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### **Public Library Partnerships which add value to the Community The Hamilton Public Library Experience**

**Beth Hovius**

Director of Public Service and Collections,  
Hamilton Public Library, Ontario, Canada

### **Public Library Partnerships which add value to the Community: The Hamilton Public Library Experience**

I am going to talk about a selection of partnerships which focused on the library's literacy and information roles, and how they have added value to the City of Hamilton. I will describe the catalyst for each partnership, a brief description of the service and what can be learned from this experience.

I have focused on our community-based partnerships although the Hamilton Public Library also has many active partnerships with other libraries at the provincial and national level. The partnerships are arranged in chronological order, and you will also notice how our role within the partnerships, while focusing on information, has evolved over time—from information and referral to content management and community empowerment.

## Background

Hamilton was, and is, a tough, gritty, industrial city with a high rate of poverty. Just five years ago Hamilton was amalgamated with two other municipalities, thus creating the new city with over 520,000 residents. It is historically a steel city, although now, health, education and agriculture are the major employers. It is ethnically diverse. At least 10% of the population arrived in Canada as recently as in the past fifteen years. New immigrants cluster in the lower city, creating neighbourhoods which are very diverse. For example, almost 100 languages are spoken at the high school nearest the Central Library.

The Hamilton Public Library is a good sized library system with a 146,131 sq. ft. (13,576 sq. metres) Central Library and twenty-three branches, half of which serve rural communities. It circulates about 5 million items annually and has a budget of approximately \$23,000,000.

Hamilton has great civic pride, and a history of developing local solutions. Partnerships were in use locally long before they became popular elsewhere. Over twenty years ago the Ontario government commissioned a study of Hamilton partnerships to determine if partnerships were a viable concept for application elsewhere. By the early 1990's, partnerships were required if an organization wanted to access provincial grants.

In preparation for today's session I looked over several annual reports and realized that at any given time in the past fifteen years the Hamilton Public library has had about ten to twenty partnerships of different sizes on the go. Each partnership initiative typically involves several partners, so if we were to count the total number of partners it would likely exceed 200. We do not always take the initiative in looking for partnership opportunities. As I describe the catalyst for the partnerships here, I think you will be surprised by how few were initiated by the library. In fact, as successful partnerships evolve, partners return with other possibilities to explore. We are now at the point that we get more requests for partnerships than we can accommodate, and must carefully select which ones advance the library's and the community's goals.

## What Hamilton Public Library Brings to Every Partnership

One of the first lessons we learned is that other organizations value a partnership with the public library. There are many reasons for this.

- **Reputation:** The Library's enduring values of inclusiveness and accessibility are valued by other partners. Public libraries are perceived as being for the common good.
- **Credibility:** Because we are a large public institution with a proven track record of delivering what we promise, other partners ask for our participation.
- **Honest Brokers:** We are perceived as fair and ethical with no political agenda and a strong focus on community development.
- **Infrastructure:** We are willing to use the large infrastructure of the public library to support a partnerships. This support can sometimes be used as in-kind support to leverage other funding. Typically this support includes bookkeeping, publicity, space, project supervision, and research expertise.
- **Senior staff involvement:** When a partnership is under development, it is crucial that the all participants be able to commit to a plan of action and to

commit their organization's support. Partnership development is a job duty of all senior positions. All senior positions are authorized to commit resources to a partnership provided that it advances the library's strategic goals.

- **Strong skill base:**
  - The Library is seen as a leader in the area of information technology, particularly in the area of content development and management
  - The good information skills of staff are relevant in a variety of information-rich environments. We are continually amazed at how well suited traditional library skills are to other services.
- **Union relations:** The Collective Agreement has been negotiated over the years to enable the library to manage partnership-based projects and create more job opportunities for staff.

### **Our First Partnership – The Adult Basic Education Association**

The Hamilton Public Library's first partnership experience was an adult literacy partnership that started in 1983 and is still going today.

Our first partnership came about because the public library set up an adult literacy tutoring program and this raised the concern that it duplicated existing services. As a result, all providers of literacy programs met to discuss the areas of overlap. The original discussion led to the formation of an association (The Adult Basic Education Association) so that the service providers could meet regularly to coordinate and develop services. Gradually, as the extent of the adult literacy problem became known, the vision of a large integrated network of programs where adults could learn to read and upgrade their education skills in a positive, adult-oriented environment without shame or stigma emerged.

The Association hired project staff, (originally only for 3 months since that was all the funding there was), to raise awareness of adult literacy issues, to provide referrals to existing programs, and to identify gaps and weaknesses in the service network from the customer perspective. Project staff were located in the Central Library. With staff raising awareness of the issues, more and more adults came forward wanting to learn to read, thus proving the basic premise that adults, if offered the opportunity, would take advantage of more programs.

The members of the Association lobbied the provincial government to provide funding, not only to keep the project going on a long-term basis, but more importantly, to provide funding for adult education programs, and specifically for literacy needs. The end result was a government-funded adult literacy initiative that lasted for over ten years. At its peak there were five high schools for adults, courses at the community college, and several community-based programs which used volunteers to help other adults. The Library's own tutoring program grew tenfold, with over 200 student-tutor pairs meeting at various library locations.

The value of this program to the library was quite profound, because it changed how we delivered our core services. This was the first time that this formerly invisible sector of the community had come to the Library. Staff became familiar with literacy needs and took more care in providing information at an appropriate reading level. We made more of an effort to purchase collections for adults at different reading levels and in non-print formats. We learned to write publicity and other information about the Library in clear language.

We expanded the non-print collections. We also provided other traditional library functions to the students enrolled in other programs, encouraging those classes to visit the library, obtain a library card, and use our resources.

More recently, the Library worked with the federal government on a three-year pilot project to document how the tutor-based approach could meet the needs of recent immigrants. This program (known as LINC - Language Instruction to Newcomers in Canada) is now an ongoing federal initiative. All programs change over time, and gradually the Library's program has shifted to support immigrants as funding for the earlier stream – Canadians who could not read – was discontinued.

### **What did we learn from this?**

- **The very powerful knowledge that partnerships work.** When all groups work together to identify the need and the vision, the end result is powerful. We learned the power of lobbying, and the impact on a community when agencies work together. This experience carried us through our next couple of partnerships where the collaboration was much more difficult to achieve.
- **We learned to go for it.** There was internal criticism that in creating grant positions instead of permanent positions, we were creating a future that could adversely affect other library services. The reality was that by taking this chance, we were not only able to help many adults learn to read, but we also created five jobs that lasted for more than 20 years.
- **Ride the wave.** We learned to look ahead to discover possible new partnership opportunities, once we realized how it worked. We found that by watching the government, and those sectors which drive economic growth, that it is possible to position the library to take advantage of these new areas of interest. In Canada, the literacy wave has been followed by services for disabled persons, multiculturalism, career information, networking and technology, and early childhood education.
- **Partnerships ebb and flow over time.** After being heavily involved in the Adult Basic Education Association, and the new organization, Adult Basic Education, Inc., we stepped back and shifted our energies into new partnerships. Our Youth Services staff are now re-partnering with ABE, Inc. and a different set of city agencies develop and promote family literacy initiatives.
- **If a partnership results in the creation of a new organization, the original partners should be prepared for the added work it creates.** The creation of new third party organization is a frequent offshoot of cooperative partnerships since it maintains the power base between the original partners. I would add a word of caution before you go this route. New organizations require a lot of support from the original members until they can stand alone. There are the creation of policies, the determination of the vision, goals, objectives and how success is measured, as well as the financial and human resource issues to be dealt with. The newly hired staff also creates more work for members because they have a lot of creative ideas since, after all, this is why they were hired. Finally, once the organization is strong, the dynamics of the original group will change since you now have an organization which is as strong as or stronger

than the original members, and which may need to compete for funding to survive.

- **The library should not quickly give up its core business – the information business.** In retrospect we realize that we could have positioned the library better if we had retained our core business - the information business- instead of setting up a third organization to do it. Yes, we ran a successful tutoring program and yes it had a positive benefit on the library but in the Association we were just one more service provider, and a small one at that. In subsequent partnerships we have retained more control over the information function. In this and the next partnership, the information service was positioned to act as an intermediary between the client and the information. This approach is no longer as relevant today. We are now more likely to focus on content development and management rather than creating specialized information services, unless specifically asked to do so.

### **The Disability Information Services Helpline**

The Hamilton Central Library has a department, the *Resource Centre for Disabled Persons*, which provides materials in alternate formats, publications about disabilities, and information about services for disabled persons. As a result, the Library was invited to a meeting with social and health care providers to address the stated problem that “there were no services for disabled persons and the services which did exist were insufficient to meet the needs.” Participants were invited to put together proposals to address this issue with the understanding that the committee would select one and help find funding.

Staff from the Library and the Community Information Service (CIS), an agency also located in the library that provides referrals to non-profit and service agencies, conferred and agreed that the real problem was not the stated one. Rather, the problem was that disabled persons did not know how to find out what was available, or how to access services because there was no service coordination nor any inter-agency referrals. We also noted that disabled persons needed a one-stop shopping approach to deal with multiple related issues. We recognized as well that there was an underlying literacy component that needed to be addressed.

The Library and the Community Information Service (CIS), proposed the establishment of an information and referral service with a component of informal counselling, thus integrating and expanding the information work already provided by both the library and the Community Information Service. We realized that the proposed clientele would not think of the Library when requiring this type of assistance. Therefore, we needed a “front” and so we proposed the creation of the Disability Information Services Helpline or DISH for short, which would appear to operate as a separate entity, although it was integrated with the library and CIS. The staff would provide the service and identify service gaps for other agencies. The Library would provide the infrastructure support (i.e. supervision, publicity, book-keeping, as well as access to the collections). The CIS would provide access to their database of community resources. An Advisory Committee of service providers and disabled persons would support this partnership.

I wish I could say that the original group immediately liked the proposal but that would not be true. It took a few meetings to explore the concepts since they were not used to thinking in terms of information and we needed to learn the language of health care and social services. Eventually DISH was established and is still operational. Funding has always been an issue since the social service and health care field has been restructured several times. Fortunately, the DISH staff has a high community profile as an advocate and expert in the disability field, and the work which they do is valued by the community. When the local rehabilitation hospital looked to establishing a similar hospital-based service for its clientele, we decided to move the DISH operations to the hospital two days a week. This is transparent to the clientele since the phone service can be offered at either location, but meanwhile it has offered stability.

The value to the Library was again that we attracted a different client group. Use of the collection in the Resource Centre rose dramatically. This also gave us the impetus to review our facilities and services to ensure that they met accessibility standards.

### **What did we learn?**

- **Speak the language of the partners.** We needed to develop a vocabulary that spanned both fields. We used 'informal counselling' to describe a service level beyond that provided by a library, but less than the "counselling" which is provided by the health care field. We defined this to mean problem-solving for multiple issues on behalf of a client, and it recognized that each issue would take significant time to determine the options available to the client.
- **Build on our core functions and skills.** We learned to expand the envelope of information services using existing skills. We were surprised that the Library's collection was heavily used to provide specific information and to support other requests. Almost every response to every question could be enhanced by information from the collection. We mailed and faxed a great deal of information to persons in the early years, although now this is done electronically.
- **Manage expectations.** We learned to state what we could and were willing to do, and also to state what we could not, or were not willing to do, right up front. This was an extremely difficult partnership, since the synergies never fully developed. Although we were pressured to do so, we did not take on other functions unrelated to our core purpose. As a result, the same committee set up another project to deal with another issue. That project lasted less than a year before it closed. If the original proposal had not clearly stated our conditions, this closure would have negatively impacted on DISH.

### **Career and Employment Resource Centres**

The Hamilton Public Library's five Career and Employment Resource Centres emerged out of an earlier partnership which created a Hamilton Business Directory, a multi-agency public-private partnership. The Federal government was one of the partners and so when it decided to get out of direct service provision and instead fund community agencies (public and private) to provide career and employment counselling and information, it asked the Library to start a Career Centre. This centre was so successful,

that the federal government has redirected its funding to support more library-based centres, and we now have centres in five locations.

The Library's Career and Employment Resource Centres provide job hunting and career information. Each Centre has a collection of approximately one thousand items, access to on-line resources, as well as additional computers with resume-writing software for public use and a fax machine to enable job hunters to e-mail or fax in resumes. There is a staff person for each Centre who provides assistance in job search strategies and resume writing by appointment or by chance.

The library wins because career information is a natural fit and an expansion of our information role and support of life-long learning roles. We have found that staff at those branches where there is a Centre have upgraded their reference skills to support the types of questions which are asked. Again we are attracting different customers.

### **What have we learned?**

- **Information skills of library staff are highly valued.** The funders value the quality of the service provided by library staff. We were pleased that an evaluation of results of the various Career Centres throughout the city determined that library staff provided the better quality service than that offered by other longer-term service providers.
- **Core Values must remain constant.** We learned that we will not override our core values, even if it means a loss of funds resulting in our inability to provide a service. As mentioned earlier, we have become good at managing expectations. But this grant provided a challenge because the funder wanted us not only to collect information about the clients but also to offer the service only to specific client groups. -- a conflict with our principles of confidentiality and inclusiveness. We explained that we could not provide this service if these were conditions of the grant and these expectations were withdrawn. We were able to negotiate a way of meeting their needs without violating our core values.

### **The Hamilton Wentworth District School Board**

We have worked for many years with the public school Board to address student needs in many ways. Recently we signed a formal partnership agreement that outlined all of the ways in which the two organizations cooperated, our shared responsibilities, and when each organization would take the lead responsibility. By doing this, the value that the library brings to the local public schools is clearly articulated and understood.

### **What we learned?**

- **Create value.** The power of this collaboration came from combining partners' core competencies in mutually reinforcing ways. For example, in this partnership it was agreed that the Public Library would take the lead role in providing electronic information resources (including negotiation of the leasing arrangements), thereby, freeing the schools to focus on other areas.

- **The process of talking is as important as the end result.** We have observed that the starting point of a partnership is the tendency to talk about what can be done for each partner, as opposed to what can be done together. It is only as both sides communicate their issues, and share a common language that the areas of mutual benefit and concern can be identified. When this happens, the synergy of the partnership is at its most powerful, as the next partnership will illustrate.

## **Multicultural Early Learning Initiatives (MELD)**

MELD is a family literacy project planned and implemented by eleven community partners. It is intended to reach new immigrant families and provide parents with support for their children's early learning and school readiness. MELD is supported by dual<sup>1</sup> language family workbooks, accessible dual language collections and family programs. A group of teachers developed a workbook based upon five school readiness skills for parents and children to work with at home. Library staff then hold programs in the schools to encourage parents and children to participate in the program. At these sessions, parents and children are encouraged to complete one activity from the workbook together and each child receives a book bag and a sticker sheet. Parents and children are also encouraged to visit the local library. When a child completes the five activities, the child returns the workbook to the school where these are displayed. Teachers also encourage the children and their parents to visit the library and they make library card applications available in any of the project's six languages.

## **What we learned?**

- **Use your Community's strengths to address issues.** This is a project that neither the school board nor the library could do on their own. It needed the knowledge and support of the local immigrant community to identify the specific needs of the various cultures, and provide translation assistance. This is a partnership of partnerships since such diverse groups as SISO (Settlement and Immigration Services) CATCH (Community Access to Child Health) and CAPC (Community Access Programs for Children) enabled this project to focus on very specific needs of a vulnerable clientele.

## **The Summer Reading Clubs**

We partner with several organizations to offer various Summer Reading Clubs. The catalyst for this is both library and community driven. The program has grown so fast that we cannot keep up the demand and we need to fundraise to offer the program. But it is also community-driven because there are many organizations who like to give funds to support children and reading.

I am sure you are all aware of the benefits and values of the Library's summer reading programs and our experiences are no different. We have run this program for more than 35 years. There are four different reading clubs for readers, reluctant readers, teens and

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<sup>1</sup> Languages include Urdu, Vietnamese, French, Portuguese, Turkish and Punjabi. These were selected by the participating schools.



preschoolers with over 10,000 participants. We hire over 30 students each summer to run the programs. We introduced an adult reading club this summer.

We call the various donors 'partners' but this partnership is more closely related to the sponsorship and fundraising model. Partners include: a bank, several chapters of a local service club, the federal government Summer Work experience grants, a book distributor, media partners, social agencies, some individual donors, and local businesses.

### **What we learned?**

- **Show the BIG picture.** We learned it was far more effective to package the results and then show each partner its contributions to the whole rather than to show only their specific contribution. For example, when we showed the federal department that they partially funded 30+ summer positions (not the six fully-funded positions as initially contracted), they were able to use this information as leverage to obtain additional funding for summer jobs in public libraries in subsequent years.
- **Build relationships.** Donor recognition is very important and is very labour intensive. This annual process requires multiple presentations, reports, thank you cards from participants, letters from pleased parents, etc. for each partner both throughout and at the conclusion of the program. This is time-consuming but absolutely necessary to keep an ongoing commitment. If you choose to fundraise for ongoing programs, recognize that there can be as much work in the ongoing care of donors as there is in running the program itself. Unless you have a department or foundation to support your fundraising objectives it is not possible to use fundraising to support many ongoing programs at one time.

### **The Hamilton Spectator**

I am including this next partnership because it was one of the few that the Library actively cultivated. The *Hamilton Spectator* is the local newspaper and has been a library partner for several years. Each year we sign an agreement in which they give us over \$50,000 free advertising to support various library initiatives. In return, they are the major partner for several annual events such as:

- The *Power of the Pen* – the annual Teen writing contest in its eleventh year
- The Summer Reading Club programs
- The first *One Book, One City* promotion in 2004.

This relationship took a long time to cultivate. Initially, we asked them to assist in many smaller initiatives to build trust and demonstrate how we had similar interests and values. We encouraged personal contact (e.g. to judge a children's book mark contest) and provided opportunities for them to meet the clientele of the program they were supporting. We never asked for free advertising for our core business, but made sure we purchased some advertising each year. We asked their sales department to sell newspapers at our annual book sale. Gradually, as the number of initiatives in which they were participating grew, they asked us to sit down and talk about a more formal relationship. We then became one of approximately six organizations which they formally support as a community partner.

## What did we learn?

- **Meet the needs of the sponsor.** Media organizations have very specific guidelines about who they will partner with and for what purpose. Generally, they have a statement of purpose that relates to their business plan. When making a case for their sponsorship, (i.e. partnership) it is important to pay particular attention to their needs and expectations. For example, since it is important to the Spectator that their auditorium be used, we organized the opening reception for the *One Book, One City* initiative there, instead of the Library.
- **Recognize what business they are in.** One important factor to remember is that the local paper is in the advertising business. We ensure that we purchase significant advertising space and that we don't ask for free coverage for something we should be paying for. If we were not also a client, it would be unlikely that we receive as much free advertising as we do.

## The City of Hamilton

This partnership is unusual because we actively seek out ways in which we can partner with the City<sup>2</sup> for various initiatives to strengthen the relationship and build trust and credibility. This has created an environment which ensures high support for the library's budget at the annual budget review.

## What did we learn?

- **Help find solutions for their problems.** After amalgamation, the city was faced with a large workforce that needed to be relocated downtown, and yet at the same time, it could not increase costs with more commercial rentals. The Library proposed that we relocate the Technical Services department to another city facility, thus freeing prime space in the Central Library for use by the City. As a result, the City relocated its Information Technology department to the Central Library, saving the city over \$500,000 annually but more importantly the synergy of this move has resulted in a number of other opportunities.
- **Showcase the talents and skills of your Library, even if there is no immediate payoff.** We regularly 'volunteer' staff expertise when it can be helpful to a city department. For example:
  - We loaned a librarian to a city dept. to organize the content for the opening of the new City Call Centre.
  - Library staff edited a report for City Council in which various departments assessed the state of the City to ensure a common voice and consistent levels of information.
  - The Library developed a reference collection of library materials to support a City-operated employment centre. We purchased, processed and included this centre in the Library's Catalogue to raise awareness of the Centre.

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<sup>2</sup> In Ontario, The Public Library Act mandates that public libraries are independent organizations operating under the direction of a Board of Directors with funding provided by the local municipality.

The next two partnerships show what can happen when the Library provides the vision. Both of these partnerships resulted in success far beyond what was first believed possible.

### **Hamilton-Wentworth Information Network**

In the early 1990's the Library established the Hamilton Wentworth Information Network, consisting of representatives of the Boards of Education, Mohawk College, McMaster University, and the Library in order to discuss the sharing of information resources. At first, the initiatives focused on collection issues, but very quickly it moved to connectivity issues. The group's goal, expanded to include the City and local business, was to build a strong electronic network. Under the leadership of this group, **all** public buildings such as city facilities, recreation centres, fire halls, schools, libraries (including those in distant rural communities), the college and the university are connected by fibre cable and there is a direct T10 Internet cable that connects Hamilton to Toronto for the exclusive use of these partners. All of this was done with operating funds, at a fraction of the cost had it been done individually and in an uncoordinated manner. And, as we like to show our visitors, the network support equipment is located in the Central Library, a symbol of the lead role the library played in this initiative.

### **What did we learn?**

- **Lead with your knowledge and your vision.** The Library was able to use its leading-edge knowledge of the information business to address a city-wide issue. It expanded the vision to ensure that all public buildings, not just libraries, had good quality, high-speed electronic connections. It made it work by planning and building the network with other partners to ensure that the network was not only robust but also cost-effective, as this cooperative approach greatly reduced the initial costs. This positioned the city and the Library to provide services in dramatically different ways.

### **MyHamilton.ca: The Community Portal**

The newest, the most exciting, and possibly the most challenging of all of our partnerships is the new Hamilton community portal. We believe that in part, this partnership was made possible because of the mutual respect for the skills of library and city staff in the technology and information area. It also builds on the work of a number of earlier partnership initiatives such as the Business Information Network, and an earlier website called PICHamilton (Public Information Centre Hamilton) which searches and indexes information from the partners of the HWIN network, the business network, and community non-profit groups.

When the portal for the City of Hamilton launches this fall, it will provide a common interface and navigation for all city, library and community organizations and will replace several other sources of information such as PICHamilton. It will enable the public to interact and conduct business remotely. It will be a one-stop source of information about any service, need, or program that exists in the city. There will be an e-commerce aspect that will enable customers to buy dog licenses, pay their taxes and eventually, even their library fines on-line.

We are particularly excited by the design of the portal's interface. On each page, there will be a link to both the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Public Library. On the right hand side of the page related information from our collections will be highlighted each time someone searches the site. For example, if someone is searching for information about day care providers, the main window will provide information about the day care centres. However, since the portal will provide consolidated searching, related material from the library's collections – from books to on-line resources – will be shown on the right hand side of the same search screen. In this way, the library resources can be truly integrated into the lives of our residents. We believe this is a first for public libraries – others have portals – but none of which we are aware have their catalogue/ electronic databases so highly profiled.

There will be opportunities for community discussions groups, for forums on various topics, and space for non-profit organizations to participate. The Library is championing and guiding the community's access to, and use of, the tools the portal provides.

Library staff members are heavily involved in the portal's development. For example, a library manager (paid by the library) was seconded to the project for a full year to lead the project. In addition to the development of the community information portion, as noted above, we are involved in content management. The Library's own website is being redesigned to fit with the portal, and front-line library staff will be trained to assist the public to use the many features.

### **What did we learn?**

- A group of teachers from the school boards developed workbooks based upon five school readiness skills for parents and children to work with at home. will be many because of the scope and the technical challenges.

### **The Hamilton Tiger Cats**

I am going to end with our newest partnership – which started just last year and is certainly one of the most fun partnerships that we have. The Tiger Cats are the local Canadian Football League team. The team was recently bought by a former Hamiltonian, Bob Young, who would be known to many of you as the founder of Red Hat, a software company. He hired a young and ambitious marketing team to renew the franchise and boost attendance, and so the marketing director approached the library to do a joint promotion.

We pitched a number of ideas for their support and they chose the Summer Reading Club as their major focus because its demographics met their target audience. The Ticats arranged to give each child who joined one of the summer reading clubs two free tickets for a game. Last summer the library gave out over 20,000 free tickets. But it didn't stop there.

They also made and distributed posters of football players reading to kids in the library. There was a promotional day where the players worked at the circulation desk to help "sign out" materials. They included the library in all of their promotional materials such as tray mats at the local fast food restaurants "because it doesn't cost us anything and it is for a good cause." They made one game night, "the Hamilton Public Library night" and made a promotional video of the library to show before the game, and during half-time. In

addition, they reduced ticket prices for library staff and gave a half-price admission to anyone who donated a children's book that evening.

### **What did we learn?**

- **Customers grow up and will remember you, and in ways that you can't anticipate.** We learned later that the Marketing Director who approached us had fond memories of libraries from his childhood. He was a former reading club participant and his mother was a teacher! So keep up the good work.
- **Partnerships follow the game analogy. There is a team, there are objectives, there are communications, except at the end of the night Everyone wins!** This partnership provided a "win-win" for both partners. Attendance at the games soared and it became such a family activity that beer sales slipped. Fortunately, this was offset by increased food revenue. As for the impact on the summer reading program - we were especially pleased to find not only an increase in the number of boys ages 10 – 12 yrs old who participated, but that they each read more books than in previous years.
- **Partnerships that celebrate libraries and literacy are fun and engaging.** So select your game. Choose your team. Practice and play hard. Show your appreciation. Celebrate the results.

**Thank you.**