

Eels and Wheels

Parklands/Waitikiri Boutique Library Christchurch

OPENS 6 AUGUST

Sally Thompson
Community Librarian
Christchurch City Libraries
sally.thompson@ccc.govt.nz

 Christchurch City Libraries
Ngā Kete Wānanga-o-Ōtautahi

Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to share what we have learnt over the past two and a half years in a way that might help others designing, refurbishing or just looking for change to their library environment. Through my experience working at New Brighton Library, I know how interested librarians from around New Zealand and Australia are in new buildings, innovative ideas and furniture. It is the small size and 'boutique' nature of Parklands that makes it stand out amongst our other larger and less intimate new libraries.

Parklands library opened in August 2005 so while this project is fresh in our minds and with some learning under our belt it is a pleasure to be able to share in this forum. I hope you find something useful and inspirational to take from this session.



Setting The Scene

The Project

When I first started planning this presentation, I thought about all the decisions and ideas that were made over the past two years and how we came to where we are today and realised I could not remember who said 'lets make the carpet the art'. Then it came to me: the Parklands/Waitikiri Library and Learning Centre has truly been a collaborative and consultative effort.

Early on in the process the Project Control Group (PCG) worked together on every aspect of the library building and service. Recently sitting outside in the sculpture garden in the sun enjoying the warmth and good coffee we all agreed that the project had been most enjoyable and believe it or not, fun. We agreed that two things contributed to this. Firstly, we had a clear vision to work from. The vision was a document that became our mantra and touchstone when we found ourselves wandering from the path, being tempted by shiny things and gut reacting to a problem. For every problem we found solutions by remembering what it was that we were trying to achieve. The other contributing factor was that we were a 'hands on' team; it was a bit of a DIY project due to the slim budget we were working with.

The PCG consisted of Christchurch City Council officers including the architect, Crispin Schurr, library colleagues, landscape architect, a Digital Library Services team member as well as an art consultant. Over time people came and went from the group and along the way at pivotal times we invited others to join the group to work on their areas of expertise and interest, this included our Maori Services Librarian, Children's Services Co-ordinator and other library and council colleagues.

Everyone brought different experiences, skills and view points to the project. Trying to design furniture that would support our vision of moveable furniture and changeable space was challenging at both design and function levels. Adhering to health and safety requirements etc sometimes stunted our creativity and these and many other challenges lead to some very hotly debated compromises, all adding to the final product.

The Vision

So what is it that makes this library different? It's all in the Vision. The original concept for the library service belongs to Sue Sutherland and Nicki Moen, two people in our organisation whose ideas can be described as visionary, challenging and sometimes scary. They are leaders in pushing boundaries and exciting and involving others to come along for the ride. Selling their vision was their first task and from there they gathered people into the project and as a team we all took it forward. We wrote and published the Vision early in the project. Publishing it on our website and sharing it with as many people as possible was an invitation for others to get involved and excited as well as keeping us honest and focussed.

Throughout this paper the Vision will be referred to and quoted often, for it succinctly expresses so much of what we want to share.

Learning points

- Surround yourself with people with complementary skills
- Establish the vision early on and stick with it
- Share the vision with as many people as possible
- Include the right people from the start and test your ideas for fit as you go.

Parklands Library

Parklands Library is the result of a remarkable makeover transforming the tired 1970's shell of the former North Brighton Baptist Church into a stunning, state-of-the-art, community library. It's been an economical solution to the need for a library in the area, taking just six months to complete at a lower cost than that of a new building.

To make the most of its 500 square-metres, the new library has a ground breaking layout that allows the relatively small space to be used for a range of different activities, for different customers, at different times of the day.

The latest technology means that you're just as likely to get your information electronically as you are from print when you visit Parklands Library. Its Waitikiri Learning Centre offers 10 state-of-the-art workstations, video conferencing facilities and a data projector for workshops, study programmes and use by local schools and community groups. The Library also has internet points with free access to key information sites, and a pay-as-you-go facility for surfing the World Wide Web.

Parklands Library has its very own café, 'Ditto', serving great coffee and tasty snacks throughout the day.

...and from the Vision

'Library services will be delivered from a space that is flexible, adaptive, stimulating and dynamic.'

'Parklands Library will be a dynamic environment. It will be pull down, push out, stack and turn around, switch on... all designed to meet the diverse needs of the Parklands community. It will be a light and bright, and a fantastic place to visit.'

Learning points

- Small spaces can be adapted to almost anything
- Find an innovative furniture manufacturer for best results
- Include the IT people in all aspects of the planning



A walk through the building: The 'Zones'

Extending the original building to the north and south created a space that naturally fell in to three areas. These are known as the 'Zones'. Using these we have been able to create three distinct areas within the library.

Starting at the south of the building is the 'Quiet Zone/ Te Marino' (calm, relax, peace). Situated on the old front on a raised area, with large windows overlooking the street and oversized orange chairs, we have unashamedly created a space where people can escape with an outward view and low noise levels. In public libraries these days it can be difficult to find solitude and peace but I think we may have captured a little of that. The cantilevered ceiling and sound absorbing ceiling panels also contribute to the ambiance. Although the DVD/CD player is situated in the area as well as the Young Adult collection, it does appear to be working so far, except of course after school where it is a free for all. Children have an amazing habit of finding all the best places very quickly.

Stepping down into the 'Flexi Zone/Te Manawa' – the heart of library, the mayhem begins. This area is the most changing and lively part of the building. The Children's collection is housed here as well as various computer facilities, games, the customer service desk and self issue machine. The Learning Centre and the stunningly bright storage areas also run off this part of the building. Flexibility is the key to this 'Zone' and our customers need little encouragement to make this space their own. It is full and busy and a real focus for parents, grandparents and children alike. Some of the signature orange furniture resides here with an ottoman being used for sitting, lounging and playing.

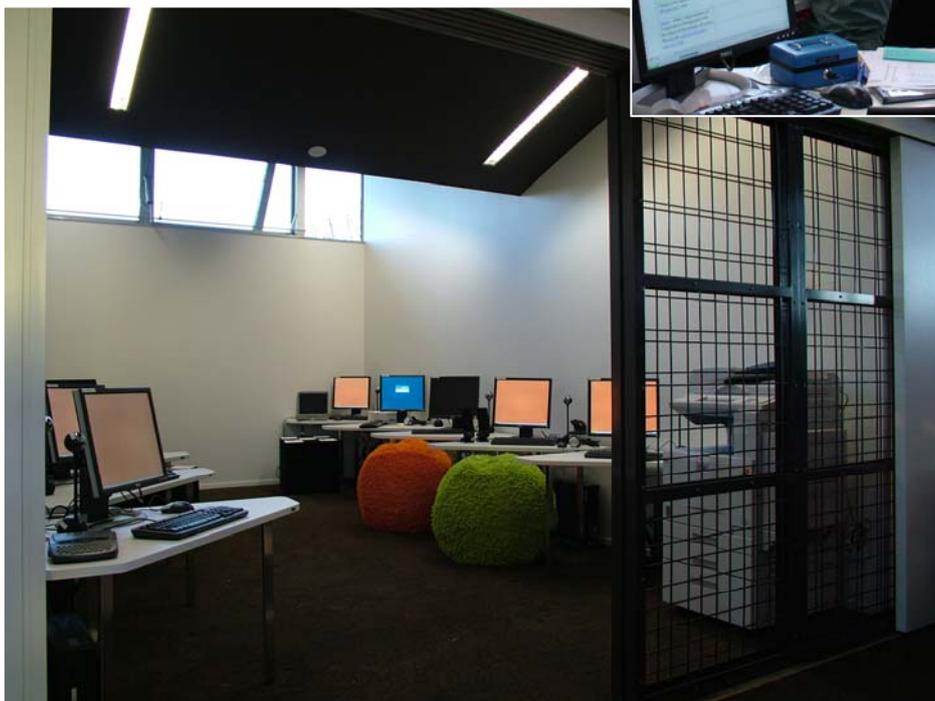
Moving to the north end of the building you find yourself in yet another 'Zone', the Easy Zone/Te Whanui (community). Being in this part of the library feels like you are sitting in a magazine spread; with the wonderful outlook onto the sculpture garden it is full of light and warmth. Housing the 'popular' parts of the collection it is truly a gorgeous space. Fiction shelves on wheels act as a buffer as well as guiding people in to the area. With café tables and more orange sofas this is a fantastic space. With warm winds wafting through the enormous wall of opening doors, you can transport yourself.



The Waitikiri Learning Centre

In 2003 the South Library opened with a Learning Centre and at Parklands there was an opportunity to create another that would form the beginning of a network that is planned to be strategically placed around the city. As with everything at Parklands the space is small but what we have achieved is a learning space that 'offers 10 state-of-the-art workstations, video conferencing facilities and a data projector for workshops, study programmes and use by local schools and community groups.'

Currently being managed by the South Learning Centre team, tutors and resources are shared between both sites. During the early days a few programmes are being offered and Waitikiri Learning Centre is open Monday and Wednesdays after school to assist with study support, with a view to establishing a homework club similar to the one run at the South location <http://learningcentre.christchurch.org.nz/Programmes/>. In time the service will be developed in conjunction with the community's needs and interests, with evening sessions to be offered in the future. Prior to opening day Pat Street, Learning Centre Manager at South, worked with a group of children from local schools teaching them digital photography skills which led to a photo essay of opening day project. They all worked on producing and editing the images in the Centre after opening and have created a wonderful depiction of the day. The exhibition has been mounted in the library.



Café

Providing a café was an integral part of the vision for Parklands. Taking up a mere 25 square metres (8 in the library proper) in the 'Easy Zone', 'Ditto' adds a great dimension to the service and is a real draw card for non-library users. The lease was taken up by local café, Va Voom, which is situated no more than 50 metres from the library. All the food is cooked off site and brought across every morning. This arrangement means there are no strong cooking smells in the library, a wider range of food is on offer and they have flexible staffing levels according to the busyness at each location. Customers are able to consume their purchases anywhere in the building but so far most have opted to remain in the 'Easy Zone' either sitting at the café tables, both inside and out, or on the lovely orange sofas.

We deliberately located the magazines, newspapers, Internet computers, Bestseller collection and adult fiction in this part of the library, which contribute to the cruisey café feel. In line with the library's 'Time Zones', 'Ditto' changes the food on offer to suit different customers with treats for small children at Play time and after school pick me ups. The owner, Janice Porter-Hoare, has picked up the colour accents in the library and has brought it together to make the most of the café's frontage. The café can be secured from the library when needed by lowering shutters and has a lockable door off the library entrance. So far we have a very happy partnership with the café team.

Recently we have jointly decided to move some of the café tables further in to the centre of the library to increase visibility of the café. This has meant using predetermined café space of collection which has limited the use of indoor outdoor flow and I believe does not look as good. However, the purpose of the move being to increase the café presence in the library has been achieved.

Learning points

- Establishing a clear detailed lease with the café is vital
- Discussing expectations and sharing the vision important
- Testing assumptions on both sides an advantage – daily and weekly fluctuations are generally just part of library life but for a commercial venture it is frustrating.



Art at Parklands

From very early in the project it was intended that art was going to be a feature of the library in support of the CCC's Arts Policy and Strategy <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/policy/arts/cccartsstrategy.pdf>. We saw the new library as a great opportunity to put into practice the concept of art being integrated into new council buildings and facilities and not treated as an add-on after completion. We received an Art in Public Places grant of \$30,000 from the Council. The grant paid for the design of the works and the consultant. The resulting 'art carpet' was funded from the project budget. As with all aspects of this project there was much discussion about what form the 'art' would take. By employing Mark McEntyre as the art consultant we were able to rely on his judgement and understanding of the market to guide our thinking. Mark is a lecturer at CPIT as well as a set designer for Christchurch Operatic Society and with his connections in the art world, as well as his wonderful creativity, he was able to take on all the ideas we brought to the table and share his own.

Eels

The first major art piece idea was a ripple pool in the north garden that would reflect onto the ceiling of the cantilevered roof. It was a great idea but the cost was prohibitive and there were concerns about children drowning, fungus and running costs. However, like all good ideas another blossomed from the water idea.

Christchurch artist Bing Dawe designed a carpet that created 'a huge river of eels under the feet of library visitors, stretching towards a striking sculpture in the form of a large hoop with three eels on its top edge. Both the carpet and sculpture evoke the wetlands which existed across the Parklands area, teeming with wildlife including native birds, fish and eels. Nearby Travis Wetland is one of the few reminders of what the area once looked like. Working with Dilana Rugs, Wall to Wall carpets and Danish manufacturers Ece, together in a world first collaboration, a gorgeous integrated art carpet was created. In the words of art consultant Mark McEntyre 'the artworks will help to make the library an exciting space: 'They're real, they're accessible, people will be able to touch them and walk on them. As children play on the library floor, they'll be playing in the river. While they're reading their stories, we'll also be sharing the story of the area with them through Bing's work.' It is truly stunning. Bing was very happy for us to use the eel motif from the carpet on the signs, invitations to events and other publicity material.

Whariki Matariki

To complement the pre-European themes the whariki hangs from the ceiling with a lovely story behind its creation. What started as a weaving project undertaken by Simon Rutherford, a local weaver and Haneta Pierce, Maori Services Librarian, turned in to an amazing network wide gift to the Parklands Library. Hanging from the ceiling is a whariki that began its life as a pile of wet harakeke at Queens Birthday weekend. Collected from the Janet Stewart reserve in Marshland, prepared in Simon's home in a traditional manner by enthusiastic library staff, the whariki began its journey. It became the focus of Christchurch City Libraries' Matariki celebrations as it wove its way from library to library. Customers and staff were invited to sit and weave the whariki at eight libraries over a four week period. What a great project. It brought all kinds of people together and the talk, story sharing and even a budding romance were all undertaken as the whariki grew. Now hanging in the library it takes on the shape of an eel and the weaving is mimicked in the stainless steel panels erected on the four exterior corners of the building.



Consultation

As Parklands is truly a community library, we of course had to consult the community. We used several different ways to connect with the community in an attempt to reach a wide cross section of people. Collaborating with colleagues in the library and across the wider Council ensured we achieved this.

School Children

Bill Nagelkerke, Children's Services co-coordinator conducted sessions at the local Parkview Primary school and gathered a large amount of invaluable information from the children in every year, from all ethnic groups as well as teachers. This very detailed information along with most of the other feedback was published on the Parklands webpage <http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Parklands/Planning/>

Teens

Through our youth website 'Pulse' <http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Pulse/> we asked the highly invisible teens for feedback and ideas. They gave us ideas on what features were important to them in a library and were asked for creative suggestions for names. Of course there was a prize offered and we had about 80 responses, an acceptable number from that age group. Although there were few surprises, we did get a very clear steer on the issues that most interested this group and published the 'top ten' on the website <http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Pulse/competition/Parklands/>. Although we have not been able to accommodate everything yet, there is still time and we are confident of success.

Adults

A public meeting was organised to display the plans, answer questions and discuss ideas and concerns. We met in the original building on a cold July evening. Again we got some ideas about what people were interested in and this was a good place to meet older members of the community.

Attending the local 'Sunday Funday' proved to be a wonderful way to meet the community. We designed a survey for adults over 20, which continued to grow our understanding of the community.

Community groups

Using the CINCH database, another Christchurch City Libraries resource, we were able to identify key community groups and contact representatives of these groups to discuss their needs and ideas. Although this appeared to be a solid personal approach, it was a little disappointing in the lack of response and enthusiasm for the project. In hindsight and in the light of all the preparation and structure of our other information gathering, a more structured approach might have gleaned more input.

Pre-schoolers and caregivers

Christchurch City Libraries Pre-school Outreach Librarian also shared anecdotal information she gleaned from the pre-schools she visited. Again, in hindsight, it would have been useful to organise a more structured way of getting information from this group. Although we knew through information provided by Department of Statistics and the Christchurch City Council, young families are a significant group in the community and we had clearly identified their importance in our planning, we could have done more to get to know more about them.

Colleagues

With a lot of community information coming our way, we decided to solicit the help of another knowledgeable group of people, our colleagues. We set up a session with about 15 hand picked library staff, assigned them all a character before the session, and asked them to research their character and bring to the session information on what these characters might require from a community library service. Everyone attacked this project with vigour and found different ways to get their information. Our 'ten year old boy' Wendy MacKay went to a school and met with a group of 10 year olds and presented us with sheets and sheets of drawings, suggestions and ideas courtesy of the children. This was great fun and an excellent way to get others involved in the project. Again all this information was put in to the melting pot.

Making It Happen

Armed with what was a large volume of demands, suggestions and dreaming we proceeded to plan the services and features of the library. This information remained a touchstone for us during the whole planning process and we are still revisiting the feedback as we make changes and play with ideas for improvement. Being able to anchor our ideas and innovations in the community is great.

One of the most creative ideas was the 'Time Zone' concept, designed to break down traditional barriers to library use. After the initial excitement, many hours were spent researching, planning, designing and redesigning everything to fit with the concept.

The essence of 'Time Zones' is to provide times that appeal to different groups at different times. Time for pre-schoolers to be able to make noise, for buggies to take up lots of space; time for adults to enjoy some peace and quiet. Having lived with and developed the idea we are wedded to the success of it. Our task was and still is, to sell the idea to our customers.

In a recent article about Australian business icon Ita Buttrose her comment 'your customers will also resist change – they will need help to adapt' could not be a more relevant statement for us three weeks after opening. The concept of 'Time Zones' in a library is very new to our customers. Other new concepts to get used to are the self issue machine that we are teaching all but the very reluctant to use, the 'Returns' area that is behind a wall and the lack of a reception desk. Although the hidden 'Returns' is not entirely new, the fact that there is no way for customers to communicate with the person behind the wall is new. All these 'new' ideas require excellent people-orientated staff to make them work.

Fortunately we have a very eager team of six colleagues, four of whom are brand new to library work, who believe in the concept and are making it work. The ideas of caring for the customer, a personal approach, nothing being too much trouble are working for us right now. Expecting immediate absorption of our innovative and exciting idea is unrealistic and helping our customers keep up with us takes time and energy. Although we fear we are in the honeymoon phase we are finding many of our customers embracing the change and enjoying the fresh approach, especially those parents worried about the noise their children make.



Time Zones

revive

'Revive' is adult time in the library, with everything set up to help adults relax and enjoy the atmosphere, browsing the latest books, magazines, online resources, DVDs and CDs, or chatting with friends over coffee.

Play

'Play' is pre-schoolers time, when children and their parents/caregivers can have a great time in a child-friendly environment. There'll be small furniture, music and plenty of space to have some fun. 'Play' will also offer special programmes for younger children, which will be advertised.

Breakout!

After school, 'Breakout' offers study support with entertainment, games and computers. It'll be a lively, interactive time with staff on hand to help with homework and recreational needs.

relax

Saturday is 'Relax' when the library opens its doors for everyone to come and enjoy all that the library has to offer, from information to entertainment, reading to Playstation games, a coffee or snack at the café, and relaxing on a big sofa in the winter, or in the sculpture courtyard in the summer.

connect

Finally, with the library's role as a centre for the community in mind, 'Connect' is a time when community groups can book or use the library as they please. Staff will organise the space to suit their needs, for meetings, talks, book groups or any business group who'd like to use the space. *(Footnote)*

Although we advertised the 'Time Zones' on the website and in all of our pre-opening communications, the lure of a brand new library with brand new stock is overpowering the need for space, quiet or noise. We have undertaken to actively promote the times with an expectation that over time people will find a 'Time Zone' that best suits them

We are using the first few months of our opening to record the patterns of use and the appropriateness of the zones as they stand.

Learning points

- Changes to traditional library use take time for customers to get used to
- Spend more time advertising these changes
- One on one is good
- Be patient

Defining space: Wheels

In such a small space, being able to create a different environment several times a day was a real challenge and wheels became the basis to most of our furniture choices. Essentially, everything that can be is on wheels to enable ease of movement. A key design requirement was for all of the furniture to be easily moved by a minimum of two people. As Parklands is a small library there are times when there are only two people in the building. The reality is that some of the furniture has turned out to be much larger than we anticipated, thus taking up more room and being difficult to move. However, the underestimation of the furniture space has proved to be a bonus in some ways, in that it is impossible to have everything out at once, so we have to adopt the 'Time Zones' and move things around. With few walls and a small long narrow building, the furniture became the key to how we defined space. With this in mind several interesting and potentially exciting concepts were developed. A note of thanks must go to the New Brighton team who endured many trial chairs, colour swatches, fabrics, tiles and cardboard box mock ups in our cramped workroom. The architect stipulated the furniture colours to work with the shelving and wall colour. White for hard furniture and orange for soft. The rest was left to our interpretation.

Key pieces of furniture

The Children's picture book bin is a new design with sloped base and segments that allows at least for some big people and numerous small ones to use it at the same time. Although a large piece of furniture, it has big wheels and with a good push, it is very easy to move about. The height was an important consideration with adults and children accessing picture books, we needed it to be a good standing height for children and a comfortable sitting height for adults on a stool or cushion. One quarter is for board books and the rest for picture books in no particular order. We are very happy with this design and feel we achieved the goal of function, form and flexibility.



Key Pieces of Furniture

The customer service desk Grub and Grublette

Without doubt this is an amazing looking piece of furniture. Designed by the architect it blends well with the organic themes running throughout the building. Breaking down traditional barriers of standing behind desks was a key factor in the design of the 'service' area. The Grub (as we call it) and the Grublette are on wheels with the intention that they can be moved behind the sliding doors to enable the Easy Zone to be used in the evenings. The Grublette which doubles as a membership/reference and information desk is able to be moved to any part of the library. So far it has remained in one place but as the business settles we are planning to plug it in to one of the many floor boxes around the library. The Grublette was initially designed as a desk to sit next to so that customer and librarian can sit next to each other, thus removing the barrier. However, the design had to be altered to accommodate wheelchairs so it has changed a little and customers sit opposite library staff. All the monitors in the library are on flexible arms which look amazing. This feature is working well although it is important when planning to allow for the weight of the monitor and get all the specifications right. Our customers seem to have latched on to this very quickly and the arms are great. Another feature of the Grub is that the till and other tools can be locked behind doors and in drawers. The till is on a slide out drawer, which has turned out to be too low but will be adjusted. However, the till is too low and we are currently looking for solutions.

The key features of the service area are the clean lines and flexibility of use. The intention was to keep the desk top uncluttered with everything out of sight however I have noticed more things being creeping in. We don't move it often because it is very heavy although we were able to move everything out of the way and create a great party space for our youth party.

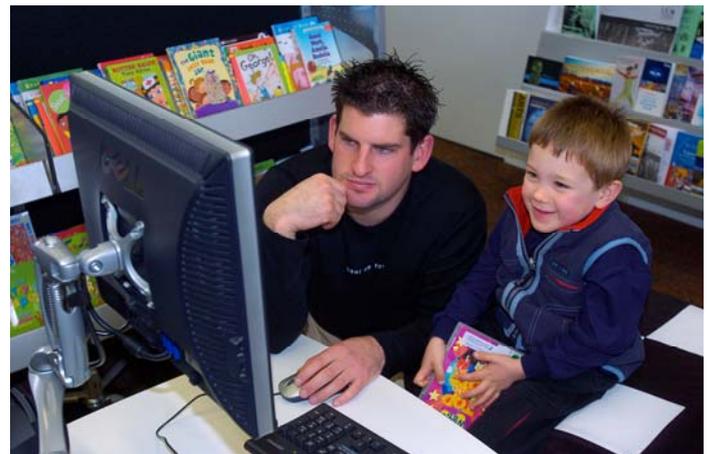


With use we have identified several things that don't work about the desk such as the till being too low and some of the lesser used equipment being a bit fiddly to use.

DVD/CD, Children's interactive, Playstation and Xbox furniture

All of this furniture is able to be moved easily by one person. With the TVs mounted on the top and everything else tucked away, we wheel them into place for each Time Zone with ease. All the headphones are attached to each unit and up to 4 people can play or watch together. After school we remove the pre-school children's interactive and bring out either the Playstation or Xbox module.

The DVD/CD module is fantastic. It is designed so that anyone at any time can select a CD or DVD and insert it into the machine and listen to or watch whatever they choose. There is no regulation on its use and so far everything seems to be running smoothly. Due to copyright we are unable to stage a viewing so it is really up to customers how these features are used and controlled.



Collaborative computer desk

The idea behind this piece of furniture was that it could be used by individuals or as a group. With moving parts and monitors on arms the unit was designed with flexibility in mind. Two of us got together and worked through the IT issues and came up with a design we passed on to the architect. What we have is a stunning unit that is far too big for the space intended and is unable to be moved around the library. Although this was initially disappointing and has limited the flexibility aspect, we are enjoying having a focal point in the library where we can establish our 'Homework Zone' and have the ability to move around one table to assist different people. It goes without saying that we would do it differently again.

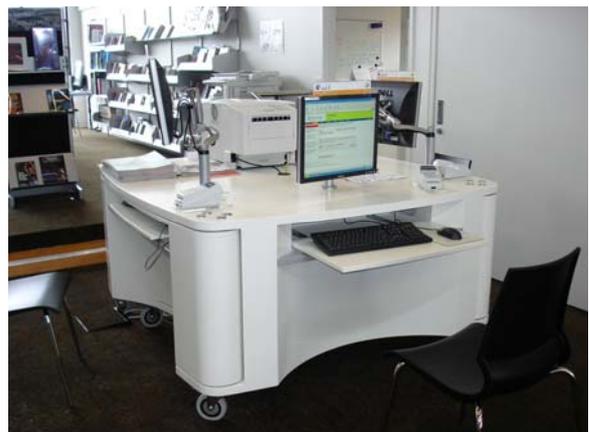
Action Station and Discovery Wall

With flexible furniture playing such a vital role in our ability to change space two pieces of furniture were developed to help do this. Firstly the Action Station which is rolled out for 'Play' time. With roll away drawers and slide out shelves, a chalk board and drawers, it is play central for pre-schoolers in the library it is easy to move and is stored away when not in use. There is tweaking to do but on the whole it is great. A similar feature called the Discovery Wall was designed to help delineate space for teens and others. Using a technique spotted on DIY programmes, a mobile wall doubling as a bookcase, the Discovery Wall was intended to house games, information and educational things for 6-12 year olds on one side and similar materials for teens on the other. However, we have been unable to use it as it is too big and won't fit in to the space. It is currently being altered and we are hoping to have it in action soon. This is disappointing as it was going to be a key 'flexible feature'.

The Big Orange Chairs and sofas

We love the big orange chairs and spent many hours looking for just the right chair to support the architect's vision for the library. The story behind the chairs is worth sharing. After months of searching, I was idly flicking through an Australian Woman's Weekly at the supermarket checkout and spotted a photo of Bernice Mene sitting in a gorgeous big chair playing a guitar. After buying the magazine and getting all the others excited about the chairs, I tracked Bernice's email address down and sent her a message asking where she got the chair from. She responded immediately, although a little coolly, and I contacted the company in Auckland. And here they are. Buying them from a photo and even with sizes and specs they are much larger than we anticipated but what an impact. Everyone loves the chairs! Uno Design is a small company and put a lot of their heart into the chairs. They were the first pieces of furniture to arrive and were a refuge for us in the weeks of builders and contractors we had to work round while setting up. We still steal away with a cup of coffee and a magazine in our breaks...you are practically invisible when sitting in the chair.

When choosing the sofas we opted for a large size enabling either two strangers to sit at each end without impinging on each others' space or accommodating entire families to enjoy a read together.



Display Unit

Having very little wall space and being keen to make community and library display space available we had made a little unit originally designed for the South library. Continuing the silver and black theme of the shelving, this unit can be moved to any part of the library and is proving a focal point for our customers.



Stereo

Although not strictly furniture, the stereo is all part of the package. We have three sets of speakers and three stereos. Music, songs or story CDs can be piped into any part of the building. While listening to cool jazz in the Easy Zone you won't be bothered by the nursery rhymes being sung in the Flexi Zone. Still getting used to all the knobs we have had some complaints from coffee sippers about the Wiggles in their ears but otherwise it is a great system. It was put through the hoops at the Frenzy Youth Party and survived, we're not sure about the neighbours though.

With a real focus on and promotion of the self issue machine we have more flexibility on how we use our service desks. Customers can stand next to staff at the Customer Service desk if they wish to. Unlike many of our libraries, Parklands has all audio visual material in the cases on the shelves so there is no need for shelving or storage behind or under the desk. Reserves are stored in a purpose built unit that is easily accessible by anyone, although self pick up of reserves is not available. So far these shelves have remained untouched by the customers. The result of having no shelves or storage behind the desk is that there are no barriers, a feat we are proud of, and there seems to be no need at this point to construct any.

We believe the key points to this being successful are

- Having a small space that is easy to see from any part of the building
- Staff roving, mingling and engaging with customers
- Constant promotion of the use of the self issue machine
- Diving in head first so that it has to work as there are no other options, taking away the temptations to store.

Learning points

- Size does matter. Spend time, even more time getting this right.
- Work with skilled people when working out furniture
- Consult widely with colleagues who will be using the furniture

Collection

As a boutique lifestyle library we have focussed the collection on being enticing, new and gorgeous. Part of the original plan was to rotate the collection around other small libraries in the network to ensure the collection remained new and interesting however, with a change of operating system this has not been possible although it is on the list of things to find a solution to. We opened with a 21,000 item collection which is in excess of the growth total we were aiming for. At this stage our focus has been on fiction (hardback and paperback) both children's and adults, a stunning magazine collection of just over 100 titles and lots and lots of audio visual material including movie DVD's . We have been astounded at the pace the children's AV has moved although we were well resourced to cope. It has only taken 3 weeks for the entire collection to move. The adult non-fiction and other parts of the collection will grow in time and we are encouraging customers to use New Brighton and Shirley collections to supplement their reading needs. This has been a little disappointing for some customers but after a chat about the role of the collection they seem happy with what we have.

The newness of the stock is a huge draw card and people are travelling from all over the city to sample the goodies. At a very early planning meeting we made it clear what traditional items would be missing from Parklands, including children's posters, motor manuals and phonebooks. These items are either able to be viewed online or reserved from other libraries in the network. We have a very small Reference collection so emphasising the availability of online resources on our website as well as our suite of databases is one of our key themes and our customers are taking to the idea well. Although the number of paperbacks was over estimated three fold, everything else is about right. We will be monitoring the magazine use to identify lesser used titles and gathering feedback on newspapers as we only supply 'The Press' at this stage.

Learning points

- Be clear about what you want your collection to provide for the customer base
- Size and demographic of community is important as to usage of the collection (seems obvious but we lost it a bit in our vision.



Communication

Throughout the project we kept our community informed. Using the talents of the council media contact, our own library marketing team and Digital Library Services we were able to keep everyone informed and generate excitement and anticipation unrivalled in the community. We knew the community were dying to get a new library and had been waiting many years for this to happen. Although being ably served by the Mobile Library for years, they really wanted a community place to enjoy and use.

Although none of these approaches are particularly innovative or new, the key to success, we found, was the concentrated and constant visibility of the project in the wider community as well as professional and stylish marketing.

We visited community groups and many of our colleagues spread the word through various groups and individuals. Of major impact were the glossy newsletters delivered to homes, businesses and local schools. For 3 months leading up to the opening we held 'membership clinics' at the local supermarket in anticipation of a flood of new memberships and old inactive cards turning up on opening day. Without doubt the clinics not only alleviated pressure on our one tiny membership desk on opening day but also gave us a chance to get to know the community.

Other useful communication tools that generated interest and excitement were

- Large signs that included plans outside the building during construction
- Articles in local newspapers
- Mail drops advertising the membership clinic
- Attending Community Board meetings (a very supportive and active group of people)
- Getting feedback from schools and other groups
- Visiting local businesses with the newsletter
- Using the library and council websites to record updates
- Holding a public meeting

win an Apple iPod
see reverse for details

'think' LIBRARY
<http://library.christchurch.org.nz> - Phone 03 941 7923

CHRISTCHURCH
Christchurch City Libraries
Ngā Kete Wānanga o Ōtautahi

FREE membership and a chance to win an Apple iPod

Parklands Library is opening on August 6 and membership is FREE. Beat the crowds on opening day, check your existing membership or enrol for the first time as a Christchurch City Library member at:

Parklands Fresh Choice Supermarket
Thursday 21 July - Tuesday 26 July
Saturday 30 July - Wednesday 3 August

All library membership forms completed at the **Parklands Fresh Choice Supermarket** will go into the draw to win an Apple iPod

'think' LIBRARY
<http://library.christchurch.org.nz> - Phone 03 941 7923

*Please bring two forms of ID, (one must be photo ID) and a power or telephone bill with your name and physical address on it.

May 2005, Issue 01

Newsletter Christchurch City Libraries
Ngā Kete Wānanga o Ōtautahi

New Parklands Library Building Project Update **'think' LIBRARY**
<http://library.christchurch.org.nz> - Phone 03 941 7923

New Library to open July

People living close to the Parklands Mall in Queenspark Drive will have seen quite a lot of building activity in the last few months. The external structure of the on-site Baptist Church has been retained but the new 500 square metre space will have some exciting features in line with the building's new purpose.

"We will be able to cater for people from all ages and a wide range of interests," says Carolyn Robertson.

Christchurch City Libraries Manager, The Parklands Library will be a great space to use computers, read books, meet friends over coffee and even attend programmes and events," says Carolyn.

The outside of the library will also have points of interest. The design allows for easy access to the outdoors and a garden is being created to reflect the special physical features of the area.

Flexibility for customers

One of the best features will be the flexibility of the library. Furniture, books and computers will be able to be moved around to suit customers at all times of the day and week. Rather than standing behind the desk, librarians will row the floor helping customers and checking on their needs.

A new approach for the kids

Several times a week the floor of the library will be on pre-school children. Big colourful screens will be pulled down, beanbags will take the place of chairs for adults and cushions and child-sized chairs will give littlest customers a fun, comfortable place to enjoy story reading, theme music and movement sessions.

Young adults and children will be encouraged to make the most of special homework and study support after school. Headphones, a video wall, bean bag and laptop computers will transform the area into a study zone, virtually converting it into a knowledge shop.

And for the big kids...

Whether it's to use computers to email friends, and family, read newspapers online or search the web, adults too will come to love this new facility. Traditional resources such as copies of newspapers, books, magazines, CDs and DVDs will all be available. The café will offer a meeting place for friends.

For those more serious about their learning opportunities, adult classes on computer hardware and software will be on offer and guest speakers will talk on topics of interest to the community. A morning book group will meet monthly and selected members and community workers will be invited to use the space as a point of contact with residents.

In the weekends

For those people whose schedules make a visit to a library during the week impossible, Saturday is pulled down, push out, stack particular at the new library will provide a high interest, low stress, relaxed environment. A combination of coffee, self-paced learning, books, music and magazines will help customers unwind after a busy week at work.

Parklands Library is going to be a fantastic addition to the neighbourhood. It will be a place where you can push out, stack particular at the new library will provide a high interest, low stress, relaxed environment. A combination of coffee, self-paced learning, books, music and magazines will help customers unwind after a busy week at work.

Promotion and Marketing

Although the library opened with a fanfare and much interest from the local community, we noticed that aspects of our service were not attracting the members of the community whom we thought could enjoy what we had to offer. In support of this the café identified that Saturdays were very quiet. The anticipated weekend leisure users were not coming. We put this down to many families leaving the area for sport and shopping and that Parklands as a suburb is not a 'destination' in the weekends. We swung in to action quickly and put together a 12 week 'Saturday Sounds' event aimed at people not in the 'family sport' demographic. Using our contacts through New Brighton library's 'Sunday Sounds' we put together a great program which has seen a significant growth in weekend usage. We used the saturation approach with posters, our website, mail drops and visits to local community groups and businesses. We also purchased some outdoor furniture and changed the layout of the library and café to encourage the use of the outdoor area.



We have also designed a pack for businesses in the immediate area as well as QEII park and leisure centre which also houses medical facilities, a pre-school and Christchurch school of gymnastics. In the Parklands catchment is also a Burwood hospital which houses specialised spinal and burns units. The content of the packs includes a letter of introduction, a coffee voucher, business related information available through our library network as well as leisure information and a free CD loan voucher.

School holidays have become a feature of our promotions with events and competitions. As we do not offer traditional school visits, we are using school newsletters and homework help in the Learning Centre to connect with our customers. Future plans include contacting schools of our 'less visible' customer base, to organise performances during the nationwide May Music Month in the hope of getting parents involved in the library. We identified the 'non-user' group when they came to watch their children perform on opening day.

Our most successful promotion has been the Pre-school storytimes and Babytimes where parents and children are enjoying the experience of meeting, singing, dancing, selecting item and staying for a coffee and a fluffy. The presentation is intimate and energising. This group will be life long library users due to the wonderful experiences.

Learning points

- Don't take for granted the appeal of a new library especially in a 'discreet' community with no through traffic.

Sprinkling of statistics

Project Cost - Approximately NZ\$1.5m

Renovation of building

- NZ\$1.1m

Interior fitout including IT, furniture, carpet – not collection

- NZ\$350,000

Staffing (FTE 4.2)

1 Associate Librarian

1 full time library assistant

5 part time library assistants

Visitors

- Average of 12,630 per month

Collection size

- 26,000 items

Collection turnover

- Average 81% - highest in the network

Issues

- 18-20,000 items per month

Self issue

- 43% average

Nearest libraries

- New Brighton 4.5 km
- Shirley 6 km

In Conclusion

What worked well

- New, popular collection
- Flexible space
- Furniture on wheels
- Indoor/outdoor flow
- Marketing for opening
- Membership clinics
- Team commitment to the principles and vision
- Doing the 'detail' work to the nth degree before getting in to the building
- Involving as many talented people as available.
- Keeping it simple, being patient during opening madness

Would do differently next time

- Spend more time on getting the scale of all of the furniture right
- Installing a sound barrier for the Learning Centre useable
- Keep promotions, events and competitions constant from opening day
- Spend more time prior to opening with 'community connections'
- Expect our customers to 'get' the time zones as quickly as we did.

To complete our first year

Although we have children's programs up and running, we are going to work on adults next with the introduction of a couple of bookgroups and beyond. We are also planning another youth party for July and will continue our close work developing homework help with the Learning Centre.

So far we are sticking to our 'Vision' and it is going well. The risks have mainly paid off and the learning and support have been wonderful. We highly recommend everyone getting involved in this kind of project in any capacity at least once in your career. The benefits are ten fold, not least the opportunity to work with the community and profession to create something really worthwhile and hopefully lasting.

In conclusion

At this stage of the presentation we would ideally like to be able to roll the credits listing all the people who have been instrumental in the success of the project. As you all know, teams make things happen and we have the privilege of working with great people. If there is something in this session that has been useful to you then we are pleased, if you have lots of unanswered questions then we edited the wrong bits.

