

Small Libraries Create Smart Spaces

TRANSFORMATION STORY

Punxsutawney Memorial Library

Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania

The Community

Every community is unique

Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania

- **Service Population:** 15,760 across rural Southern Jefferson County, Pennsylvania
- Home of Punxsutawney Phil, Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, and Weather Prophet Extraordinary



“Passionate about our heritage and traditions, our community celebrates its beloved groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil. Thousands of travelers visit annually to see Phil and Gobbler’s Knob, stopping by the library to see his habitat where he lives during the other 364 days in the year.”

Jessica Church, Library Director

Before the Changes

Small libraries can create Smart Spaces

**“The library could be the blank slate,
where people bring ideas and leave
with action plans.”**

Jessica Church, Library Director

“Changing the space would mean changing the routine.

Considering how the library is currently configured, creating a smart space will require shifting more than one area.”



Before the changes, children’s programming such as storytime, took place in front of Punxsutawney Phil’s Burrow viewing area. Phil-gazing tourists would walk through the program to take a look!



Sightlines from the front desk were very obstructed before the changes. Large shelving units made it difficult for staff to see into the stacks and to interact with patrons.

Engage & Explore

Engaging community members in visioning and planning

The library used a variety of community discovery tools to learn what the community wanted and needed. The most successful tool was the survey.

Power of the Survey

As a participant in the Research Institute for Public Libraries (RIPL), Library Director Jessica Church learned a lot about data and survey creation. “I put a lot of thought into my survey questions,” says Church.

The data collected pointed to the need for a kids’ space and also something skills based. According to Church, “jobs are out there, but the skills are not.”



Prepare for Change

Making way for transformation

The Domino Effect: “You move one thing, then you have to move something else, and something else...”

Purpose Statement

To provide the community with safe, welcoming spaces which members can utilize to build better connections.



Active learning materials are received at the Punxsutawney Memorial Library.



One of the first changes: A community Boggle Board.

Transform

Make it happen!

Small Changes in the Space Leads to Big Impact



Large, bulky shelves used to dominate the children's area. By simply relocating the shelving, the space is opened up and available for active learning. Active learning toys geared to younger patrons are now accessible on the lowest shelves and a table has been added for children and their caregivers to gather and engage in activities.

Small Changes in the Space Leads to Better Sightlines



Shelves that used to hold the DVD collection were relocated in favor of tables for gathering and learning. This change not only improves the sightlines for staff but also allows them to interact more easily with patrons.

Small Changes in the Space Leads to an Improved Teen Area



Teen-friendly furniture and a Lego Maker Corner now make the teen/tween area much more inviting. A roll of adhesive whiteboard material was used to resurface existing table surfaces in the space.

Learn

Activate the space with programming

Active Learning in Action!

Punxsutawney Memorial Library chose to provide a variety of active learning materials for their patrons. Ranging from “low tech” (Legos, art carts and blocks) to “high tech” (Makey Makeys, 3D pens), there is something for everyone!



Learning and Playing at Punxsutawney Memorial Library



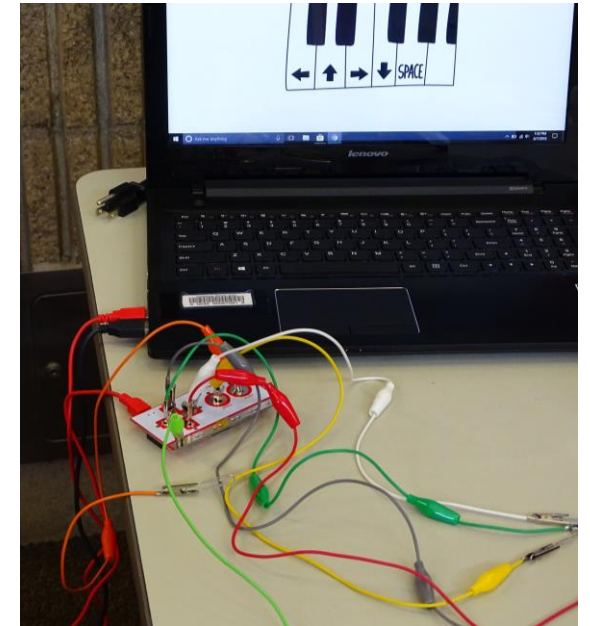
One of the library's two new "art carts" full of art supplies and activities.



3D Pen ready for use in the new Smart Space.



The "Makers Corner" full of Legos. Featured challenge: make your name out of Legos!



Makey Makey ready for music.

PA Forward

Library Director Jessica Church chose to support the Pennsylvania Library Association's PA Forward Initiative as part of their active learning transformation.

PA Forward focuses on five knowledge areas: Basic Literacy, Information Literacy, Civic and Social Literacy, Health Literacy, and Financial Literacy. Church created activity boxes that can be used in or out of the library.



Celebrate & Sustain

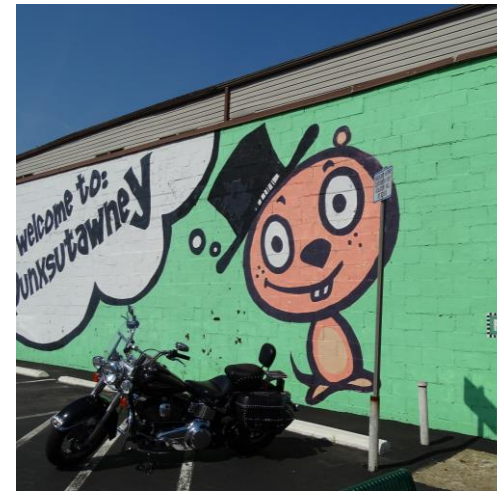
Continual community connection



“What Jessica has done is very sustainable. It’s something that can be built upon.”

Many life coaches and social workers use the library for working with individuals and family visitations. “It’s a safe space.”

Kid-friendly and kid-sized furniture is a big improvement in the children’s area: “It gives them ownership of it.”



The library is now more “visually appealing.” It’s more spacious and open and “It’s more inviting for people coming in.”

For more information on how Small Libraries
Create Smart Spaces and more case studies
please visit oclc.org/SmartSpaces.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Association of Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) worked collaboratively with WebJunction on all project phases.
- Project for Public Spaces (PPS) provided subject expertise, consultation and instruction.
- This project is made possible by support from OCLC and by a grant from the Institute of Museum & Library Services, LG-80-16-0039-16

