Today’s Presenter

Jennifer Pearson
Director, Marshall County Memorial Library (TN) and current board member, ARSL
Beyond the Job Description
Ten Practical Tips for the New Rural Library Director

Jennifer Pearson
Director
Marshall County (TN) Memorial Library
Annotation Tools

The tool buttons will open in a row on the left side of your screen, once you **click on the marker**.

Check mark

- Click on square, half-way down.
- Use the drop-down menu and choose the check mark.
- Click on slide to indicate choice.
How long have you been a library director?

- 1-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-5 years
- 6-20 years
- 20+ years
- Not a director
1. What are your community’s needs?
How can the library meet them?
Get buy in from your community!

• Create a survey
• Ask current patrons
• Ask people who aren’t patrons
• Talk to stakeholders
• Find some partners
  • Schools
  • Parks and Rec
  • Civic clubs
  • Museums
  • Others???
2. Don’t try to do everything at once
It’s all about priorities!

Make a list

• Base this list on
  • What you found out from the community
  • Quick wins
  • Medium term
  • Long range
  • Things you can actually do
  • Some aspirational but not too many

http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_kePE3nICECg/TSCpyv4gEII/AAAAAAAAAwk/LWuW5Uu4lb4/s1600/ask+focus+prioritize.jpg; is licensed under CC BY 2.0
3. Stuff takes time

http://jdorganizer.blogspot.co.uk/2010_08_01_archive.html; is licensed under CC BY 2.0
Establish trust first

• Trust is the most important thing
  • From stakeholders
  • From the community
  • From your staff
• Once trust is established you can
  • Build partnerships
  • Build a following
    • For programs
    • Social media
  • Build your vision
4. Figure out your staff
Finding the right fit

• Assess your individual staff members
  • What are they good at?
  • Bad at?
  • Passionate about?
  • Want to learn more about?
5. Make yourself known to your community
How do you want to be involved?

• Civic organizations
• Community boards
• Leadership programs
• Social clubs
• Religious organizations
• Speaking engagements
• Volunteer opportunities
• Others?
“You can’t do it alone.
As you navigate through the rest of your life, be open to collaboration.
Other people and other people’s ideas are often better than your own.
Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life.
No one is here today because they did it on their own.”

-Amy Poehler
Who can help me?

• Create a list based on
  • People you TRUST
  • Needs you have
  • Influencers

• Who should be on your list?
Some ideas…
  • Local business owners
  • Economic development officers
  • City/county elected officials (aka—your funders)
  • Anyone who really understands how things work in your community
  • Anyone who gets stuff done

“Help Me Obi Wan” by http://www.alidamakes.com is licensed under CC BY 2.0
7. Don’t bulldoze your way in

“No Bulldozing” by Wikimedia Commons; s licensed under CC BY 2.0
Politics ain’t easy!

• Always know what is going on in your community that could affect the library
• Know the best way to work with your different stakeholders
• Compromise when you need to
• DROP IT if you have to

“Politics is more difficult than physics,” The Disorder of Things; s licensed under CC BY 2.0

You can’t win unless you learn how to lose.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
How to win

• Be Prepared
  • Do your due diligence
  • Know that you are asking the right people
    • Know how to talk to those people

• Ask for the right things at the right time

“How bostonstrong is #winning,” Flickr.com s licensed under CC BY 2.0
When you lose

• Why did you lose?
• Is it worth trying again?
9. Own your successes. And your mistakes.
What to do when you succeed

• TELL PEOPLE!
  • If no one knows then it’s not really a success
• Figure out why it worked and how you can replicate the success
• Always, always, always acknowledge everyone who helped you
  • Staff
  • Stakeholders
  • Volunteers

“everyone loves minions” by moviefone.com is licensed under CC BY 2.0
What to do when you don’t

• Take responsibility
• Figure out what went wrong
  • Wrong time?
  • Wrong thing?
  • Wrong people?
• Is the failure something you need to try to correct or is it just something you didn’t need to do in the first place?
10. Whether you like it or not... the library is a reflection of YOU
What do you see when you look in the mirror?

• Articulate a clear vision. Be able to state it to anyone who asks. State it every time you talk about the library.
  • Can you articulate it now?

• Remember wherever you go in your community you are seen as the face of the library.
  • This probably means no Jell-O shots for you at the bar on Friday night if you live in a small town
  • But it also means you have amazing opportunities to take the library to the community

• Have fun with it! This is the BEST part of being a library director!!
Questions and takeaways

• What is one thing you heard today that you want to work on right away?
• Did you hear anything you disagree with? Why?
• What would you add to this list?

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If you have questions or suggestions for me— you can hit me up at:
mcmlib@bellsouth.net
931-359-3335
jennifer.pearson71369 on Skype
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