**Collection Plan: Looking to the Future and Beyond at Libbie Mill Library**

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**The Libbie Mill Library Community**

Libbie Mill Library, one of nine locations in the Henrico County Public Library (HCPL) system, sits close to the border of Henrico County and Richmond City, two of the areas that it serves. In comparison to the other areas of service, Richmond City has lower income (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), greater poverty (United States Census Bureau, n.d.) and school dropout rates (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.), lower rates of homeownership (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), less access to broadband (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), lower computer ownership rates (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), and due to poverty, a 100% rate for free/reduced meals in schools (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). There is not a large percentage of Hispanic/Latino in the areas served (United States Census Bureau, n.d.) but Hispanics/Latinos are some of the most at-risk students for dropping out of public school (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). Another group at-risk for dropping out of public school is non-English learners (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). Henrico County has the greatest population of the three main areas serviced by Libbie Mill Library of those who speak a language other than English at home and the second highest concentration of Hispanic/Latino (United States Census Bureau, n.d.).

**Libbie Mill Library’s Collection**

Libbie Mill Library (and HCPL) does try to have a well-developed and diverse collection. All physical items except Bestseller copies of popular titles and reference materials are available within HCPL to be put on hold by a patron with a library card and picked up at the library of the patron’s choice (Henrico County Public Library, 2022). HCPL has 2,200,000 physical items in the 2021-22 fiscal year, which runs July 1st to June 30th (Henrico County Government, 2021). There are a total of 355,000 different titles and 920,000 copies in its collection in 2021-22 (Henrico County Government, 2021) in varying formats. HCPL had 1,300,000 available digital items in 2021-22 through two apps, Libby and Hoopla (Henrico County Government, 2021). In random sampling done at Libbie Mill Library, diversity in beginning readers in the children’s section was found at 55%. Content mapping from the HCPL catalog found that looking at two topics, job interviews and learning English, that there was not a lot of variety in formats, especially for the job interview topic.

**Targeting the Libby Mill Library (HCPL) Collection With a Plan**

In looking at the collection plan for Libbie Mill Library (HCPL), one focus will be on strengthening the collection in ebooks/eaudiobooks. The goal is to provide more listings on subject areas that benefit the communities that Libbie Mill Library serves, such as job resources and those resources for English language learners. The new catalog did debut on March 22, 2022, so making ebook/eaudiobook results appear in the HCPL catalog and being able to click in the catalog to borrow them from the apps (Henrico County Public Library, 2022) have already been accomplished by HCPL so this part has been eliminated from the collection plan.

Another target is diversity in the children’s section by providing more titles in the beginning reader, board book, and easy section with diverse populations featured in them and for those learning English as a second language. For the target of the plan, I am not going to focus on diversity and learning English in adult so the scope is not too wide. This might be a future target for a collection plan.

Originally, I had hoped to target New Readers (easy short readers for English language learners) because the HCPL catalog listings for these have not created new resources since 2018. I have been unsuccessful at finding new offerings in my limited research scope, plus have decided to focus on the other parts of the plan due to budgeting, so have curtailed this part of the collection plan for now, but it may be a focus later.

Another place to target the collection is to offer more hotspots and find the resources to offer laptops for check out. HCPL currently has 50 hotspots, and the waiting list continues to grow for them. Laptops are available currently to check out at Libbie Mill Library but must stay in the library.

Last area to focus on is a barrier to service by requiring a library card to use computers, which require a valid government identification and proof of address to get a library card with no exceptions (Henrico County Public Library, 2022). To better serve patrons who maybe homeless or without a permanent address, HCPL will offer a day pass at its locations for two hours of computer use only, no identification required. A temporary printing account would be set up as well where the patron paid for printing as they printed so that no money could be carried over on the day pass.

**Collection Plan and The Mission of the Library and Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Community**

HCPL’s mission (and therefore Libbie Mill Library’s) from their website is, “We promote reading and lifelong learning, connect people with the information they need, and enrich community life” (2022). The additional ebooks and eaudiobooks will add to reading and the lifelong learning of all patrons through their use. This will also allow job seekers and English language learners in the community more access to the targeted subjects, enrich their lives, and meet their needs. The additions to the children’s section will start the youngest patrons on their journey of reading and lifelong learning through adding to the collection of books for young children. This step of the plan is about seeding the targeted areas with more diversity in books meeting the needs of and enriching the lives of diverse children. Additional hotspots, laptops for checkout and adding day passes for computer use will add to lifelong learning, reading and connect those who use them with the information they need by giving them access to the internet, thereby enriching their lives. This will also help minorities and disadvantaged groups take advantage of the internet, meeting the needs of those segments of the population.

**Supporting Research for Each Targeted Area of the Collection Plan**

**Ebooks and Eaudiobooks**

A study done by Walton and Bunderson comparing print versus ebook data from selected libraries over the period from 2009-2019 found that the percentage of print books during this time had decreasing usage, while ebooks during the same time had increasing usage (2020, p. 86). 90% of libraries now offer ebooks and between 2008-2017, there was a 3188.2% increase in the number of ebooks in the public library collection (IMLS, 2020, p. 12 as cited in Mendieta, 2021, p. 6). In 2008 ebooks were only 1.4% of all collections while in 2017, they made up 29.7% of all library collections (IMLS, 2020, p. 12 as cited in Mendieta, 2021, p. 6). In 2016, 87% of public librarians responding to a poll said that ebook circulation was still growing but at a slower rate than the past year (Albanese, 2016, p. 38). And then came COVID-19. OverDrive, the leading ebook provider for libraries, found that every day during COVID-19 was a new record (Albanese, 2020, p. 10). Demand is still high for ebooks/eaudiobooks. And with the economic instability after the pandemic, just as in past downturns, there is an increase in the need for resources for job seekers (DeCoster et al., 2011) just as increasing diversity of the United States population (Jensen et. al., 2021) increases the percentage of English language learners. Expanding the collection of ebooks/eaudiobooks is backed up by the research.

**Diversity in Board Books, Easy Books, and Beginning Readers in the Children’s Section**

Early literacy is important in school success as seen by the Anne Casey Foundation who wrote that the National Research Council asserts that “academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone’s reading skill at the end of third grade. A person who is not at least a moderately skilled reader by that time is unlikely to graduate from high school”12 (2010, p. 10). Martinez found that community help, such as with the public library, assists with student achievement (2008, p. 4), helps early learners develop, and prepares preschoolers for learning (2008, 5-6) which can help those disadvantaged students at risk for dropping out. Children’s books that contain diversity with cultures and languages can increase a child’s self-image and make inroads to cultural understanding (Naidoo, 2014, p. 2-3). Through books children build “messages about their cultures, and roles and society” and can locate aid “for the process of defining themselves as individuals and understanding their developing roles within their families and communities” (Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001, p. 810). Not to mention that book encounters are often “the safest, easiest way to encounter other people and to see oneself in their eyes, to recognize one’s own experience in an experience that at first blush seems radically different” (Levine as cited in Lindsay, 2006, p. 37). Public libraries and librarians can assist children to obtain positive positions about those “perceived as the ‘other’ by introducing them to authentic, high-quality literature about diverse cultures. Particularly, positive representations of diversity in children’s materials” (Ford et. al., 2012, p. 5). Johnson posits that a part of the responsibility of a librarian’s job is to curate collections that are balanced and not only mirror but meet the needs both educational and recreational of the user communities (Johnson, 2018, p. 204). Diversifying the collection in the earliest books for young patrons not only will help cultivate early literacy but will help them to see themselves and others.

**Additional Hotspots, Laptops to be Checked out, and a Computer Use Day Pass**

Offering more hotspots, laptops for checkout, and day passes for computer use all tie into the importance of the public library for providing free computer use and internet access. Seven counties probably form the majority of HCPL patrons as they all qualify for free library cards, with Henrico County, Richmond City, and Chesterfield County having the most patronage.

**Statistics on Computers in the Home and Broadband Access**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Location | no computer at home | no broadband access |
| Henrico County | 6.5% | 11.7% |
| Richmond City | 10.1% | 21.7% |
| Chesterfield County | 8.1 | 14.8% |
| Goochland County\* | 6.9% | 14.2% |
| Hanover County\* | 5.6% | 11.8% |
| King and Queen County\* | 19.2% | 32.5% |
| King William\* | 7.8% | 25.2% |

(United States Census Bureau, n.d.).

\*Must show identification with proof of address and Pamunkey Regional Library card to qualify for a free HCPL card (HCPL, 2022)

Public libraries fulfill an important role in the community and society by offering internet access and bridging a digital divide. In 2010, 45% of 169 million visitors to the public library used a library computer or Wi-Fi to connect to the internet (Becker et. al., 2010, March, p. 1). 44% of people in the United States living below the poverty line used the public library for computers and internet, and 61% of young adults living below the poverty line did the same for educational purposes (Becker et. al., 2010, p. 2). Adults with low income were found to mostly access the public library computers for employment related purposes (Kinney, 2010, p. 118). During the economic downturn of 2008-9 and the increasing number of online job applications, in 2009, “90.9 % of public libraries provide access to online job resources” while “71.9 percent of libraries help people apply for jobs online” (Bertot et al., 2011). Access to the internet can help economically, affecting wages positively and can even out disparities in pricing between whites and minorities by allowing minorities to shop online (Kinney, 2010, p. 112). Minority youth as in Hispanic, black, Asian American, American Indian, and non-English speaking household are more likely than others to access the internet at the public library (Kinney, 2010, p. 116). Minorities make up a majority of those without broadband access at home with income the biggest factor in whether there is access or not (Webber, 2019). Children without computers have a worse performance on cognitive tests (Kinney, 2010, p. 112) and children without access to a computer at home and only one device at home, usually a cell phone, may have difficulty completing their assignments as things move online (Webber, 2019). Youth and adults both benefit from hotspots being available, laptops to check out, and being able to use the computer at the library.

A survey found that 11% of voting-age adults across the United States did not have valid government-issued identification (Weiser, Gaskins, & Iyer, 2011). That number goes up for minorities and those in living in poverty (Weiser, Gaskins, & Iyer, 2011). Proof of address is difficult for those who do not have permanent addresses. The homeless population nationwide is estimated, according to a one-night survey in 2017, to be 564,708 (Millen, 2017). Greater Richmond Continuum of Care did a census in early 2021 in City of Ashland, Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent and Powhatan and found the largest single year spike since they started keeping records, from 549 to 838 people (Robinson, 2021 February 12). Homeward, a regional group for services for the homeless in the Richmond area, talked about housing 1000 people being housed in emergency, transitional, and permanent housing for the homeless, not including the 75+ people who were living at the encampment that was razed with needs unmet to house more people (Lazarus, 2020 March). Woelfer did a survey of homeless youth and 70% used the internet at the public library (Crewdson, 2013). Lack of identification and proof of address has been an impediment to patrons without them who still need to use the computer and print.

**Adding Resources**

**Ebooks/Eaudiobooks**

To add to the ebook/eaudiobook collection, search Non-Fiction Core Collection and other databases for non-fiction books in the subject areas and look for ebooks/eaudiobooks on the same topics/subjects. Utilize reviews to select titles. One suggested ebook title is *Speak English Like An American* by Amy Gillett. Midwest Library Review recommended it as a self-teaching tool for English (2013). Gilette has written other books specializing in languages on this topic along with other language books so that makes her an authority and fulfills accuracy. It is relevant to the collection as it is for the diverse population and has literary merit and value for the subject matter to that population. It is appropriate for English language learners in the community. Another suggested title, *101 Job Interview Questions You’ll Never Fear Again* by James Reed, is owned in book format at HCPL, but HCPL does not own the ebook or eaudio-book, which are available. Farber said in a review in *Library Journal* that the title is well-organized and well-written (2016). He also said that author has “firsthand knowledge of recruitment practices and interview tactics” (2016) unlike other authors in the genre. This would speak to the accuracy of the information and the authority of the author to the subject. This would be an added resource in the ebook and eaudiobook category fulfilling a need for the diverse population who may want other formats, and expand the collection, thereby adding merit and value to the collection. It is relevant and appropriate to the collection because Henrico County does have unemployed job seekers.

**Easy Books, Board Books, and Beginning Reader books**

An addition for the picture book section is *Dear Primo*: *A Letter to My Cousin* by Duncan Tonatiuh about two cousins, one in Mexico and one in the United States, who write letters back and forth. *Kirkus Reviews* says that book shows their different cultural experiences through use of color, typeface, sweeping styled pictures, and the use of Spanish in Carlitos’ letters (2010). This book is written by a Mexican-American author, who has lived both in the United States and Mexico, so there is a knowledge of both cultures for accuracy and authority. It is a picture book that is rated for preschool to grade 3 and gives a diverse story for the collection, including Spanish language, so is relevant and appropriate to the diverse patronage. The review talks about the use of pictures to tell a story, so it remarks on the literary merit and value of the book. An addition for a board book is *Counting on Community* by Innosanto Nagara, which uses a multicultural community to provide a counting resource. *Kirkus Reviews* says the book is graphically strong and shows a city community that is diverse and supportive (2015) adding merit and value to the collection. This is a board book for babies to age two and has counting with a diverse community showing the relevance and appropriateness to the collection for diverse readers at HCPL along with accuracy of counting. The author is a multicultural activist so has some authority on showing diversity in the book. A beginning reader addition is *Block Party* by Gwendolyn Hooks, where the neighborhood is having a block party and all the families are bringing something, but Padma is worried her friends will not like the lentil soup her mother plans to bring. Koster at *School Library Journal* says that this has “strong representation of children from a variety of cultures” (2017), demonstrating the relevance to diversifying the collection and its value. The book is for emerging readers so is appropriate to the intended audience. The review called it strong, showing its literary merit and value. Hooks specializes in writing diversity in her books so she is an authority and gives an accurate presentation.

**Hotspots and Laptops**

Originally 50 hotspots were acquired for Henrico County Library through T-Mobile and Facebook (Henrico County Public Library, 2022). T-Mobile, among others, is advertising low-cost hotspots through federal funding (T-Mobile, 2022). T-Mobile is an authority and accurate on providing internet. The extra hotspots would add value and merit to the collection by being a service to the diverse community and helping disadvantaged patrons. They are appropriate and relevant in meeting the patron’s needs. Dell Computers has programs for libraries to acquire laptops at discounted rates (Techsoup, 2022). There are also grants available for technology. Offering laptops for checkout would have accuracy at fulfilling a need, authority because Dell and grant writers have authority, relevant to the collection because they fulfill a need in the community along with adding value and merit to the collection. They would also be appropriate to the community at large because there is a need for computer use.

**Computer Day Pass**

The next program to offer would be a day pass at HCPL for computer use and printing only without requiring identification or a library card. Richmond City Public Library offers an e-card, good for online services and computer use only (2018). Printing on a HCPL day pass would be on a per page basis ($0.10) with money added to the pass as printing goes to the print queue, so money is used immediately as no money can stay on the card after that day. This meets a need in the community for computer use by disadvantaged patrons, making it relevant to the collection and adding value and merit to the collection by meeting that need. The day pass for computer use only would be appropriate to the community of diverse patrons. Authority and accuracy would be met by the librarians headlining the program, following the rules, and making sure day use patrons followed the rules of the day pass.

**Table for the One Year, Two Year, and Three Year Mark**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Increasing the Collection of ebooks/eaudiobooks | Get the two titles mentioned.  Begin looking at sources for ebook/eaudiobook selections to diversify the collection, especially in the subjects of job search and learning English. | Get at least ten ebook/eaudiobooks in the subjects of job interviews and learning English.  Look at other subject matters. Where is the online collection lacking?  Do an in library display on ebook/eaudiobook offerings with instructions on how to download the apps. | Look at getting ten more ebook/eaudiobook selections in the lacking subject matters.  Look at circulation statistics. Are they being checked out? Do the resources have holds?  Do a feature on the webpage on the resources available in ebook/eaudiobook form |
| Diversifying the easy books, board books, and beginning reader books in the children’s section | Used Children’s Book Council plus Diverse Book Finder (listed on Children’s Book Council’s website) to find three diverse titles not in the catalog at HCPL.  Purchase the three books listed.  Do book displays with diverse books not just for the months of various demographics (aka Black History Month, Hispanic History Month, etc), but mix them in displays all year long. | Use resources like Children’s Book Council, Diverse Book Finder, review sites’ lists of diverse books (like *Library School Journal,* *Kirkus Reviews,* etc.) to find diverse books in all three formats, along with looking at awards like Pura Belpré Award and others to choose books.  Check out the Confetti Collection that Block Party is a part of.  Also keep books multi-diversified, i.e. different cultures.  Add more board books of different languages/English.  Do a world map book display with diverse books from the collection. | Continue selection process as in Year 2.  Evaluate the circulation statistics of the books that have been added since year 1. Are they being checked out?  Do book displays with diverse books not just for the months of various demographics (aka Black History Month, Hispanic History Month, etc), but mix them in displays all year long. |
| Offer more hotspots and obtain laptops to check out. | Acquire 25 more hotspots  Continue to promote by signs in the library and on the website.  Find laptops at discounted rates from nonprofit offerings and grants.  Acquire 25 for checkout.  Figure out distribution and setup so laptop can be used but not added to.  Promote by website and signs in the library. Do a news story on them with local media. | Look at the circulation statistics and deactivation statistics. Are they getting returned? Are there still holds?  Acquire 25 more hotspots  Continue to promote by signs in the library and on the website.  Look at circulation statistics and hold rates. Assess problems and fix. What are return rates?  Acquire 25 more laptops.  Promote by website and signs in the library  See what needs are of the community. Patron survey to see if investing in more laptops is wanted/needed. | Continue to assess circulation statistics, holds and deactivation statistics.  If there is a need (circulation statistics are good, return rates are good, still are holds) acquire 25 more hotspots.  Continue to promote by signs in the library and on the website.  Continue to assess circulation statistics, holds and return rate statistics. Assess problems and fix. If circulation statistics are high, holds rates are high, and survey says patrons want, acquire more?  See what needs are of the community. Patron survey to see if investing in more laptops is wanted/needed. |
| Offer a computer day pass | Number/pass good for two hours of computer use only. Printing is done as sent to print queue on kiosks near adult section computers only as no printing money can stay on the pass. Behavior guidelines apply.  Advertise day pass on the HCPL website and signs in the library. | Assess program. What are usage numbers? What are problems coming up? Address those problems.  Advertise day pass on the HCPL website and signs in the library.  Survey users on what they want to see. Survey card holders on what they think about the program.  If no wait for computers, offer extension after two hours to four hours. | Continue to assess program. New problems? Assess the problems.  Perhaps if need exists, day pass can also be extended to a week. Printing would still be as needed so money would not stay on card.  Advertise day pass on the HCPL website and signs in the library.  Survey users on what they want to see. Survey card holders on what they think about the program. |

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