**The Power of Small: How Rural Libraries Help Their Communities Thrive**

**Learner Guide**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/power-of-small.html>

**Event Description**: All libraries provide vital services to their communities, but libraries that serve small, rural populations have the potential to go beyond providing information and access—they can inject the vitality that will help their communities thrive. Addressing the challenges faced by rural areas may seem daunting to a library with few staff and limited resources, but any tiny library can find more ways to support the needs of their community by thinking strategically and creating new connections with their stakeholders, patrons, and other library staff. Learn how small library director and [2018 Library Journal Mover & Shaker](https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=allie-stevens-movers-shakers-2018-community-builders), Allie Stevens, applied the concept of growth mindsets to set her priorities, use resources and volunteers smartly, and avoid burnout as a solo librarian. Follow her lead to turn your library into a powerhouse for your community.

**Presented by:** Allie Stevens, Director, Calhoun County Library & Museum, Hampton, Arkansas

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** | |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Turning Challenges Into Opportunities** | |
| Reframing your library’s challenges into opportunities can help you discover new ways to leverage your personal and professional strengths into successes for your library.  Start by thinking about these questions:  What are my personal strengths? What are my professional strengths?  What are the biggest challenges facing my library?  How can I leverage my strengths to turn the challenges into opportunities? | |
| **Community Stakeholders** | |
| Your library’s “stakeholders” extend far beyond the staff, patrons, and library board. Anyone in your community who has the power to influence others is also a stakeholder. Discovering what stakeholders perceive to be the greatest concerns facing the community can help you find ways to align the library with community needs in a way that creates buy-in for library services and support for library funding.  List your stakeholders. Include names of individuals, rather than just job titles or positions, and note any staff or volunteer connections to these individuals.       4.  5.  6.  In addition to stakeholders, consider inviting other community members to join a conversation to help the library better understand community needs. Explore a collection of [Community Discovery Tools](https://www.webjunction.org/content/dam/WebJunction/Documents/webJunction/Topics/smart-spaces/basket-of-community-discovery-tools.pdf) (pdf) to help create these conversations. | |
| **Serving the Whole Community** | |
| Explore the resource guide [Defending Intellectual Freedom: LGBTQ+ Resources in School Libraries](https://standards.aasl.org/project/lgbtq/). What concrete steps can you take to increase the diversity of your collections and ensure that you are reaching out to all members of your community?  Examples:   * Update the library’s collection development policy to include diverse selection resources. * Establish ordering guidelines for the library to ensure that the library is collecting a high percentage of diverse titles. * Perform a diversity audit of the collection to determine which areas are least represented. * Include titles by all types of authors about all types of characters in the library’s book displays. | |
| **Developing a Growth Mindset** | |
| Encourage your staff or colleagues to take the Growth Mindset quiz at <http://blog.mindsetworks.com/what-s-my-mindset>.  What are your results?  Explore these resources to learn more about helping yourself and your colleagues and staff develop a growth mindset.  <https://www.mindsetworks.com/>  [https://mindsetscholarsnetwork.org/learning-mindsets/growth-mindset/#](https://mindsetscholarsnetwork.org/learning-mindsets/growth-mindset/)  <https://mindsetonline.com/> | |
| **Action Plan (include next steps, who, when, etc.)** | |
|  | |