Today’s Presenters

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Reduce Waste, Build Community: Hosting Repair Events at Your Library

Presented by Tom Watson, Laurie Finlayson, and Steven Bailey
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WebJunction

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Libraries = ideal venues

- 50 King County-sponsored repair events since 2016
- 21 at King County Library System libraries
Event priorities

SAFETY

RESPECT

REPAIR FOR ALL
What do we work on at these events?

**Electronic**
- Lamps
- Vacuums
- Sewing machines
- Computers
- Digital devices
- CD players
- Blenders

**Mechanical**
- Chairs
- Tables
- Drawers
- Screens
- Ornaments
- Toys
- Tools

**Sewing**
- Pants
- Dresses
- Shirts
- Jackets
- Costumes
- Curtains
- Bags
Our fixers are the ❤️ of the program

- Diverse skills and backgrounds
- Enjoy helping people
- Have tools or sewing machines
- Flexible, adaptable
Libraries in partnership (or solo!)

- Local solid waste/recycling agencies
- Public works departments
- State environmental agencies
- Non-profit tool libraries
- Other environmental non-profits
- University extension services
Getting support to start

• Cite examples of existing successful repair events programs/partnerships
• Explain how liability will be addressed (customers sign release form)
• Keep simple, avoiding MOUs or formal contracts if possible
• Get library management and staff on board
• Or leverage programming freedom and build your partnership and fixer networks!
Guidelines for attendees

• Bring items small enough to be carried in

• Don’t bring items that are leaking, dangerous, contain gasoline, or have a strong odor

• Stay around during repair

• Have fun!
Expect the unexpected

• 10 to 50 attendees
• 30 to 120 items to work on
• Our fixers and customers are wonderful 99.9 percent of the time!
• Under-promise and over-deliver
• Apologize sincerely as needed, fix the problem, move on
What’s in a name?

• Repair Café, Repair Fair, Repair Event, Repair Time Event, Fix-It Event, U-fix-it Clinic….share your ideas in chat!
• King County program lets venue or host choose name
• If any complaints, pick a different name
• Naming or bureaucracy around repair events not important; attendees and “fixers” should be focus
Make it your own!

- Start small and simple
- Learn from others but use your creativity
- Build a program that reflects your community
Why a Repair Café at the library?

- Barrier-free access to skilled repair people
- Build community
- KCLS Strategic Focus: Create opportunities through meaningful connections.
More reasons!

• Save money
• Reduce waste
• Outreach
  • Attract people who may not come to the library otherwise
  • Expose Fixers, partners, city officials to services the library offers
Recruiting fixers

In three main areas:

• Sewing
• Mechanical (handywomen/men)
• Electronic
Finding volunteers for sewing

- Quilting groups
- Craft fairs
- Farmers Markets
- Ask patrons
- Post flyer on craft/sewing bookshelves
- Post sign at craft shops
Finding volunteer handywomen/men

- Ask at Senior Center
- Post flyers at hardware stores
- Call VFW, Rotary, etc.
- Woodworking clubs
- High School woodshop
- Scout troops
Finding electronics repairers

- High School Robotics Clubs
- Senior Center
- Radio Control Car/Plane Clubs
- Radio Shack
- Ask at Electronics Recycling
- Post on Social Media
Logistics

- Space
- Tables & Chairs
- Power
- Clean up
Space

- Library’s meeting room
- Community Center
- Other venue
- Size of room
- Access to outside
- Waiting area
Set-up

- How many tables?
- Where are outlets?
- Sign-in area/Welcome desk
- Children activity area
- Seating area for waiting
- Allow room for large objects
Other factors

- Have plenty of trash cans
- Tarps for messy repairs
- Provide water for repairers
- It will be noisy (and chaotic!)
- Fresh air is helpful
- Stay flexible!
• Help people think of all the broken things they might have around (share yours in chat!)
• “Look in your attic!”
Promote with flyers everywhere!

- Give a bunch to Thrift Store drop-off locations
- Post at local hangouts
- Ask Fixers to spread the word
- Take to hardware stores
- Post at the dump/transfer stations
- Promote in library with displays of broken items
- Have translated versions!
Promote digitally everywhere!

- Email it to all your contacts
- Post on social media
- Ask Fixers to share it on Facebook, etc.
- Post on library web page
- Answer neighborhood queries about recycling, repair (NextDoor, Patch, etc.)
Day of event!

- Allow plenty of time for setup
- Be available and check in periodically
- Put out flyers about library programs
- Have a display of repair books
- Mix and mingle!
- Take pictures!
- Have a bell to ring when an item is repaired
Afterwards

• Clean up
• Thank your fixers and partners
• Share success stories, including with staff
• Repeat!
Thank you!

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