

SECTION 4: POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS REPORT

The Consultant team was charged with these primary tasks related to potential partnerships for the Round Rock Public Library (RRPL):

- Identify regional resource partnerships, such as regional colleges that offer library resources; and
- Report on findings.

In order to address these tasks, the Consultant team gathered data for analysis in these distinct areas:

1. Existing partnerships; and
2. Potential partnerships with various types of organizations.

Subsections for each of these headings are included in this Section of the Report. This Section represents the primary effort of the Library Services Strategic Master Plan in collecting data on existing community resources that could have an impact on the projection of future library needs.

Activities focused on the development of a qualitative inventory of potential threats and partnership opportunities, as a portion of the foundation for long-term planning. The Consultant team performed an environmental scan of schools, academic institutions, bookstores, and technology purveyors in the area. The Consultants also surveyed programming within other City departments.

EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

RRPL has ongoing relationships, i.e. partnerships, with a significant number of organizations for teen court service work, programming, presentations, volunteering opportunities, landscape assistance, computer skill building, English as a Second Language (ESL) training, classes at the Library on gardening, organic foods, and the like.. Some of these current partners are:

- Barnes & Noble Bookstore;
- The Book Spot;
- The Literacy Council of Williamson County;

Existing Partnerships

- Rotary Club;
- Round Rock Arts Council;
- Round Rock Chamber of Commerce;
- Round Rock Family History Center;
- Round Rock Fire and Police Departments;
- Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD);
- Round Rock Information Technology Department;
- Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department;
- Williamson County Genealogical Society;
- Williamson County Master Gardeners; and
- The Williamson Museum.

We believe these already effective partnerships can be expanded and strengthened from the sampling of potential partners outlined below.

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Consultant team assembled data for consideration of potential partnerships by RRPL in these distinct areas:

1. Children related organizations;
2. Civic organizations;
3. Community-related organizations;
4. Cultural organizations;
5. Businesses and Corporations; and
6. Education and educational-related organizations.

Children-Related Organizations

Local partners providing programs and services to youth of various ages could A World for Children and Junior Achievement. Potential programs could include:

- **Junior Achievement:** Schedule a “Finance Camp” that has proven to very effective with young people; and
- **A World for Children:** Provide programs on the process of adoption/foster care for children and/or outreach.

Civic Organizations

Service clubs like Lions, YMCA, and YWCA can provide benefits for mutual marketing each others' programs and services. The Library can volunteer to host meetings and present programs on a variety of topics – not just organizations in which the Library Director is active, but also encouraging other staff to join different groups like the Historic Commission, Local Legends Committee, El Amistad, etc.

Community-Related Organizations

The Library could hold shared exhibits, classes, visiting lectures, and tours with City of Round Rock Departments not now working with the Library, plus other prime candidates such as the Round Rock Express, the Indoor Sports Center, and a revived Williamson County Fair, if/when the Fair is reinstated. Examples could include:

- **Emerging Booksellers:** Collaborate for author visits and book signings; and
- **Annual Community Events:** Contact other public libraries in the County for a joint exhibit, distribute brochures at the Library and library promotional pieces at the events.

Cultural Organizations

Of the cultural organizations active in Round Rock, the Sam Bass Theatre, Historic Round Rock Walking Tour, are prime candidates for partnering, as well as continuing with the Round Rock Arts Council and the Williamson Museum. These partnerships could include:

- **Austin Aquarium:** This organization, funded by the owners of aquariums in Portland, Oregon and Boise, Idaho, will be located in northwest Austin. They expect to open in November of 2013, according to an Austin Business Journal dated June 6, 2013. Once up and running, a partnership with them could lead to programs for children of all ages at

the Library, and the cross-promotion of the Aquarium and the Library;

- **Penfold Theatre Company:** Many performers in the greater Austin area are seeking venues in which to perform. The Library could host either small productions – not site or actor extensive, or previews of upcoming performances. The RRPL Teen Advisory Council could interact with the Theatre. Distribution, displays, and website promotion could also be developed;
- **Round Rock Symphony:** The Library could make available, with cooperation of the orchestra, the scores for each Symphony performance and have an exhibit of the composer(s) work(s), bio(s), etc., in addition to having Symphony promotional materials available and the concert schedule on the Library website; and
- **Sam Bass Community Theatre** There are programs, productions, research, etc. for which the RRPL could be a valuable resource – and thus partner.

Businesses & Corporations

Corporate donations to public libraries are commonplace across the country, but true symbiotic partnerships are not frequently found. Examples of business and corporations – both the obvious, as Dell, and not-so-obvious, include:

- **Emerson:** This major corporation has an early childhood education program, the Emerson Academy. The opportunities for a win-win partnership with the Library are huge. In addition, a strong relationship with the firm could lead to more of Emerson's hundreds of employees and families being made aware of the resources and services of at RRPL;
- **TechShop:** TechShop opened for business in Round Rock in 2012. It is, in one sense, a very large maker space, with the opportunity for a meaningful partnership. The Library can make its members aware of TechShop and TechShop make its customers aware of the Library and the many

resources available to assist the TechShop customer with his/her/their design, marketing, legal issues, etc. There could also be demonstrations of TechShop-created items at the Library, as well as displays.

Education & Educational-Related Organizations

The Round Rock Public Library may want to consider a host of programs and services directed toward the local campuses of Austin Community College, Texas State University, and Texas A&M Health Science Center, as well as continuing with RRISD. These partnerships could include:

- **Academic Institutions:** RRPL could host seminars and have a reserve collection of materials for students;
- **Outlying School Districts:** As with RRISD, schedule class visits, book talks, etc. on a regular basis.

The Consultants want to emphasize that this list may approach being comprehensive, but is by no means complete. Conversely, RRPL should be judicious in where to begin – or continue – as may be the case. The biggest mistake that could be made would be to over promise and not be able to deliver. Failure can be a learning tool – but failure should only come about after planning and a strong effort has proved to be unsuccessful.

Conclusions

The RRPL will continue to be impacted by forces over which it has little, if any, control. These impacts can be harmful and possibly destructive if the organization stands by and does not initiate efforts to work with the forces. We believe Round Rock is striving to do just this.

On the partnership front, the opportunities are almost limitless. In this Section of the Report, the Consultant team has offered a few examples that we believe are worth trying – recognizing that it takes two to partner – and sometimes more than two – and that not every partnership will be a success in spite of the best

Potential Partnerships

efforts by all concerned. Failure is no reason to give up. As Thomas Edison said “I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.”

However, we point out as clearly as possible that effective partnerships will not result because they are considered to be important. They require work – on the part of the Library as well as the partner. And, since the Library can only be responsible for itself, it is incumbent that the RRPL have staff that can implement a Partnership Development Program.

The impact of schools at all levels of the educational spectrum is, we believe, obvious and should be embraced by all parties.

All bookstores should be viewed as partners. There are many who believe – and the Consultant team is among them – that cities with good bookstores are also cities with good public libraries. We recognize that economics and the presence of online ordering and ravenous “big box” retailers has resulted in the demise of most small, independent bookstores and even two or three chains. As a result, many public libraries – including Round Rock – have started used bookshops – often operated by the Friends of the Library. We believe these shops can and should cooperate with for-profit bookstores in the local community. Such cooperation can be a win-win for everyone – including the taxpayer.

Technology purveyors, be them giants like *Google* and *Facebook*, or smaller, sometimes local companies like *Boopsie for Libraries* and *MozGo*, can be viewed as competitors – or partners. Indeed, *Boopsie* and *MozGo* should be thought of as partners. Among several other firms, they have apps that assist Library members in accessing the resources of the Library. For many persons, the first place they turn to with a question that needs an immediate answer is *Google* –or within *Google*, *Wikipedia*. But librarians often do the same.