

# Campaign Provides Learning Opportunities

## Goals

There is something to be said about being proactive, and that was the main motivation behind the Geek the Library campaign at Lawrenceburg Public Library District (LPLD) in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Library support wasn't a pressing issue, says Director Sally Stegner, but she saw an opportunity for an original and effective approach to talking about the value of the library for everyone in the community.

"We did not have an immediate need for funding," she says, "but our thinking was to create goodwill now while we are okay. This way, when we do need help, community members will know that the library is here for them in so many ways."

Stegner and her team were drawn to Geek the Library's visual impact and the message, and felt the additional support and resources provided by OCLC were a win-win. In the early stages of planning, Stegner focused on gaining buy-in and ideas from her staff, and building internal excitement for the program and related activities. She launched internally with an employee in-service day in February 2011, and created an integrated marketing committee to brainstorm and plan.

Having the support of the staff was vital, says Stegner. Since this program encourages more interaction with the public, she adds, staff had to be well-informed, excited and part of the process.



## AT A GLANCE

- Service area: 149 square miles encompassing 3 cities, a town and 7 townships
- Service area population: 32,807
- Staff: 9 full-time, 23 part-time

"The people who are involved in the planning frequently aren't the same people on the front lines who are tasked with executing whatever it is you are doing."

## Campaign

Stegner and her team launched the campaign officially in April 2011, during National Library

Week, after several weeks of planning. Initial efforts included the creation of staff posters and library displays, programs involving teen librarians, online marketing efforts and taking part in local events. They also worked to gain support from local leaders. "We sent letters explaining the campaign to a

list of nearly 100 prominent community members," notes Stegner.

Stegner received \$10,000 from the Indiana State Library to fund LPLD's campaign. (The Indiana State Library helped promote and administer a statewide campaign, which included providing some grants.)

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*—Sally Stegner, Director*

## Campaign Provides Learning Opportunities *Continued*

In addition to purchasing t-shirts and other campaign items and adding Geek the Library to the library's bookmobile, the extra money allowed for paid advertising. On top of two newspaper ads and using the Geek the Library handout as an insert in a community publication, Stegner wanted to investigate new promotional avenues. She purchased radio, cable television and movie theatre advertising—all new marketing tactics for the library.

Overall, the 'blitz,' as Stegner calls the combined advertising efforts, generated a notable amount of interest about the campaign and the library. However, the most valuable results, according to Stegner, are the lessons learned by the library team. One example is related to movie theatre advertising. "I was astounded that I could get an ad created and featured for a year that was shown before every film, in every theatre—and it ran a couple of times before each show—all for \$1,800."

The affordability and effectiveness of television advertising was also a surprise. For about eight dollars per commercial, LPLD's ad was featured on seven popular cable channels, mostly during primetime. What's more, the price included creation of the actual commercial. There were also lessons in negotiating and relationship building. "It really just helps to ask," insists Stegner. "I learned that people who work on commission have some leeway and are happy to work with you. If you don't ask, you won't know what's possible."

Another significant benefit, according to Stegner, has been that all the lessons trickled down to the

library board. "It really influenced how [the board] thinks about the cost and impact of advertising. They heard about the campaign from their friends, people in the community, people at church, and saw that what we were doing was working."

### Outcome

Getting out and talking to the community is nothing new for Stegner and her team, but Geek the Library provided the staff with renewed energy when approaching people. It also allowed them to try new tactics to start a dialogue with community members, and ultimately help local residents make a personal connection with the library. "[Geek the Library] is new and fresh, and engages people right away. It made the staff more comfortable."

The LPLD campaign will wind down in March 2012. Wrap-up efforts encourage further community conversation, including thank you letters to the local leaders who participated that contain personalized bookmarks. It is important, notes Stegner, that her staff continues to build

on the momentum and lessons gained from the campaign.

Overall, the LPLD team is happy with what they have accomplished. The goal for the campaign was to create awareness for the library in a positive way, says Stegner. "Hopefully [Geek the Library] has laid the groundwork for making the community aware. Our library funding has been pretty stable traditionally, but if we ever need more support, we are already one step ahead."

For more information about Geek the Library, visit

| [geekthelibrary.org](http://geekthelibrary.org)