

MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY

I. Background & Evaluation

A. Background of Madison Public Library

Madison Public Library is located in Madison, Wisconsin, for Dane County. There are nine branches, including the main library location in downtown Madison. Branches are open Monday through Saturday, with later hours up through Friday, and 9am – 5pm on Saturdays. Only the main branch is open on Sundays. The central, or downtown library, which will be the focus, is located right in the center of downtown, near the Madison Art Center, and shopping and business areas. It is close to the University by about a 10-minute walk. Bus routes have stops right by the library, and it is near street parking. The library is also nearby a few homeless shelters in town.

According to the website, in 2007, Madison Public Library:

- “Welcomed over 2.2 million visitors from Madison, Dane County, and beyond. There were another 3 million web page visits to the Library's web site.
- Circulated over 4.6 million library books and media from nine different library locations throughout Madison - more than 20 library items circulated per capita.
- Facilitated over 500,000 in-library Internet uses.
- Welcomed over 68,000 children and adults to library programs.”

B. Background of Madison, Wisconsin

The total population of Madison, Wisconsin is 208,054 people. There are 10,815 children under five years old, which constitutes 5.2 percent of the total population; and there are 19,184 people over sixty-five years old, being 9.4 percent of the population. In regards to race and ethnic groups, 174,689 people are White, which is also 84 percent of the population; Black or African Americans make up 12.8 percent of the population, as do Asians, at 12,155 and 12,065 people, respectively. American Indian and Alaska Native, as well as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander groups make up an extremely small percentage of the population, respectively showing 0.4 percent (759 people) and 0 percent (77 people). Hispanic/Latino groups are also not represented in high numbers, with 8,512 people comprising this group, making up 4.1 percent of the total population. Those with disabilities are 13.5 percent of the population, which is 26,324 people. Those who are foreign born are 9.1 percent of the population (18,792 people).

The top five ancestry groups for Madison, Wisconsin are:

- German (35.9%)
- Irish (14.5%)
- Norwegian (10.4%)
- English (9.8%)
- Polish (5.4%)

The percentage of people who speak a language other than English is 12.7%.

There are a number of community resources in Madison. Organized by category, the following depict diversity in this city. The following highlights a few groups as an example:

- Nearby Schools & Colleges
 - University of Wisconsin – Madison
 - Madison Area Technical College (MATC)
 - Edgewood College & High School (Parochial)
 - Madison Metropolitan School District (K-12)
- LGBTQ
 - Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools
 - Gay-Outreach
 - Gay Law Enforcement Officers Association
 - Parents Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays
- Seniors & Disabled
 - Madison Senior Coalitions
 - Madison Senior Center
 - MealCall/ Meals on Wheels
 - Elder Law Center
 - AARP
 - Family Enhancement (Deaf)
 - Learning Disabilities Association of Wisconsin
 - McBurney Disability Resource Center (at the UW)
 - The Arc – Wisconsin Disability Organization
- M/D/S Groups & Businesses
 - Upper Midwestern Cultures
 - Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies
 - Freedom’s Journal (African American)
 - Hmong Wisconsin Radio
 - Association of Indians in America, Inc. – WI Chapter
 - Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
 - Boliviamanta Bolivian Dance Group
 - Madison Jewish Community Council
 - Andy Garcia Productions, Inc.

- Amigo Painting, LLC
- Bhargava Associates
- Buraka, LLC
- Tavaréz & Associates Architects, Inc.

C. Evaluation of Madison Public Library

This library's site was not very welcoming, nor attractive. They do seem to have an average to decent collection of materials for M/D/S groups, but it is not made explicit or advertised clearly on the site. The interface can be changed to Spanish, but that is the only alternate language offered. Activities for the next few months seemed to be lacking for M/D/S groups, and there is not much offered for newcomers. Text can be changed in size, and there are links to organizations for people with disabilities, but it is harder to find links to organizations for other M/D/S groups. For the resources this library seems to have, the website and services (or at least what is depicted on the site) are lacking.

- The overall impression of the library website is that it is not aesthetically pleasing or welcoming, but is somewhat representative of diverse groups. It does not look very professional and is not entirely intuitive, due to messier design. There are no obvious promotions of special collections or materials for M/D/S populations. The site alone would most likely not attract members of a diverse group to explore and use the library.
- Language alternatives are a limited option, in that the interface can be changed to Spanish by clicking on a button towards the top of the page. As for changing “language” for disabled populations, the text can be enlarged with easy-to-find buttons, also towards the top of the page. No other languages or disabilities are represented. The catalog can only be navigated in English, or Spanish if the entire interface was switched. However, search limits can be implemented to find materials in a variety of twelve different languages; this is quite impressive.
- Some of the collections are featured on the “Don’t Miss List”, including new materials in foreign languages, but M/D/S materials are not advertised on the front page. When looking under “Services”, there is a link to the World Languages Collection, materials in large print, and audio books. This is not intuitive, since these are collections; only when clicking on the Services link, does it expand, saying “Services and Collections”.
- Activities and events include a list of children’s programs in Spanish, information about the new Citizenship Test with related resources, computer training, “Art in a Suitcase: Things Japanese”, and financial information. Other than these events, there are not only few events listed in general, but even fewer pertaining to M/D/S groups. It appears there are approximately five activities per month.

- Links to diversity resources include a great deal from the link “The Madison Community”; Access Wisconsin (eligibility support services for health and nutrition), community pages, a cultural resources directory, ethnic publications, homeless/transitional housing, Latin American/Caribbean/Iberian Studies Outreach, Madison’s Neighborhood Associations, FrontDoor (temporary or affordable housing), and United Way are just some of the links provided. There is rich diversity and a great deal of variety offered. Most of these links are for external resources; internally, reference services seem pretty general, and other M/D/S resources include materials for transitioning to retirement or translation services, but no materials or services appear to be specific to community information.

II. M/D/S Outreach

A. Mission Statement

It is the mission of this library to support its *entire* community through providing appropriate materials and services according to needs and wants, while having foresight for change. We will base our assessments on genuine community feedback, bringing our users the highest level of materials and services that we can. “Highest level” implies unbiased attention, equity of access and representation, and a variety in programming to include all community-relevant multi-cultural and diverse groups.

B. Targeted Groups

Group #1: Asians

Objective: To help empower Asian Americans, while also assisting in transitioning to acculturation in modern American society, by providing relevant materials for user needs, based on community assessments and partnerships.

Activities:

A. Parenting Tips for Asian Americans in the USA

- As we learned in our readings, Asian Americans are interested in best parenting practices, to give their children the best opportunities for success in this country. Having an activity based around this, explaining American culture in schools and youth culture to help Asian American parents and their families better understand how Asian children may grow up differently in this country, and how to adapt.
- Presenters could be Asian community leaders who have gone through the American educational system with their children, or education professionals who could relate information to Asian groups. Library materials that might

best supplement this activity could be audio-visual materials in English with subtitles, so parents could see and hear the types of environments their children could be in when enrolled in school. These could be documentaries on youth in America or growing up in America, or instructional videos on how to best take advantage of the educational system, and how to progress to a University. This would help provide immigrants with information in their own language on helping their children make their way in this country. Community partnerships or coalitions could be with Asian-American cultural groups to offer parents a resource for support, and/or any youth groups where children could relate to each other and their experiences, also for more support (these could be church groups if community groups are very religious). National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse could be another useful coalition for support.

- Marketing strategies for this activity would include advertising in Asian communications (papers, radio stations, etc.) and promoting the event in schools, so that when parents go to enroll their children, they can hear about these activities. Funding would not be necessary, as presenters would come on a volunteer-basis, and all materials would be in the library (or could be ILL from elsewhere nearby).

B. Bilingual Family Storytime

- This activity would help Asian Americans relate to each other and create more community ties by having newcomer families interact, possibly even with later-generation families interested in connecting more to their culture and language. This would help teach families English, while also reinforcing primary languages.
- Presenters would be volunteers who can read in both English and Asian languages; this could be a community member or a librarian. Library materials that could be used would be popular children's titles in English and community groups' native languages, or a translator could read the stories in one language, and translate in another. Community partnerships could be with cultural and community groups encouraging networking and supporting families.
- Marketing strategies would include advertising these events at children's schools, the park, or other areas families might frequent. Funding sources would only be necessary if a translator was obtained, LSCA Title 6, which is a federal grant, could be applied for.

C. Medical Education Programming for Asian Families

- This was listed on Oakland's Asian Branch Library's site, and it is a great idea. They offered a series of workshops on heart health, nutrition, and more. These workshops would be tailored to Asian American health, common health issues, and how to maintain good health while here. This activity could

also teach Asian newcomers about health insurance and how and where to get medical care in the community.

- Presenters could be local physicians or naturopaths who would volunteer their time in exchange for free promotion, and possibly an increase in clients. Library materials used could be health and anatomy picture books in English and various Asian languages (depending on the community). Coalitions could be with Asian Community Mental Health Services and Asian Health Services, if in the Oakland area, or similar groups if located elsewhere.
- Marketing strategies would involve advertising in Asian communication sources (newspapers, radio stations, etc.), as well as at health clinics. Funding sources would not be necessary, because volunteers would be taken for these activities.

D. Cultural Differences

- This activity would create discussion for community members (or could be in the form of a lecture) about similarities and differences between the new and old culture. History of homeland regions and culture, compared with new experiences and discussion of regions in America could present a wider perspective. As our Hoffert (1994) reading discussed, “Newly arrived immigrants want information in their own language on making their way in America”, and “Longtimers want to recall, often in English, the glories of their cultural heritage”. This activity could unite newcomers and longtimers, giving both an aspect of what they’re looking for.
- Presenters could be local professors or teachers who specialize in the geography and history of East Asian cultures if it is a lecture, or just community members, if a discussion. Library materials used could be maps; history books in either language; and History channel or other audio-visual materials discussing cultural and regional history of locations in Asia. Coalitions could be with community centers, historical preservation groups, and Asian cultural groups.
- Marketing strategies would include the same as before, by advertising in Asian communication sources, community centers, or other areas that might be frequented. Funding sources would not be necessary, as most activities would center on discussion, and if a lecture, it would be on a volunteer-basis. To improve the collection or to pay for a translator, a grant, the LSCA Title 6 federal grant could be applied for, as mentioned by Hoffert (1994).

E. Family & Community ___ Time

- This ongoing activity would be an opportunity for families to connect with one another over a variety of activities, such as chess, crafts, bingo, or other activities.

- Presenters would not be necessary, as community families would just be interacting with one another. Materials used could be books, magazines, or videos on how to play chess or knit or quilt, etc. Coalitions would not be necessary either, but community and cultural centers could get involved.
- Marketing strategies would be to post notices for these events in parks, Asian communications sources, and other public areas. Funding would not be necessary unless more materials were needed for games and crafts; if so, donations could be taken or fundraisers could be set up through local, relevant churches or community centers.

Group #2: Women

Objective: To provide information to women, unbiased by gender stereotyping. Empowerment is also important in this group, so providing materials and services promoting assertiveness, comprehension of oppressive patriarchal motives, and media literacy are essential.

Activities:

A. Medical Information Series for Women

- This activity would be in a series, where medical information relevant to women would be presented by health topic. Health issues differ between men and women, and alerting women to certain risks should help to empower this group. Also, birth control, emergency contraception, and abortion are important topics that would be discussed, providing a great deal of resources.
- Resources for this activity would include health sciences materials, a medical professional as presenter, and external groups, such as non-profits for women's health or feminist organizations, including Planned Parenthood, would be great partners.
- Marketing strategies for this would be on the library site and at health clinics; the information would be promoted, however, remain somewhat discreet, as these can be very sensitive topics, where user privacy should be kept in mind. Funding sources would include assistance from Planned Parenthood, as these series could be in conjunction with them, the National Women's Health Information Center or the U.S. Department of Health.

B. How to Interpret the Media - Series

- Women are assaulted from all different media sources on how to look, act, and feel. This series would examine different outlets and help teach women (and girls) how to see through marketing schemes and oppressive patriarchal influence. This series would not only improve media

interpretation, but promote discussion on feminism and empower participating individuals. Intended audience would be women, adults and girls, with workshops being integrated or separate based on age; men could attend certain sessions as well to explain their viewpoint, as well as learn how the media affects women. Each component could focus on how different ethnicities of women are portrayed in the media, or age groups, or focus on different media sources.

- Presenters could be individuals who have studied these topics a great deal or more prominent feminists in the community or nearby areas. Partnerships could be formed with Women's Media Center, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization or ALA's SRRT Feminist Task Force. Community feminist and women-focused groups could be included. Resources used would be examples of how women are portrayed in various media items, which most likely will be readily available in the library, such as magazines, movies, books, and music. Critical media sources, such as *Bitch Magazine*, could be used as tools for examples of how to interpret mainstream media.
- Marketing strategies would include spreading the word on relevant Internet resources, such as message boards and listservs, flyers in community centers and schools. Guerilla marketing tactics could also be employed, such as putting flyers in women's magazines for sale in the community, where the women reading these items might not realize the influence the materials have on them and society. Funding sources could be obtained through the Women's Media Center or in connection with a women's studies program at a nearby university.

C. Math, Science, Finances, & Technology Series for Women by Women

- Women, at times, are discouraged from pursuing careers in mathematics, science, finance, and technology. This either might come from cultural influence in general or discrimination in school or the workplace. This series would inform women of possible career options in these fields, successful strategies for entering these fields (including schooling), and would also provide tutoring sessions, as well as networking sessions. Some series would be for adult women, and some for younger girls or adolescents still in K-12.
- Speakers would be successful women in these fields, whether prominent or lesser-known community members. Partnerships could be formed with Association for Women in Science (AWIS) and Urban MAST: "Women and Minorities in MAThematics [sic], Science, and Technology", both non-profits. Library resources used would be publications on these topics, blogs and news sources to keep up with new information, as well as autobiographies and biographies on successful women in these fields.
- Marketing strategies would include advertisements in schools, colleges, physician's offices, science museums, and relevant community centers and businesses. Funding sources could include working with AWIS and Urban

MAST. Grants could be awarded to these programs or individuals by local colleges or universities to promote women studying these disciplines.

D. Self Defense

- Women might fear assault and rape, while also possibly feeling helpless: this would be an ongoing event, to teach women self-defense strategies for safety, to empower female community members to feel safer and more self-reliant.
- Presenters would be martial arts experts or law enforcement specializing in safety specific to women. Partnerships could be formed with Association for Women's Self Defense Advancement, an international non-profit comprised of men and women working to end violence against women. Materials used could be training videos or helpful books and manuals on the topic.
- Marketing strategies would include promoting these events in women's centers, schools, colleges, and public spaces. Funding sources would not be necessary, as this would be on a volunteer-basis, however, AWSDA (Association for Women's Self Defense Advancement) could be used as a partnership for funding or for setting up free workshops.

E. Bicycle & Scooter Clubs

- This would be an opportunity for women interested in bicycling or scooters (or motorcycles) to connect and have a group of like-minded people to participate in these activities with. This ongoing event would consist of two components: one being learning sessions in the library, and the other being biking or riding as a group outside of the library on a regular basis.
- Presenters would be female bicycle mechanics (or scooter or motorcycle mechanics), enthusiasts, or etc. Partnerships could be formed with bicycle enthusiast community groups, such as BICAS in Tucson. Library resources used for the library component would be bicycle maintenance manuals, how-to books, and relevant videos.
- Marketing strategies would be to advertise the event in bike shops, on bike paths, gyms, and women's centers. Funding sources could be useful for bike parts or to give donations to the female bike mechanics participating, so working with BICAS could be helpful in obtaining funding, or obtaining donations from larger bike shops or bike companies.

Group #3: Newcomers

Objective: To assist new Americans in becoming citizens, fitting in, and taking advantage of social services available, while promoting maintenance of self-identity yet also acculturation.

Activities:

A. Crisis Literacy: Filling out Government Forms

- “Crisis Literacy” programs were mentioned in our Venturella (1998) reading. This ongoing program would provide strategies for filling out complicated forms for people who would need help the most. It would help newcomers better understand bureaucratic red tape and confusing language. This could be a rotating series, focusing on a different kind of form each session.
- Presenters would be government officials or experts in the community, or people trained to help newcomers fill out forms. Other less-recent newcomers could also volunteer to help newer soon-to-be citizens, as well as talk about their experiences in adjusting to this country and the community. Materials used would be government forms and relevant reference books; possibly also English language dictionaries. Partnerships could be formed with local M/D/S businesses and cultural centers
- Marketing strategies could include posting flyers in a variety of languages at cultural centers, bus stops, and community areas that would be most popular; if there are also newspapers or radio shows or stations pertaining to various communities, announcements could be made in those places as well. Information for extra help could also be posted at the places these forms would be obtained at. Funding sources could be obtained from the government, as the activity focuses on government forms. An example is the Newcomer Settlement program in Canada, so something similar could be created in this community.

B. Citizenship

- Newcomers need help with the process of citizenship; what steps to take, how to best prepare, and who to contact when. This would be a single event repeated once a month. This would fit in well with the “Crisis Literacy” activities.
- Presenters, again, could be government officials or experts, or people trained to help newcomers with citizenship. And also again, former newcomers could help explain the process, as well as share their stories of obtaining citizenship. Materials used would be similar to the previous event, such as government forms and relevant reference materials. A translator could be hired as well to assist different groups of newcomers in understanding the discussion better. Partnerships could be formed with M/D/S businesses and community or cultural groups.
- Marketing strategies would be the same as the previous activity, including information about extra help being posted at locations where newcomers would go to inquire about citizenship. Funding sources would not be

necessary, since this would be on a volunteer basis, also helping local businesses promote themselves.

C. Computer Skills

- Computer skills are essential for obtaining a decent job in this country, and many newcomers might not have even used a computer before. This series would teach newcomers how to use computers and relevant programs they might need in the workplace. These activities would be taught in a variety of languages.
- Presenters could be librarians who speak other languages, or librarians with translators. Only basic usage and software would be taught, so bringing in experts would not be necessary. Materials used would be the library's computers and software; handouts could be distributed as well, but would not always be necessary. Partnerships could be formed with M/D/S businesses and community centers, where newcomers could relate to former newcomers from the same country and understand how computer skills are relevant in the workforce.
- Marketing strategies would include posting in cultural communication sources, community and cultural centers, and the state employment department. Funding would not be necessary, as this would be on a volunteer basis, however the LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) might be beneficial.

D. Free ___ Help Series

- This series would offer up a different type of help for newcomers each month. One activity could be legal help, another could be help with taxes, another could be teaching newcomers how to best take advantage of the educational system, help finding employment, and another time could be how to find good healthcare options.
- Presenters would be local lawyers, accountants, teachers, placement workers, and health care workers. Local or national businesses could offer free services as free promotions for them, or at least at a very reduced rate. Library materials used would be reference materials relevant to the topic being discussed. Partnerships would be formed with local businesses, especially if a minority group or former newcomers own them.
- Marketing strategies would include posting these activities in local businesses where newcomers might visit to obtain assistance. Funding for these activities would not be necessary, as local businesses would participate on a volunteer basis in exchange for free promotion and potentially increased clientele.

E. Self-Identity & Acculturation

- Often times when attempting citizenship and fitting in while in a new place, newcomers can lose a sense of self-identity and/or compromise acculturation. This ongoing activity would help newcomers find a balance between the two, while also connecting to others in similar situations.
- Presenters would be former and present newcomers, sharing experiences, concerns, and achievements. A culturally sensitive librarian or volunteering psychologist could moderate the event, but the focus would be on the affected groups sharing information with each other. Library materials used would be maps, translation dictionaries, and fiction and non-fiction sources depicting actual experiences for newcomers and people of similar nationalities. These items would be on display and available for check out. Partnerships could be formed with community centers to get the word out and help find volunteers.
- Marketing strategies would be promoting this ongoing activity at community centers, cultural centers, or religious meeting places to let newcomers know others share similar feelings and experiences, and that there are people to connect with. Funding would not be necessary unless a psychologist volunteered for a small fee; this could then be obtained through the ALA Annual Diversity Research Grant Program if research was incorporated into this event, possibly tracking user information needs and activities to improve library services and materials.

References

- Hoffert, B. (1994). Dragon dancers & eastern westerners: Serving the Asian American community. *Library Journal*. Accessed April 1, 2008 from IRLS 554 course readings.
- Spradlin, L. & Parsons, R. (2008). *Diversity matters: Understanding diversity in schools*. Belmont, CA: Thompson-Wadworth.
- Venturella, K. (1998). Libraries and poverty. In Venturella, K. (Ed.), *Poor people and library services* (pp. 29-34). North Carolina: McFarland.