

Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library, Tracy Branch (via Stella Beratlis, edited)

- Located in western San Joaquin County, part of the Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library system, Tracy is geographically distant from the county seat.
- As part of its strategic plan, the Tracy Library was developing programs and outreach to engage and empower its diverse community.
- Through Harwood community conversations, the library found that safety and homelessness were issues of concern for residents and nonprofit agencies. Nonprofits felt isolated from other programs offering services to the homeless community; participants in community conversations sensed there was duplication of services and piecemeal efforts to address homelessness. Safety concerns were frequently framed in terms of the homeless “problem”.
- As a result of the conversation, representatives of public agencies, faith-based organizations, and individuals, who were interested in addressing issues around homelessness, convened at the Tracy Library in January 2017. They formed working groups to tackle various issues such as housing, social services, law enforcement, and food service.
- The coalition has already seen results. A directory of daily hot meals served by local churches and organizations was established. A regional 211 social services directory has added additional local services so that callers have access to referrals in Tracy. But most significantly, there has been greater participation in the coalition by the homeless and people in transition themselves. As a result of the coalition’s activities, participants feel much more connected to the community and each other. And there is a sense that the coalition’s advocacy around homelessness has the potential to be heard and acted upon by local government officials and nonprofit partners.

Corona Public Library (via Sarah Nolan, edited)

- Corona, California is a diverse bedroom community located at the intersection of three major counties: Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside.
- This is the second year that the Corona Library and Recreation Department is

including an Adaptive Summer Reading Program in its Summer Fest events at the Corona Public Library. The recreation side of Corona's Library and Recreation Department also offers a flourishing Adaptive Recreation Program. In the past, the library and recreation departments did not offer competing programs because they believe this sends a mixed message to the same population.

- The Turning Outward practice made library staff reconsider this long standing assumption and motivated them to ask the disability community before making this year's Summer Fest event programming decisions.
- Library staff spoke to three groups about their aspirations for this year's Summer Fest activities: patrons who participated in last year's Summer Fest, people in group homes, and day program coaches. Staff discovered that some people are assigned to library programs while others are assigned to recreation activities at another facility, and individuals are not allowed to switch schedules. By offering two programs at the same time and at different locations, the Corona Library and Recreation Department is actually making it possible for more people to take part in Summer Fest.
- Harwood's Turning Outward practice has taught the library the importance of not making assumptions about the community, and to listen and act on what they learn in order to be more impactful.

San Jose Public Library (via Addie Rogers, edited)

- San José is the largest city in California's famed Silicon Valley, but its community faces many of the same everyday challenges that other cities do.
- Like many libraries, SJPL has children's activities that center around reading. As is often the case, these activities appeared to be meeting the community's needs.
- But librarians speculated that there might be community members who were not being served by the library's current programs.
- Librarians asked participants of its "Learn and Play" program to stay after the regular activities for 30 minutes (over the course of several weeks) to answer

questions and discuss community-related issues. During these abbreviated Harwood community conversations, many of the participants expressed their aspirations to have a safe place for their children to develop literacy skills. San José has a large immigrant population, but the majority of the programs and services offered are for adults.

- After their community conversation, San José created a program specifically for children ages 9-12 that would enable them to learn and practice English. This led to the creation of the library's "Leer es Poder/ Reading is Power" program, which is a weekly bilingual book club that is offered on a weekly basis. The library saw immediate interest in the community and were able to get about 15 families to participate in the program. The participants got the opportunity to practice their English, both reading and writing, while also interacting with others their same age in a safe environment. Now, the library is looking to expand the program to include more concepts such as math and science.

Santa Barbara Public Library (via Lisa Gonzales, edited)

- Located in Santa Barbara, CA, the "American Riviera" on California's Central Coast, a city with a thriving tourist industry and many first-generation Spanish-speaking immigrant families
- The library regularly invited local elected officials to a feelgood "achievement" event to congratulate children who had completed a library after-school program. Staff would chat cordially with officials after the event, voicing the need for family literacy programs.
- In spite of these positive interactions with officials, librarians lacked compelling evidence with which to demonstrate opportunities within the community and advocate for new programs.
- During Harwood community conversations, the library found that many Spanish-speaking immigrants were fearful of deportation and felt disconnected and invisible in the community. Immigrants were not aware of efforts within the English-speaking community to show support and assist them with legal issues. At a subsequent achievement event, library staff shared this newly-gathered public knowledge with elected officials.
- Elected officials were interested and impressed that library staff had gathered

this information that highlighted unexpected information gaps within the community. So it remains to be seen how this knowledge will be used by public officials, the library staff was able to advocate for the community from a position of authority on the community's needs.

Placentia Library District (via Jeanette Contreras, edited)

- Located in Placentia, CA, a diverse city of 50,000 in northern Orange County.
- Staff began having their Harwood community conversations in a low income, high gang area. This took them out of their comfort zone but they've found they are ok with this. Going beyond their comfort zone opened them up to others and they've gotten to know their community better.
- They went into the conversations in this area assuming the library should probably provide resources and education. They learned in the conversations that the community needed the library to be something else. In the conversations they discovered that neighborhood safety, above all else, was a dominant and urgent need of the community. Staff learned that the community lives in daily fear for the safety of their children and families. Members of the community felt isolated and ignored by city officials. There is a "no snitching" culture that makes it difficult to report crimes. As a result, people were reluctant to speak up for fear of retaliation against their children. When asked what might improve the situation, people said things like fixing light fixtures and having more police presence during the afterschool hours would improve the situation.
- They discovered in the conversations that the community needed the library to be a connector between the community and those that can help the community feel safe.
- The library is now moving forward on being the vital connection between the community and local government. Staff plans on being accountable to that community and will set realistic expectations and report back to the families about the progress being made.