they put out, the publication. Things that didn't happen before happen because you take the time to make the connection. *Yes.* And you establish this reciprocity. I think it helps, they feel comfortable helping and offering to help when you know them as people. [Nonessential Delete]
9. *Again, I think you already answer this. Do you ever introduce members of various groups to each other? You have already told me that your staff introduces you to other people, if you have anything to add to that. Do you introduce people to each other?*
I just remembered, sometimes I'm just not aware that this is what I'm doing. Then when you sit back and have questions like this you say well, gee this is what I'm doing. I do know at a recent activity where there happen to be people that were philanthropic, I introduced someone that was, that was making large donations, to

someone else that I thought fit their profile. And I will never know whether it made a difference or not. I hope people will do the same for me down the road. *Yes, exactly.* Cause certainly if we are going to be building a new library . . . [Nonessential Delete]
10. *If there was a group in the community that you hadn't met but would like to, how would you go about meeting them?*
Well, if I've heard about them, it may be through the newspaper or local publication or whatever, I would find somebody that I have a connection with that had a connection with a program in the organization and talk to them about it. That usually can result in an invitation because most organizations can use more people who are committed to working with them. *Yes, okay.* That usually works.
Alright, what I'm going to do now is run through these questions real fast and see if I left anything out. [repeat questions] Is there anything else I left out? I don't think so. [Nonessential Delete]

3.) Institutional Partnerships B collaboration with other agencies.
Number three, institutions, and once you finish these questions, you're at the half-way point. Institutions are more about collaboration, how you collaborate with other agencies. It's a little bit different than what we have been talking about. But they run along the same lines and I already know you've gotten what I'm talking about that's why I said I wanted to talk to you.
1. *What are some of the local institutions you collaborate with?*
Rowan University, *That's true, I know that.* The local school system. [Nonessential Delete] We work with several of the preschools around here, Glassboro Head Start Program. A child development center, the Genesis Center. Several of the preschools, we visit on a monthly basis. *Museums, Historical Societies, parks, you know, anything like that?* From time to time I have the Historical Society present a program. Of course we do put out the literature for all of these organizations. We are on the mailing lists for all of them. We promote their activities as appropriate. *Police Stations, Unemployment Offices, government agencies?* The Unemployment Office, until recently we had some staffing situations involved, but until recently we have been visiting the Unemployment Office, actually it's the Work Force Office, on a monthly basis, working with their job-training seminars, to tell them about the library and tell them about the job resources at the library. It has been very helpful, to reach a population that may not be very familiar with library services. *Yes.* I also, from time to time, will get someone from their work program to work here at the library, because as a transition from not working to working they place people in various government institutions. There are quite a few people in Glassboro that are unemployed so, from time to time, I'll have someone who comes in here that is making that transition and works maybe two, three, four, weeks. Usually once they have worked here for a few weeks they realize that if I can do this, than I can find a job for real. And again, sometimes the biggest help is that I can provide a recommendation. But, for us it is an opportunity to let someone know about our services that may not have known before. *Yes.* Again, sometimes people think oh libraries, all that reading, it's only for smart people or whatever, especially if it is someone who didn't use the library when they were younger or when they went to school. We start talking about having the Internet

available to them and classes on how to use it. That we have all this free material available for them like DVDs and that we have programs that they can attend for free. And we mention that children can come to our programs and that they are not all during the day. And you can sit and read a book while their in this room and someone is with them. I don't want to call it babysitting but, *It's relaxation for them.* Yes, we find that over time the parents form a bond when the kids are in this room that acts as a real stress reliever for someone that is looking for a job. *Yes.* But, unfortunately we have not been able to do this (work with the job training seminars at the Work Force Office) since September because of our staffing situation, but I'm hoping that it will get resolved real soon. We hope we will be able to do it again. [Nonessential Delete]
2. *What are some to the community concerns that you address with them? And again, you have pretty much touched on that such as reaching people that don't normally know about the library's services.*
The Genesis Center is a preschool that was started by the local school board earlier by grants. It is located in the Ellis Manor housing project because they found that at one point almost all of the male children coming out of that housing project were scoring very low in forth grade. So they wanted to do an early intervention, if you will. So they designed this preschool to give them an advantage. They have done a wonderful job with it. So we go out there every month to visit them. Again, they(the children) know that our staff comes from the library and they come here for field trips as well. The parents participate in the preschool so we get to meet them as well. *That's important. So, I would say probably that you are concerned with quality of life issues.* Yes, that's a good way to put it. *I don't want to put words in your month, but that's what it sounds like to me.*
3. *How do you determine what the library can do for them?*
Well, I have to make an assessment of what I think they need, and what the library has available with our usual services. And I try to make it as non-threatening as possible. Even when I go out to, when I've done the program at the Work Force New Jersey Office, I tell them that they don't need a card to come into the library, that they can come in to use the computers. I tell them that if they want a library card, our library requires an ID such as a driver's license. If you don't have a driver's license, you need three forms of identification, I go through them. I also tell them that everyday we get phone calls asking that question so if you don't know or you don't remember and you're too embarrassed to ask, call us up. It makes it much easier, because then you are not standing there. And we've had people that just stand around and observe and then they get brave enough to come to the desk, and then you realize that they were just very awkward and not used to asking for things. *Right.* In this community we have people that come from other countries and English is not their first language. I worked with the ESL teacher in the school district and at one point I asked him what languages are you teaching, what countries are these people coming from? And he said he generally had about eight different languages at any particular time, but it's never the same eight and he gave me a range of about twenty. *That's a lot.* It really is, and many of them do find their way here. So we need to be very welcoming. *Yes.* Even if English isn't their first language. Sometimes the children are the ones providing the translations. *Yes, exactly. because they adapt faster, and people don't*

realize how intimidating a government office is. Yes. [Nonessential Delete] And a lot of them come from counties where a government office is a very scary thing. *Yes.* You're taking your life in your own hands. So, we need to be exceptionally sensitive to those things.

4. *Do any of the institutions do anything for the library in return?*
The school supports us through their National Honor Society volunteers. I'm also on their Key Communicators Committee and from time to time I ask them to make announcements about special programs that we have so they can help get the word out about our special programs. The same thing with the Chamber, by participating in their activities, I hope that they also spread the word about what services we have. Institutions, I'm just trying to think. I know the Rowan fraternities and sororities helped with Unity Day and that helped with the library situation because we had all these things in the meeting room that had to be trekked out to the road that connects to the street behind us. And the mural that is on our wall in the children's area was the result of a Rowan student doing a project here in the community one summer. That was about seven years ago. *It looks great.* They did a project and they decided to make this mural with the students and then they needed a place to put it. And we decided this was the perfect place to put it. *That's great.*

5. *How do you determine which institutions to work with?*
I try to evaluate how we best serve each other. There are institutions that we have more in common with or have more of a reason to participate in things together and there is only so much time and energy and you have to pick and choose. *I was thinking that, you don't want to spread yourself too thin or there is going to be nothing left to work with.* Yes, in the past we have had seven years of grants from the state to support literacy. We don't have it this year, they cut back severely. We were one of the institutions that did not get their funding, but there is a new health center in town, Glassboro. I spoke to them and went to their grand opening and such and part of our application which was not approved would have allowed us to do programs in their waiting room. We have been doing it in social services in the health department, the county ones, and we really wanted to be able to do it in their waiting room. It was a wonderful opportunity because you frequently have families with children and you have the opportunity to talk to the families about the importance of reading to the children and they get to see how interested the children are. Really, it's a teachable moment. And we tell them that if they do this with their children on a regular basis if they read with their children, that it will make such a difference in their education and their success later in life. So that is something we have done with other offices but unfortunately weren't able to do with the health department, but again you can only spread yourself so thin. *And a lot of it depends on whether you get your grants or the funding.* Right. *And that's getting tighter now.* It is. *That makes it harder, that's a shame.*

6. *Do you ever introduce people from different institutions to each other?*
Yes, it do. I feel very fortunate that people have introduced me to people from other organizations and so I try to return the favor. *Can you give me an example?* It's hard to remember specifics, like I said before I did introduce someone from a generous corporation to someone that I thought would be mutually beneficial to each other.

That's alright; I don't want to get too hung up on specifics.
7. Does your staff help with this type of work?
Not usually. But sometimes in conversations they will say something that I'll pick up on and they'll help fill in some of the blanks. They will bring in literature that they get at their house that I don't get here at the library. There are certain types of mail that only goes to residents. *Yes.* Libraries don't get that. I rely on my staff to bring it in or otherwise I don't know what everybody else got. *Yes. I know that with staff, this requires an awful lot of training. Again, that's something Chicago has, training.* Training would be wonderful. [Nonessential Delete] *And that is the halfway mark.* Super.

Transcription of Interview
Date: 1-16-07 Time: 2:05 B 3:15
Place: Glassboro Public Library, Meeting Room
Topic: The Engaged Library B Model of Community Engagement
      Sections 4-6 Support for the local Business Community, Library Building as physical space, Library as reflection on community.
Interviewer: Barbara Snyder
Interviewee: Branch Manager of Glassboro Public Library

4.) Support for the local Business Community B contributing to the local economy.

1. *How do you reach-out to the business community and let them know what the library can do for them?*
I go to Chamber meetings and from time to time I give a presentation to the Chamber, and on a one to one basis talk to them about what's available at the library, meeting rooms for non-profits, specifically some databases. I try to promote them and it usually happens at that teachable moment when they are talking about needing a particular type of information and I remind them that, hey the library can help you with that. When we have our Small Business meetings, our programs are sponsored by Rutgers University and SBA, we usually have one in the spring and one in the fall, I send out notices to our Chamber e-mail list. I let them know in case someone has a small business that might be looking for some additional information. Typically the topics are financial and technical information for small business. That is usually something that sparks interest in small business owners. The other day, last Tuesday, someone was in that I knew from the Chamber earlier in the day and in the course of conversing with him I pointed out that we have this program and he was back that night. And, he's had his own business for years and years but felt that information is a good thing, to find out what is available so you can keep growing your business. [Personal Delete] That's primarily how I reach-out to the business community, there have been times that I've gone door-to-door with information about special programs, particularly when I targeted the downtown area, I've gone downtown at various times. It's probably been a little while since I've done that. Some businesses have become more restrictive about what type of posters they will hang in their establishment, so it's not as productive as it once was. However, sometimes making the connection is every

bit as productive as possibly putting a poster in their window. *Yes.*

2. *And as usual you've gone already into the next questions which is what type of resources do you offer the business community? Which you've told me.*

Yes, the databases are the main thing, but we also let them know we also have a reasonably good selection of print material at this location and at our other locations. For small businesses, particularly for writing business plans. That's more for someone starting a business, but it also helps for someone looking to get additional financing. A business plan is very important to most banks when you go to them for additional funds. *That's true.* [Nonessential Delete]

3. *Do you collaborate with any of the local businesses for fund raisers or programs?*

The children's department will usually solicit some sort of donation from the local businesses as part of the summer reading packet. We've had coupons from the bowling alley, the skating rink, Dippies, there over in Mullica Hill, and some of the other places have given us coupons like Burger King. And these are things we use for the summer reading program. Sometimes there are special things like that, that will be given out as part of a lottery at the end of the program when we have our end of summer reading party. Those donations are used as prizes.

4. *Do you use any of the local businesses for goods or services?*

Because we are a county library system there are certain restrictions on how we do purchasing. We do have an account at the local Acme because we can get a lot of items there, if we need to order food there or get some of our office supplies, like paper plates or cups from time to time. Once a month one of the Mullica Hill staff goes shopping there and gets the food for the commission meeting or any of the items that we wouldn't normally order through an office supply place. It could be paper products or soap for the local sink, odds and ends like that.

5. *Does the business community support the library in any way?*

I would say that the ones that give donations to the library do and I think they support it through the good relationship we have and the good things they say about us in other environments which has helped us tremendously.

6. *Are you a member of any local business associations and do you attend any meetings?*

I'm a member of the Greater Glassboro Chamber of Commerce. We do have a membership to the County Chamber but I'm not the designated attendee for that. *And you do attend meetings?* Yes, and I've gone to a couple of their meetings (County) as well. *How about your staff, any of them do any of this?* No.

7. *Do you ever introduce members of the business community to each other?*

Sometimes mostly at meetings. One of the primary roles of organizations is to be a place to network so when I'm there I try to make sure that's part of what I do. *Do you have an example, can you think of one?* I can't think of one exactly. *I know, that's a tough question.*

8. *Do you have any corporate business connections, any corporate sponsorships or anything like that?*

Not for our local organization. Of course NJLA has corporate sponsorships and ALA and those are always beneficial when we attend professional meetings. I do attend NJLA. Last spring PLA for the first time and that was an amazing conference.

Everything is relevant. ALA I attended a couple of day sessions, but it hasn't had as much relevant information as PLA did. *They go a little off on the ethics and the higher thinking in terms of.* The big picture. *Yes.* I'm glad someone is thinking of it, but I would say for those of us in the, I don't want to say in the trenches. . . [Nonessential Delete] But PLA is amazing, I don't think I'll go out to California, but *that's really far.* Yes, it is and I just feel that is too much to ask the library to support, but should they be in this area again, I will certainly consider that. *Right.*
Okay, now just to make sure I got them, I'm going to run down these questions really fast. [repeat questions] Is there anything I left out on that, that you think I need to know?
I would say that when the Café was opened I would post their menu regularly. *That was nice.* The staff likes to order food from all the local establishments. *Yes.* We keep a menu here for all the places. *That is actually important believe it or not to this study, that by being here you bring business to all the local businesses.* [Personal Delete]

5.) The Library Building as community center B what the library means to the town.

1. *Is the library used as a public meeting space?*
Yes. *This is it right here. the public meeting room.* Yes. We wish it was larger and more attractive, but.
2. *What are some of the groups that meet here?*
Boys and Girls Club, Literacy Volunteers, let me go look at the meeting room book just to give you some more specifics. *Alright.* Cub Scouts, County Clerks Office, South Jersey Quilters, we use it for discussion groups but that's not really outside of the organization. The Greater Glassboro Chamber of Commerce, Gloucester County Green Party, NAACP Act-So, I'm trying to remember what the acronym stands for, it's for High School youth to do academic, cultural, and technological programs. They compete in competition regionally, statewide and nationwide, and actually the group here has won some national honors. *Very impressive.* I think that's all the organizations I have for the moment, for this year.
3. *What do you think your present library contributes to the community, this building just as it is not the building you wish you had but this one?*
We're a safe place for people to meet, for people to be. There are quite a few young people that are unsupervised after school who come here. They do their homework here or they just socialize. We have adults that come that I'm not sure where their sleeping at night. They use it as a comfortable place to be as well as Internet access. We have people of course coming here to borrow materials and use the computers, to attend meetings, to attend programs that we're presenting. Sometimes people come in to use the restroom or to wait between appointments if they are doing a couple of things down town. For a number of years there was a laundry across the street, about two years ago it closed, actually it was about a year and a half, there is one a couple block away now, but when it was across the street we frequently had people who would put a load of wash in and then come over here until the wash was done and then go back and switch things over and come back over until that was done. *That must*

have been great. Yes, really for us. *It's a shame it's gone.* I believe there are some families that drop their kids off at Let's Dance and then come over here while their children are dancing.

4. *Are you involved in any town planning or redevelopment projects?*

Yes. I was appointed to the Main Street Board, it's the GEDC, the Glassboro Economic Development Corporation/Main Street. They had the economic development corporation prior to having the Main Street organization and then when they realized that they needed to be part of this Main Street idea to gain access to professionals, training, and grant money they sort of merged the two organizations. But I was asked to be on their board and was appointed by town council to be on their planning board which gives me some access to what they are doing to the down town as part of their revitalization.

5. *Okay, now here comes the fantasy library. With a better library, what do you think the library could contribute to the community?*

I see more space for programs, so we could have a more active program schedule. I see more space for tutoring whether it's for the LVA; from time to time we have had Rowan Students meeting here to tutor. Most of them are in the public space, and it's not an ideal situation. So I see more of that available. More computers available. We are a community that has some economic challenges for some of its residents and their access to technology is the local library and we need more computers available. So that would be more available, I would love to see more access for handicap people. We have within one block of the library, we have housing, a building, housing people who have disabilities. Some of them are in wheelchairs, many of them have multiple sclerosis, that type of disability, and yet they can't get into this library unless somebody opens the door for them. The restroom facilities aren't suitable for them either. We try to do the best we can to help them use our services, but it's not right. *Yes, they're being cut off.* They are. And they live so close, it's just unbelievable. So I picture a building that would be welcoming to those people as well. I think the teens in this area would benefit from some additional space that would be more welcoming to them, because we don't have a specific teen room. From time to time they have difficultly finding the right place to be, because we don't necessarily want them hanging around in the children's area, and sometime they end up down that end (indicates the far end of the library) where we try to be quieter. It does provide a challenge. We want to be welcoming to them. This is an important part of their life really. They come here and the resources we have here can make a difference in their life. So we want them to come, but we need to find a way to make it more welcoming to them. *It's a very important demographic when it comes to libraries.* It is, it really is. Some of these young people, the home environment makes it difficult for them to do any studying there, or just to be there because the houses are crowded or whatever. It's important to be welcoming to them.

6. *Where would you like the new library to be built?*

I'd like it to be built in this general vicinity. I think libraries traditionally are anchors in the downtown. Your municipal building, your post office, and libraries, historically they were your three public buildings in the downtown area. It is within walking distance of quite a few people, not as many people walk as use to, but a least for those

people who have transportation issues, it is a reasonable location. It would also help with the revitalization of Glassboro. Libraries do contribute to the economy. It's not surprising to think that people like to visit the library as part of perhaps doing a series of errands so the more centrally located you are, the better. It would be a win-win for the other businesses in the area as well as for us. [Nonessential Delete]

7. *What have you done to help the planning and financing of the new library?*
Well, as part of the Main Street Board, this summer they solicited ideas from the board about what we thought the Rowan University Grant should address in the coming year. They were looking for ideas, so I proposed the library planning program. As you know Rowan University pledged $100,000.00 over ten years for economic development. And last year they used it for marketing survey to determine what sort of things people wanted to have in their downtown. And although they didn't give me the exact number of how many responses mentioned the library, the marketing people said it was a statistically significant amount of people wanted a new public library. So that has become something that it is more favorably talked about. Not that it wasn't before but it seemed not as high a priority. So when we are asked for ideas, I put the library right out there. It was accepted as one of the ideas and we are working now on moving that forward. *Okay, that's it for that one. I'm going to run down those [repeat questions]. Anything else?* Help with financing. I'm sort of, I'm investigating some other sources of funding, and that is the building plan proposal that we are going to get to address the financing aspect. We're hoping that the state will fund more public library construction in the future and we want to be prepared for it. *I hope so too. But it's not looking good right now.* It's not looking good this year, or maybe next. But I do believe it is a possibility before the end of the Governor's administration. *Well, if it's any consolation, libraries are considered very important by most people.* Right. *I've got a national survey in my research that proves that, however, most people are not aware of how they are funded and that they're vulnerable.* Right. *So a lot of it is just making the people understand that if you want it, you have to let the elected officials know you want it.* Right. And we're in that challenge where the Secretary of State asked the State Librarian to summit names to her in the year to come for the new Public Library Construction Board and that went out; I think it was in December. And I did submit a name to Norma Blake, the State Librarian, of a local resident, [Delete], who was Chair of the Library Commission when they built the Mullica Hill Branch and the Logan Branch. [Personal Delete] So last year at NJLA she was named the library champion of the year. *Great.* So, I did summit her name and hopefully the governor will confirm that at some point. I think that it's a good thing that they are trying to get the board organized so that at some point it will be ready to meet and work on regulations and that sort of thing. I think they need to do that before they decide to approve any money. So, it does sound like things are possibly happening. *I hope so.* And, on the State Librarian's web site she said she had been asked by the Secretary of State, I believe, to do a presentation to the House and Senate Education Committee sometime after the first of the year. So, maybe it will be spring or whatever, but at some point she's suppose to do a presentation on public library construction. *Great.* And those two things are kind of happening in the background. [Personal Delete]

6.) The Library as a reflection of the community it serves B what the library means to the people.

1. *This is about the library as a reflection of the community, an identity for the community. How do you determine what types of programs your community would like?*
I talk to people who are using the library and ask them what would interest them. I have asked, we have a library volunteer that volunteers every Tuesday, a retired gentleman. And I sort of discuss some things with him to get feedback. It's hard to tell, I'm only one person, I run it by staff sometimes or other people I've associated with but it's more likely to be people who use the library. I'll go ask them, we're thinking about doing this, what do you think? And I can usually tell even if their hedging their bets so they're not disappointing me, I can usually tell how interested they are. [Nonessential Delete] Because if I don't get some feedback from them it ends up being whatever I think or I'm interested in. And, heck I'm just one person. *And they're the ones who are supposed to be in here using it. So, it's mostly the people who are using it.* Yes, but that does mean that you don't get those that don't come in, you're not getting their input. And so, that's when it comes in handy to know people outside of using the library. And some of those people are very strong about library support even though their not in here regularly. They understand the role that a library plays in a community and how important it is. And so, I check them out too. *Yes.*

2. *How do you determine what types of materials your community would like to see in the library?*
That's something we look at from time to time. It comes back to circulation, you know, what's being used. But, circulation's not everything. I do know that some of the young people in here. Some of them don't have library cards. They use the library books when they're in here. One time we had a problem with a young person hiding one of our books. And I discussed it with her and found out that she didn't have a card and she couldn't get one under our rules and I understood that. So, she was reading the book and when she would leave, she put it in a safe place so it would be there when she came back. So you have to realize that even though a book is not going out, it's needed to be in the building. [Personal Delete] *So you can't just look at what goes out.* No, you have to look at your community, what you think your community is interested in. And actually the people that put away the books, the page. At one time we had someone designated as a page now it rotates. But I do still check with them and say are these going out or are these being used because sometimes it's a matter of what's being left on the tables, although we don't count them at this point, some places do. And that also speaks to what's being used. A lot of the people that are in this library regularly do not take materials out and yet they use what's here. [Nonessential Delete]

3. *How much input does your staff have on programming and materials?*
They can suggest anything to me, and I'm pretty open-minded because I think variety is good. The more varied our programs, the more likely it is that we're going to have a

variety of people come in. The library is for everybody, not just for the ones who want to devour books. It's for everybody. [Nonessential Delete] Milt Thompson, who had played for the Philadelphia Phillies, I think it was a couple of years ago, and he was coaching for the Phillies at that point. And I had him here, and I had people in this building I had never seen before. I had more men with young boys than I have ever had for anything else. I thought, oh gosh, if I could just tap that and, you know. I had a good turn-out like that for the Eagles. We had the Eagles bookmobile come. Actually, they don't come. One time we had a player, generally they don't send a player. They just send the bookmobile and they give out books and tell a story, but if you can get a professional sports player to come you will see people that you won't see any other time because they are more physically active and they are busy doing more physical activities. *Yes.* And, yet we can provide a more supporting role for that too. I can point out that we have things on coaching soccer, and then they think of us when there are other opportunities. So that was helpful. *Making that connection.* Yes. So it's good when your staff have varied interest it helps to bring in other people. *Yes, I agree.* [Personal Delete] *You need a background, you know, besides this. Because this place serves the community, you know, not itself.* Right. You don't want it feeding on itself. [Personal Delete] And really curiosity is really a very important trait in a librarian because you need to have a wide range of information available to you. Or at least a framework of things so that when you get that request about, the newest alternative health problem or resource or whatever, that you have some type of familiarity so you can take-off and do some appropriate research. It just sort of shortens your research time, and so the more variety you have in your staff the better off you are. *And interest in it too, like, no I don't know but boy would I like to. That sort of thinking.* Yes. I've found a few people, men especially, that when I say that oh, I know about refrigeration and steam engineering licenses, it's got the blue, the red, the black, and the gold. They look at me like oh, my God, how did she do that. But then you see them back again because they realize that okay, I can find something here. [Personal Delete]

4. *How does the library make the younger members of the community feel welcomed? And again, we talked a little about this before.*

We're still working on that aspect because of the space limitations, the lack of computers. We do work with the Boys and Girls Club. I'm on their board, just to try to keep things welcoming to the kids that are next door. They come here after they are done the programs next door. I think it's an area that we could work on a bit more. It comes down to staff, making an effort to connect individually with these students. Some of them are more challenging than others. You know teenagers. *Yes.* They are challenging for teachers, for parents, and for us. But, it's worth the effort. *Yes.*

5. *Okay, now this is a companion question here. How does the library make the senior members of the community feel welcomed?*

We've had programs specifically for seniors in the past. We did have the Senior Center next door until two years ago. Now they have moved out to Delsea Drive. They're with the Little League Fields. We haven't had as many programs specifically targeting them. Although I have contacted them in the past and alerted them to programs I thought they might be interested in. The Mullica Hill site, and Greenwich,

does have tax advisors come and they work with the senior population. It's through AARP, I think it's the Vita Program. And so those people contact Mullica Hill and they are set-up for appointments. *The reason for those two questions is that you measure the quality of a community by how they treat their young and how they treat their old.* Those are the two sections that might be the loudest, for different reasons. *Yes, and they're in here more.* Yes, that was one of the things that were pointed out to me when I went to a program having to do with youth. Is how often we hear seniors being loud because they can't hear each other. [Nonessential Delete] And do we tell them to be quiet and that sort of thing, and yet they may be every bit as noisy as the teenagers, but we are more likely to tell the teenagers to be quiet. *Yes, that's right.* But we have to think about that and treat them equally. *Yes, that's true, as I said, these are the groups that are here more. When people get more responsibilities as adults they can't always be here. These are the people who are here.* Yes, we can't be chasing them out the door. *That's why I had to ask those two questions.*
6. *Do you know the history of this area?*
I do know some to the history. Of course this was a town that was built on glass building. And I know the history about this particular library. It had several buildings before it came here, and this building use to be an Acme. But this central area was where the factories actually were. There is a building across the end of the street that was where the factory store use to be and it's still standing. So I try to be aware of the local history and be sensitive to that aspect. There are people in Glassboro that are still annoyed with Rowan for changing the name. And while I was at the Court House taking care of a problem with the library one of the people that works there explained it to me. He said that there were a group of people, residents of Glassboro, who got together and purchased the land and donated it to the state to put a state college there. And since they were the ones that started the school when the name was changed, they felt that it had been taken away from them. And, that didn't sit well with them. *Yes. That was my next question. How does the library help tell these stories because if you don't these people are going to get angry.* They will. I have some information about local history that I have hung on to as opposed to donating it to other historical organizations. And I think that I allow people individually to tell me the history of Glassboro and I'm continually finding out more. When I have something that doesn't sound like something I'm familiar with, I usually go to a resident I know. There are a couple people on staff, I think you know [Delete]. *Yes.* [Delete] also works at Mullica Hill and lives here in Glassboro. And so I will check with some of those people. And I have a couple, a few, people on staff who also live in Glassboro and I ask them about specific things because I think it, you have to respect the past. *Yes.* That was one of the reasons we had our fiftieth anniversary last March. We had been a branch for ten years, but this library had been in operation for fifty years. And we took the opportunity to publicly thank those people that had started and that had served it during that time period. To let them know that what they had done was important and that it was still on-going. There have been changes over the fifty years, and as long as you honor the work that has gone ahead of you, most of those people will accept that. But it is when their work is not honored that they will get angry and resentful and no longer supports it. *Do you ever have any kind of programs with history, you know,*

seniors telling stories anything along those lines? I had one person that was local, but it's been quite a while ago. They do have a class in the high school on local stories. Local people, it's actually a local history class where they do a presentation, a theatrical or drama presentation, on local stories. So I haven't really pursued that. [Personal Delete] They have a, they generally go to the people in the community and they have their stories, that they do presentations about it. I think [Delete] is the teacher for that class, and they have it, I want to say every spring. It is quite a popular class. [Personal Delete] Yes, it's fascinating, it's wonderful that they have collected these stories. I have a copy of their stories that they did not last year, but the year before. Maybe almost three years now because [Delete] gave it to me because her daughter took the class. *That's a great connection.* And of course there are so many stories to tell here. Especially with the Summit Meeting and Ronald Reagan came for commencement. Some incredible things, people have incredible stories to tell about what's happened here. I know one person told me, [Delete], said that his mother has a scrapbook that the press gave her because they stayed in his house. You know, so they gave her this scrapbook. That's irreplaceable. *Exactly. That goes to your pride in your community. They really need to know that and be able to have access to it. Because that's what the last part of this is about, neighborhood pride.*

7. *Does the library provide local community information?*
Yes, community organizations and that type of thing, primarily in an informal manner. But we do try to be a resource of information. If we don't have the information we get it, that type of thing. And that can be even, I've had people come in and say, I don't have a way to feed my family tonight can you help me. And knowing where the resources are for that type of thing, *the agencies and things?* Yes, is very important. Yes, so your referrals are as important as being able to provide the information. *Very important.*

8. *How do you think the library reflects the unique identity of the present community it serves?*
That's an interesting question. Well, we try to reflect it from the way we develop collections, programs, hire staff that type of thing. It's always a work in progress. It is always based on our perception which is, you know, which is an inaccurate way of looking at things. *Because you only know who comes in, but you need to know what is beyond.* Right. *Those people you don't reach, they're the hard ones.* Right. We've worked with Genesis down at the Ellis Manor housing project, we've worked with Genesis which is the preschool down there for probably ten years. I know I've asked there if they have a large or significant Hispanic population because I knew one of the women on staff spoke Spanish, and they didn't think so. When I talked to school about it, they said yes. So, sometimes the populations are kind of hidden. We have a large immigrant population in this community. And I knew that because people were coming in that did not speak English. And you know, we would try to be welcoming and do what we could to get them library cards sometimes the children would be able to translate for them. But I was, many times I was unsure where they come from and sometimes it didn't feel like the right thing to ask, well where are you from? *Yes.* You don't want to offend them or put them on the spot at all. *Yes.* So, it's hard to tell where some people are from. So I asked the ESL teacher and he said that at any given

time he's got eight different languages going but year to year they're different. And so it can be like twenty different places. That's kind of amazing when you think, that here in a small town in South Jersey that is so rural that you got this kind of diversity. And I think a lot of it comes from Philly and also from New York from what I understand. People move into this area because someone's come here and found the community welcoming. And so then they bring other family members and such. It's hard for the library to reflect that, but yet the harder we try to serve it, the more we will reflect it. [Personal Delete] And when you look at the Census figures for Jersey as a whole, it's something, I believe they said that 25% of the households spoke another language at home. And I thought my goodness I don't see that really here. I think it's more prevalent in North Jersey and the cities and type, but it's around. [Personal Delete] *It's all over New Jersey, we are very diverse.* More than people think we are.
9. *Do you think the community feels comfortable in your library, as if it belongs to them?*
Yes, I do. I think that they feel strongly that it belongs to them. And it's a very good thing. [Nonessential Delete] For an example, I think we had a good turn-out for the fiftieth anniversary and that reinforced my feeling that the library belonged to the community. We had a good turn-out for the, there was a tree-lighting ceremony December first that afterwards they had the Atlantic Brass Band and refreshments here and it was definitely a community activity. And there were a lot of people here and it just felt like it belonged to them. *Great.* And that's what we need to be doing. That's exactly what we need to do. *Yes. Alright that's it. You're done other than if there is anything to that one that you want to add. And I'll run them down so you will know what we did. [repeat questions] Is that good?* Yes, I think we're good. *Okay, then that's it. Believe it or not, we covered everything.*