mySummer Sparks Imagination at Anythink

ANYTHINK LAUNCHES NEW SUMMER PROGRAM
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A Letter From the Director

“What is the fatal charm of Italy? What do we find there that can be found nowhere else? I believe it is a certain permission to be human, which other places, other countries, lost long ago.”

– Erica Jong

This summer for many of the staff of the Rangeview Library District is consumed with opening our new Anythink Wright Farms and our summer programs. Since vacation is just a figment of my imagination, I plan to invent an experience as part of my Summer. My “staycation” looks like this:

One of my favorite places to travel is Italy, and I can invent a staycation without even updating my passport. My package might include some classic movies – Room with a View, Tea with Mussolini, Big Night – or a recent film, Letters to Juliet. On my reading list: Francesca’s Kitchen by Peter Pezzilli and Vanilla Beans and Brodo: Real Life in the Hills of Tuscany by Isabella Dusi. Next is planning a wonderful dinner for good friends. Maybe I’ll include our favorite Bolognese recipe, fresh fruit from the farmers market and for dessert, an Italian cherry croustade. One of my favorite little medieval Tuscan hill towns is Montepulciano, where they grow an amazing grape that they use to make Vino Nobile. So, I’ll find a lovely wine from Montepulciano to go with our meal. We will sit outside, and it will seem as if we are in our favorite place in the Chianti region of Tuscany, overlooking the vineyards and the Tuscan cypress, listening to the quiet evening where all you can hear is the occasional dog bark.

And this is just the beginning as my Summer ideas begin to take hold. I hope you all are planning your summer as well.

The possibilities are endless....

Pam Sandlian Smith

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Find Your Happy Place

For everyone it’s something different – watching streetlights flicker on, the feeling of bare feet in cool grass or eating Otter Pops on a hot front porch. It can be a scent, a feeling, a sound that takes you right back to summer. Anythink’s new summer experience aims to do just that – transport participants to their happy place.

mySummer

In 2009, Rangeview Library District reinvented itself by launching the Anythink brand and establishing a new philosophy for its libraries based on the idea that a library can be a place of play, discovery and exploration as much as it is a house for books. As part of the district’s transformation, even the most coveted library conventions are reexamined, and one question is asked – how does the customer benefit from the experience?

The point of summer reading programs has always been to maintain reading levels for students between school years, and public libraries have always been integral in making that happen. Yet what the Anythink guides decided was that fast food coupons and plastic prizes were no motivation for reading. They believe that customers deserved more and that by tapping into the imaginations of people of all ages, Anythink could inspire everyone to read.

“Summer reading programs have been the same for the past 50 years. You read books, mark a tally and return to the library for some sort of prize. In keeping with the nature of Anythink, it was time to change summer reading into a more engaging experience,” says family services director Lynda Freas.

mySummer: Read Think Do is based on a simple concept – partici-

mySummer has begun at Anythink and runs until July 31 district-wide. Corey Douglas (8), left, and Shawn Owens (10) play in the sandbox at Anythink Huron Street, part of the “Staycation” experience.
pants can read a book, watch a movie or listen to music, think about what they’ve read, seen or heard and go out into the world and do something with that knowledge. As the mission statement says, “we open doors for curious minds”; mySummer’s goal is to pique the customer’s curiosity, inspiring them to continue on their own explorations.

Power to the People

So, how’s it work? With mySummer, reading isn’t required, it’s encouraged, and the program is open to people of all ages. There’s no official sign-up. There are no weekly prizes. Instead, there are over 150+ hands-on programs scheduled district-wide for all ages all summer long. The “prizes” are the incredible memories created at these fun, interactive programs and a beautiful, reusable scrapbook for anyone who wants to participate. The desire is for people to use the scrapbook year after year to record their summer adventures – at the library, on vacation or at home.

To receive a scrapbook, customers fill out their mySummer plan. There’s a place to list books they want to read, ideas they want to explore and the programs they want to attend. This allows participants to set their own goals and really think about how they can make the most out of their summer with the tools Anythink provides.

Once the itinerary page is turned in, customers receive their mySummer scrapbook. The scrapbook is something that can be filled as a family or individually – it’s up to the customer. Inside are pages to list books, ideas, drawings, photos and more.

Imagination Vacation

The focus of mySummer 2010 is destinations – real or imaginary. Each branch focuses on a different theme every two weeks, from Staycation or Fantasy Worlds to Back to Nature or Mysteries of the Universe. Programs during those two weeks are designed around each theme. For instance, during Fantasy Worlds, families can participate in a Mad Hatter Tea Party; during Back to Nature, adults can learn about composting during Worms to the Rescue.

“The idea is to transport people to another world while they’re right here at the library,” says Stacie Ledden, writer/editor for the district and co-chair of the mySummer committee. “We know that a lot of people can’t afford to take exotic – or even small – vacations this summer, so we wanted to inspire them through imagination.”

Daring, Unique, Fun – Check!

Earlier this year, creative consultant John Bellina of Ricochet Ideas met with the guides to brainstorm about programming. Tough questions were asked – was the old way of doing things the right way? How can we make a more positive impact on our customers? It was through these discussions that the guides decided to reinvent summer reading.

“The idea to revamp summer reading came from the staff and managers,” says director Pam Sandlian Smith. “We have been reconstituting summer reading over and over for decades, and it was time to take a step back and examine our goals and outcomes. The staff were looking for something much more meaningful as they engaged in programming for the summer.”

The group created a list of criteria they would use to develop programming moving forward. From these, the mySummer committee went even further to define what summer programs should look like. These criteria included things like “evolves reading from skills to experiences,” “experience-driven,” “engaging for staff as well as customers,” “exciting for families and individuals,” and so on. Each program was evaluated so that it met these criteria.

“A group of guides representing the Sarah Heiderstadt gets her hair done by students from the Aveda Institute prior to Anythink Bennett’s Project Runway: 2050 event for mySummer.
different branches joined with members from the communications and admin teams to create the mySummer committee. This group worked together to develop the mySummer program.

“The most rewarding part has been the collaboration with colleagues,” says Schmidt. “We have come up with some amazing, exciting and engaging programs that will connect with our customers. We have set the stage for transformation.”

Summer and Beyond

Due to the success of mySummer thus far, the guides and administration have decided to use this formula for all programs moving forward.

“mySummer programming has become the model for all of our programs. It starts with creating opportunities for people to explore the world of ideas,” says Smith.

“I’ve been impressed with the positive response,” says Schmidt. “We had 125 people doing a scavenger hunt at Anythink Huron Street’s Bon Voyage party. The next day, 36 teens made ice cream at Brain Freeze. We followed that up with 40 adults for Spa Night. The programs are well attended at all age levels. Also, people like the scrapbooks. They are willing to do the extra work to get them because they’re so beautiful.

“I have yet to hear a single person complain that we have no plastic frogs.”

For more information about mySummer or to find out about upcoming programs, visit anythinklibraries.org/mysummer.

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New Books: Check ’Em Out

Celebrate the dog days of summer with great new titles about your favorite pet available this month at Anythink.

**Adult**

*The Search* by Nora Roberts

**Children/Teen**

*The Fast and the Furriest* by Andy Behrens

*Calvin Coconut: Dog Heaven* by Graham Salisbury

*Strike Three Marley: Based on the Books by John Grogan* by Susan Hill

*Hip Hop Dog* by Chris Raschka

*Smells Like Dog* by Suzanne Seldof

*Dog Boy* by Eva Hornung

*Scent of the Missing: Love and Partnership with a Search-and-Rescue Dog* by Susannah Charleson

*Nose Down, Eyes Up: A Novel* by Merrill Markoe
Brian Hall, branch president at Valley Bank and Trust, is secretary of the Rangeview Library Friends Foundation that was formed in 2009. “I like being involved and meeting new people,” says Hall.

Fun Sometimes Comes In Serious Packages

As a branch president with Valley Bank and Trust, Brian Hall’s job is to work with numbers. He’s a finance guy with a knack for community relationships, but beyond the numbers is a guy with a sense of adventure and fun. That’s what makes him an integral part of the recently formed Rangeview Library Friends Foundation Board.

Born in Flint, Mich., Hall moved with his family to Colorado when he was very young. His father worked for the Flint Golf and Country Club, but when it closed down, he was tapped for a position helping to open and manage the Pioneer Country Club just south of Denver. Hall was raised in Littleton and attended Bear Creek High School. His older brother and sister still live in Colorado. “I’m the baby,” he says.

After a year at community college, Hall attended Western State University in Gunnison, Colo., where he received an athletic scholarship for skiing. He skied competitively throughout high school and college. Alpine skiing is still a favorite pastime for Hall and his family. Water skiing was also a favorite for Hall growing up. His father leased Soda Lake, which is now Bear Creek Lake, so that Hall and the Foothills Water Club could train. Hall’s dad charged locals to use the lake while the club wasn’t building jumps and practicing. One year, they were even hired to do a water ski show at Lakeside Amusement Park. Hall and his club mates dressed up as clowns and put on a performance with tricks and all to the delight of the crowds.

Hall has always had a sense of adventure, whether it was on the slopes or in the water. In his younger days, one of his biggest adventures was
a biking trip from San Francisco to Buffalo, N.Y. Inspired by his brother who biked from Colorado to the Pacific Northwest, Hall and a friend started at the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco on their 10-speeds and biked across the northern half of the U.S., stopping to visit friends and family along the way, but mostly camping or staying at the occasional youth hostel. Hall remembers the trip fondly, and says he’d love to do something like that again. “But I’d have to get back in shape,” he laughs.

Outdoors is still where Hall spends most of his time when not working or volunteering. He plays tennis in the Thornton Tennis Association league, plays golf, rides bikes, or takes trips with his family to the mountains. His wife of 27 years, Susan, works part-time as a chiropractic assistant in Broomfield. They have two daughters: Tiffany, 23, works for Kraft Foods in the Denver area; and Lexie, 21, will be a senior this fall at UNC, earning her degree in nutrition.

Besides the outdoors, giving back to his community has always been a constant in Hall’s life. After graduating from college, he traveled for a year with the organization Up with People, whose mission is to “spark people to action in meeting the needs of their communities, countries and the world while building bridges of understanding as a foundation for world peace.” More recently, Hall received the 2002 Volunteer of the Year Award from the Broomfield Chamber of Commerce, where he served on the board. He has also served on the board of the Bal Swan Children’s Center and the Broomfield Economic Development Corporation, and is past president and a member of the Broomfield Optimist Club.

“I like being involved and meeting new people,” he says. “You never know where business is going to come from.” Recently, Hall presented a scholarship from Valley Bank to a local student. At the ceremony, he provided a “little snippet” about the company. Several days later, a gentleman called to say he’d been in the audience that night and liked what Hall said about the company. The man came into the bank and set up a business account. He’s been back since to set up his personal accounts as well – all from one snippet and a good cause.

“You try to give back, try to stay involved with the community,” says Hall. That’s what drove his interest in being part of the Rangeview Library Friends Foundation Board. It’s also a great way to give back to one of his customers, the Rangeview Library District. “We like to do things to help our business customers as well.”

The Foundation board is currently working on its first big project, its inaugural fundraising event scheduled for September. Called “Sparkopolis,” the Anythink-style party will raise money to fund the district’s collaborative public art projects and is being held at the district’s new Anythink Wright Farms library, which opens to the public July 10. Hall says that Anythink resonates with people because “it’s unique and different,” and Sparkopolis will too.

“I’m glad to be a part of this first event,” he says. He hopes that it will set the standard for future events, so the foundation can continue to...
Events Not to Miss

Pottermania!

Pottermania! is back this summer at Anythink. Wizard rockstars ALL CAPS, The Whomping Willows, The Moaning Myrtles and more will perform. Guests get a chance to participate in an interactive videocast between sets, discussing all things Harry Potter.

Wednesday, June 30, 5 pm
Anythink Huron Street
9417 Huron Street
Thornton, CO 80206

Anythink Wright Farms Grand Opening Celebration

“Freedom to Dream: Honoring Ideas Sparked in Libraries Since 1776”

From the first free library to the opening of Anythink Wright Farms, thousands of ideas have been sparked at public libraries. One thing has remained constant – the library is for everyone. As Anythink continues its revolution in library service with the opening of Wright Farms, we look back at the many revolutionary ideas and innovations throughout history. Enjoy interactive displays, living history, refreshments and more during this fabulous summer celebration.

Saturday, July 10, 2010, 1-6 pm
Anythink Wright Farms
5877 E. 120th Ave.
Thornton, CO 80602

*Bring your blankets and picnic baskets to enjoy on the lawn during the concert.

For a complete listing of Anythink events, visit anythinklibraries.org

raise money for the district. “Annual fundraisers can do a lot. You build anticipation and people will remember and want to come back next year.” Hall and his fellow board members are planning a party that’s very different from what you might expect from other fundraisers. “There are so many of these types of events. If you create something unique people will be talking about it, and it will bring more people into the library.

“It has to have that Anythink flair,” he says. One of the “unique and different” features of Sparkopolis will be the food. Local chef Ian Kleinman, founder of the Inventing Room and nationally renowned leader in molecular gastronomy, is catering the event. Interactive food stations will be set up throughout the space for people to play with food and experience something different from the usual fundraising gala. “Ian’s definitely the right guy,” says Hall, who recently had a tasting with the chef where he created banana splits using liquid nitrogen.

When you’re crunching numbers and dealing with finances, it’s easy to get caught up in the daily grind, but Hall tries to remember to “stop and smell the roses.” Although he’s obviously an adventurer at heart, Hall says he’s considered a more serious guy. Yet it’s his serious dedication to his community and his industry which has made him successful – and it’s his enthusiastic spirit that makes him an Anythinker.