spark

Anythink Launches Garden Project



spark

Library Director

Pam Sandlian Smith psmith@anythinklibraries.org

Communications Manager

Stacie Ledden sledden@anythinklibraries.org

Graphic Designer

Mary Thelen mthelen@anythinklibraries.org

Spark is what's created when Anythink customers walk into our libraries – it's a spark of creativity, of imagination and interest. Anythinkers offer the fuel.

Published quarterly, Spark is available at any Anythink library.

Cover photo: The Anythink Garden Project launches this spring at Anythink Commerce City and Perl Mack. Reserve your plot today.

How to Reach Us

303.288.2001

Questions? Comments? Email us at iThink@anythinklibraries.org

Find Your Local Anythink

Anythink Bennett

495 7th Street • Bennett, CO 80102 303.644.3303

Anythink Brighton

327 E. Bridge Street • Brighton, CO 80601 303.659.2572

Anythink Commerce City

7185 Monaco Street • Commerce City, CO 80022 303.287.0063

Anythink Huron Street

9417 Huron Street • Thornton, CO 80260 303.452.7534

Anythink Perl Mack

temporarily closed for renovations reopens Spring 2011

Anythink Washington Street

8992 Washington Street • Thornton, CO80229 303.287.2514

Anythink Wright Farms

5877 E. 120th Avenue • Thornton, CO 80602 303.405.3200

Outreach/Anythink in Motion

8992 Washington Street • Thornton, CO 80229

Visit us at Anythinklibraries.org.

A Letter From the Director

People ask me what I do in winter when there's no baseball. I'll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring.

- Rogers Hornsby

As the thought of spring tantalizes us, the excitement of our community gardens at both the Commerce City and Perl Mack libraries becomes closer to reality. It is time to think about getting our hands dirty and time to look through the seed catalogs. It is time to begin dreaming about some delicious heirloom tomatoes, zucchini, corn, arugula, baby carrots and peppers. There might be space in our garden for some marigolds, zinnia and cosmos.

When the idea of having community gardens at our libraries was first pitched by our director of public services, Ronnie Storey-Ewoldt, it seemed like a natural fit. After a few meetings with Denver Urban Gardens, the idea seemed like something that we might actually be able to accomplish. We had enough land at both Anythink Commerce City and Perl Mack, and they were in the beginning stages of renovation so we could incorporate the plans for the gardens into the landscaping. When Rangeview Library District was awarded the Community Putting



Reserve your plot today.

Prevention to Work community gardens grant from Tri-County Health Department, we were a step further in achieving this idea.

A community garden at a library? It seems like a natural for Anythink. Our libraries are more than places to check out books. Anythink is a partner in helping people lead successful lives. A community garden is the perfect place to start. We can learn about growing our food, about sustainable gardening, what works in Colorado and what doesn't. How to grow from seed, when to get started. Then we will till the soil together, get our hands dirty together. Help each other throughout the season as we encounter issues we cannot predict.

see page 8

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Anythink Grows	3
NewBooks: Check'Em Out	5
Faces of Anythink	6
Events Not To Be Missed	8

Anythink Grows: Building Community One Garden At A Time



Gardening has been a passion of the Anythink Commerce City staff since before the community garden project was planned. Last spring, staff and volunteers planted flowers in anticipation of this spring's community gardens.

Last year, Denver Urban Gardens planted its 100th garden in the metro Denver area. And yet, this spring they are helping Anythink to launch the first of their community gardens ever hosted at a public library.

"We found ourselves asking, 'Why has it taken so long?" says Shannon Spurlock, community initiatives coordinator with DUG.

Anythink enlisted the help of the organization to plan and promote the Anythink Garden Project, launching this spring at Anythink's Commerce City and Perl Mack libraries.

The Anythink Garden Project is the brainchild of public services director

Ronnie Storey-Ewoldt and Anythink Commerce City manager Deborah Hogue. They were at a meeting together in February 2009, along with representatives from DUG, Adams County Food Distribution and members of the slow food movement when the topic of community gardens came up.

"Deborah and I looked at each other thinking the exact same thing," says Storey-Ewoldt.

Commerce City is considered somewhat of a "food desert," she says.
There aren't any farmers' markets or many places to buy fresh, inexpensive produce. Plans for Anythink Commerce City's addition and reno-

vations were in the works, and they knew there was undesignated space available that would be perfect for a community garden.

"It seemed like libraries and community gardens would be a natural fit," she says. They took their idea to Anythink director Pam Sandlian Smith, who loved it, having always been intrigued by Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard. Because Perl Mack would eventually have similar space available, a garden was planned for that location, too.

The enthusiasm for this project was there, but funding needed to be secured before they could move forward. Luckily, the project qualified for a Tri-County Health Department grant as part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative. Anythink was one of several recipients of grants to support projects that promote healthy living in Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas counties.

Once the grant was approved, Anythink turned to the experts for help.

Know Your Community

"Our mission is to build community - one garden at a time," says Spurlock. DUG's role has been to work with library staff on leading community meetings and informing potential participants about the responsibilities of maintaining a community plot. Michael Buchenau, executive director of

see page 4

SPARK • March 25, 2011 PAGE 3



Anythink Perl Mack guide Rene Bohn preparing seed balls at the Anythink Commerce City Debut on November 13. 2010.

from page 3

DUG and a landscape architect, has helped by working with Anythink's project manager to design the physical space of the gardens.

Assessment of a potential garden location "starts with knowing your community," says Spurlock. "Is this something the community will benefit from?" Next, DUG assesses the space: What are the social and physical elements? Is it a place where people naturally gather? Is there room for multiple plots?

When organizing community gardens, Spurlock says that ideally there are a handful of people who are interested in participating in their organization. They are typically the ones who take the reins in deciding who's in what plot and identifying workdays when people tend the gardens together.

DUG is now helping Anythink coordinate community volunteer work-

days. Even if a community member does not have a plot in the garden, they can help with other tasks like creating pathways, building raised beds or prepping the soil.

"This increases buy-in from the community," she says. Details of the upcoming workdays will be announced by late April.

She sited important research by Dr. Jill Litt of the Colorado School of Public Health that says communities that do have gardens receive more positive feedback from their residents, and even people not involved in the gardens consider them special features in their communities.

Spurlock lauded the Anythink Commerce City staff for its grassroots awareness campaign. They've been talking with friends and neighbors about the gardens on a one-on-one basis, "spreading the word in an organic way," she says. Both libraries have also made a concerted effort to ensure a bilingual representative is present at all the community meetings.

As the district gets closer to opening Anythink Perl Mack in May, the staff there will begin their own outreach. Anet Martinez, manager of Anythink Perl Mack, says, "I think people will be inspired to become involved and take pride in the garden. They'll see it as a focal point in the neighborhood and want to participate. It will allow neighbors to interact and get to know one another."

Read, Think, Eat

While fresh food and affordable access are important roles of community gardens, the idea behind the

Anythink Garden Project is to focus 50 percent on food production and 50 percent on community building, says Storey-Ewoldt.

"These gardens will be a place for gardening and harvesting, but they will also be where community is created," she says. Her vision is that people in the neighborhood will stop by and say hello while gardeners are out working in their plots. She notes that people typically "do more of what they see," so seeing people working the garden will encourage more folks to be curious and possibly start their own gardens.

Her ultimate goal for the Anythink Garden Project is to have it fully managed and sustained by the community.



If plots don't get filled, "We'll grow strawberries," says Storey-Ewoldt.

She is currently taking a master community gardener course through Denver Urban Gardens. The most important thing that she's learned so far is that it takes time and patience to not only plant a garden, but to develop a community garden.

"It's not like you throw a seed in the ground today and get a carrot next week," she says. Developing a community garden doesn't happen over night. "There are seasons to it; they say it can take three to five years to come into its own." What

see page 5

from page 4

she's learned is to "be patient and let things grow at their own pace."

For her, success will be when half the plots are planted and there is a waiting list for next year's growing season.

"I hope the end result is that people in the neighborhood become invested in the library even more," says Martinez. "Also, if people were able to grow food that could be donated to help others in the community, that would be awesome."

Staff at Anythink Perl Mack and Commerce City have been exploring other ideas, too, like partnering with local restaurants and other businesses. A restaurant could potentially maintain a plot in one of the gardens, and then use the food in their menu, touting how it was grown in the Anythink garden, says Storey-Ewoldt.

Spurlock agrees with Storey-Ewoldt that the partnership between Anythink and her organization is a natural fit. "Denver Urban Gardens looks forward to supporting the communities and the libraries."

Anythink Grows

Interested in participating? Contact our staff to reserve your plot today!

Anythink Commerce City
Deborah Hogue
dhogue@anythinklibraries.org

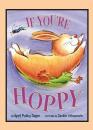
Anythink Perl Mack
Anet Martinez
amartinez@anythinklibraries.org

To learn more about the project, see upcoming programs and more, visit anythinklibraries.org.

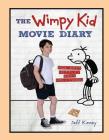
New Books: Check 'Em Out

Check out these great new titles for April available at your local Anythink.

CHILDREN

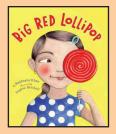


If You're Hoppy by April Pullley Sayre



The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary: How Greg Heffley Went Hollywood by Jeff Kinney

Big, Red Lollipopby Rukhsana
Khan



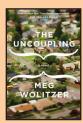
Diary of a
Wimpy Kid
by Roderick Rules
& Jeff Kinney



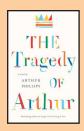
39 Clues, Book 10: Into the Gauntletby Margaret Peterson
Haddix



ADULT

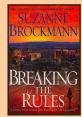


The Uncoupling: A Novel by Meg Wolitzer



The Tragedy of Arthur by Arthur Phillips

Breaking the Rules by Suzanne Brockmann



The Land of Painted Caves by Jean M. Auel





Red on Redby Edward Conlon

Want to see what else Anythinkers are reading? Visit the I Love My Anythink group on Goodreads.com

SPARK • March 25, 2011

FACES OF ANYTHINK



Adventure-seeker and Anythink public services director Ronnie Storey-Ewoldt is spearheading the Anythink Garden Project.

Always a New Adventure

From the initial spark of the idea, Anythink public services director Ronnie Storey-Ewoldt wanted the Anythink Garden Project to be a part of her legacy here at the district. However, her influence has been farreaching since the idea of Anythink was nothing but a tiny seed itself.

"I remember when Ronnie came on board with the district," says Anythink Wright Farms concierge Bill Zorack. "She brought a whole new energy." That was May 2007, before Anythink was born, before there were new buildings or even a new director hired.

"Nothing concrete had shown up yet," says Storey-Ewoldt. "No one knew what it was, but they could feel it was coming." This palpable but unnamed "thing" was the revolution that transformed a district from

being the worst in the state to one of the best in the country. Storey-Ewoldt was there from the beginning.

Growing up in southern California, Storey-Ewoldt was always an adventure-seeker. It was this drive for adventure that brought her to Colorado at age 25. She had visited the Centennial State the year before.

"It felt like this is where I'm supposed to be. This is my place," she says.

When she moved to Denver, many of her new friends worked at Denver Public Library. She was an avid reader and fondly remembers receiving books as gifts from her grandmother. She had always wanted to work at a bookstore, but had never before considered libraries.

Her friends were so passionate

about their jobs that her perception changed and made her want to work there. "These were clerks and other library staff," she says. "They didn't make a lot of money, but they loved what they did."

At first, she was ready to jump right in. "I thought, 'Be a librarian! That's what I should do!" She considered getting her master's degree in library science, but decided the better option was to get a job in a library first to see how she liked it. She started working as a library assistant at the Ford-Warren branch of DPL.

This was the beginning of a new direction in her life. She would spend the rest of her career involved with libraries in some capacity.

Previous to working at Anythink, Storey-Ewoldt worked for 10 years at Innovative Interfaces, a vendor of library automation systems. In that position, she was able to travel around the world to places like Australia, Ireland and Singapore. She also traveled to South Africa and was there when the *Truth and Reconciliation Report* was issued.

As exciting as traveling was, "I always knew I wanted to end up back in public libraries," says Storey-Ewoldt. When she saw the job description for the public services director at Rangeview Library District, she was intrigued.

"It said things like, 'Be a part of this adventure." She also liked the fact that it was a newly created position. "When I read it, I thought, 'This is the job, the place I've been waiting for." Right away you could tell there was something different about this

see page 7

from page 6

district, she says; this was a "whole new animal."

Creating something new from scratch is not without its challenges. "Change is never easy," she says, and working through the district's changes of the past several years with both branch and admin staff had its difficult moments. Yet each day she is thankful. "I can't believe I get to be a part of this," she say about working at Anythink. "Every single day there's a new adventure, a new challenge. What's not exciting about that?"

As the district lead on the Anythink Garden Project, she's embarking on



Denver Urban Gardens offers master community gardener courses and much more.

yet another new adventure. Anythink libraries will be some of the first in the country to host community gardens. Through classes at Denver Urban Gardens, she is learning the ins and outs of community garden development, and she's excited about the impact the gardens at Anythink Commerce City and Perl Mack will have in their communities.

And if the plots don't get taken up? "We grow strawberries."

A Tree Grows at Wright Farms



The tree sculptures at Anythink Huron Street have become signature pieces in that library, and so will the small tree grove now being installed at Anythink Wright Farms. The staff from NatureMaker, like Ehren Schultz pictured on the right, designed and installed the two Aspen and one cottonwood tree that now add a bit of whimsy to the children's area.





SPARK • March 25, 2011 PAGE 7

Events Not to Miss

Explore on the Floor

Drop in any time between 9:30-11 am to experience a new interactive approach to story time. Come with your little one (18 months to 5 years) to enjoy one or all of our stations that will feature a book and meaningful activity for you to share together. We'll show you how to nurture all six of the skills identified to be key in developing reading readiness.



Wednesdays, 9:30-11 am Anythink Wright Farms 5877 E. 120th Ave. Thornton, CO 80602

Your Money, Your Life

Anythink Commerce City introduces its new teen finance series. "Your Money, Your Life: How to Keep it, Use it and Make it Grow." Teens will learn how money matters affect their lives and useful tips for smart money handling. The series runs every Thursday from 3:30-5 pm through May and is free and open to the public. Appropriate for students grades 6-12.

Thursdays in May, 3:30-5 pm Anythink Commerce City 7185 Monaco St. Commerce City, CO 80022



Anythink Perl Mack Debut

Enjoy music, food, and crafts during our Anythink-style garden party at the debut of the newly renovated Anythink Perl Mack library. Learn more about the Anythink Garden Project and see the library's beautiful transformation while spending time with neighbors and friends.

Friday, May 6, 3-7 pm Anythink Perl Mack 7611 Hilltop Circle Denver, CO 80221

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

from page 2

Besides growing our gardens, we will get to know our neighbors, maybe even have an afternoon lemonade or glass of iced tea together. As our garden begins to ripen, we will share recipes and ideas for healthy cooking. At the end of the summer, I hope we will all be a little healthier, a little happier and a little calmer from working together in our garden. I imagine having a big pot luck with everyone bringing a favorite dish made from something in their garden and listening to a bluegrass band, maybe with a little hand clapping and foot stomping.

This is Anythink, a library where you get to shape your future, become a part of your community and live a life that is a little bit richer. Join us in learning about gardening this spring and summer and help us build our community garden.

- Pam Sandlian Smith



mySummer: June 4
- July 31

Sign up online beginning in May

anythinklibraries.org



When you're done reading SPARK, share with a friend, give back to your librarian or recycle.

PAGE 8 SPARK • March 25, 2011