

spark



Anythink Looks to the Future



spark

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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.

On the cover: A look through the pressed glass into the teen area in Anythink Wright Farms

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Visit us at anythinklibraries.org.

A Letter from the Director

"Without libraries, what have we? We have no past and no future."

– Ray Bradbury

Earlier this month, the world lost a wonderful writer and human being in Ray Bradbury, who cared so deeply about libraries. As many of you might know, he wrote his signature novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, at UCLA's library. He used the public typewriter, plugging in 10 cents at a time. He calculates that he spent \$9.80 to write that novel – a bargain by any standard.

Ray Bradbury was a friend to libraries. He understood that a democratic society needs libraries to survive. *Fahrenheit 451* speaks to the idea that we must guard against censorship, that the backbone of our culture depends upon the unfettered collision of ideas you find in books, books that live happily on the shelves at the library. His death gives us another reason to read and reread some of his works – *The Martian Chronicles*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, *Dandelion Wine* and *The Illustrated Man* – to name of few.

I am so lucky to have a Ray Bradbury story to share. When I was in West Palm Beach, I was part of the group that invented "One Book, One County" for Palm Beach County. There were representatives from the *Palm Beach Post*, the Literacy Coalition, Palm Beach County Library and West Palm Beach



Ray Bradbury was one of the most celebrated 20th-century American writers.

Public Library. Our first book selected to read was *Fahrenheit 451*. One of our criteria in selecting it was having a living author who could make for more memorable programming.

We soon discovered that Ray Bradbury had recently suffered a stroke and could no longer travel. He did agree to have a conversation that could be broadcast, however. We needed a package that had more cache, so we booked NPR's Renée Montagne as the interviewer. We secured a theater, did a walkthrough rehearsal, sound checks, etc. Renée and I worked through the questions.

My husband, David, picked up Renée at the Palm Beach airport in style, as only one could in Palm Beach – top down on the convertible and golden retriever in the back seat. On the day of, we had a delicious outdoor reception with over 300 people waiting to enter the theater. We called Ray Bradbury to do a mic

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Madeline Lucero, left, and Faith Lechman rock out in the Paper Jamz experience zone at Anythink Wright Farms.

Changing the Perception of Libraries

Over the past three years, Anythink has been no stranger to transformation. With the bold rebranding of Rangeview Library District as Anythink in 2009, the floodgates of change opened. Four new libraries were built and three others were renovated. Overdue fines and the Dewey Decimal system were eliminated. Programming was revamped with hands-on experience zones, community gardens were constructed, and a unique summer reading program was put into place.

In its relatively short existence, Anythink has demonstrated how a typical library can evolve from a building of books to a place where community connects with information and has experiences that inspire new ideas. In Adams County and in the library world, it's been a revolutionary time.

As Anythink looks to the next chapter in its evolution, the question now is, "what's next?"

The answer lies in the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, a forward-thinking road map with five strategic initiatives that will help Anythink continue its path as a groundbreaking 21st-century organization. In a nutshell, these initiatives can be summed up like this: Anythink is all about community, supports learning and technology, and aims to give customers unique experiences while changing their idea of what a library can be.

In creating the plan, Anythink conducted extensive interviews with stakeholders in the community through a series of

2012-2014 Strategic Initiatives

- I. Anythink is a Learning Organization
- II. Anythink is an Experience Library
- III. We Understand and Collaborate with Our Community
- IV. Creativity and Innovation are Supported by Technology
- V. Shift Perceptions of Anythink and Libraries

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focus groups, and also used invaluable feedback from customers – gathered both online in and in the branches. Lastly, Anythink gave every person in the organization, including its Board of Trustees, a chance to share their ideas to help formulate the direction of the library.

COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Community plays a vital role in each of these initiatives. As a partner to the community, Anythink will enhance its collections, programs and services to better reflect the needs of its customers, while continuing to provide tools for lifelong learning.

“The first strategic plan was a lot more about infrastructure and rethinking what a library is,” says Anythink Director Pam Sandlian Smith. “The next couple of years are really about getting to know the community and understanding at a higher level, who lives here? What are they yearning for? What do they need from a library? What do they want to contribute?”

Gathering this information from the community will not only help customers connect with and share their expertise through library-sponsored programs and initiatives, but it will also help Anythink discover more local talent in the area. Because, who knows – the next best-selling author, rising movie director,



This is what a makerspace at Anythink could look like. Photo courtesy of MakerBot.



YOUmedia mentor JoVia Armstrong helps teens with their music projects at Chicago Public Library. A digital media lab like this one will open at Anythink Wright Farms in March 2013. Photo courtesy of YOUmedia.

innovative scientist or music producer could be right here in Adams County.

In addition to reflecting the fabric of the community through such things as collaborative public art projects and community gardens, Anythink will continue to spark creativity and healthy development in children. In July, the first Nature Explore Classroom will be built at Anythink Wright Farms to provide a dynamic playground that helps kids connect with nature as they build, crawl, climb and dig their way around. These unique spaces have been shown to improve math, science, language and socialization skills in kids.

BECOMING A TECH HANGOUT

As we become more and more of a technological society, Anythink aims to be a destination where the community can explore their creativity through technology while connecting with others. One milestone in accomplishing this is through the creation of a digital media lab at Anythink Wright Farms in March 2013. Inspired by the YOUmedia project at

Chicago Public Library, the learning lab will give teens a chance to “hang out,” “geek out” and “mess around” with technology. Whether they’re creating a digital collage, editing a student film, or recording music, the lab will improve digital literacy and 21st-century skills in young people.

Anythink IT Manager Matt Hamilton says that with the way the Internet has allowed anyone to be an instant artist, publisher or writer, it’s only right that libraries provide similar opportunities.

“Libraries really need to become a platform that’s much more participatory,” he says. “We need to provide the tools and the necessary space for people to create and to converse, and that includes digital content creation.”

Another project that mixes technology with socialization is the addition of makerspaces – creative areas in which people with common interests meet to socialize, share knowledge and collaborate on projects. Anythink is currently looking into creating a space where people can work on textiles,

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computers, digital photography and 3D printing.

“This is all about fostering creativity and inviting people to do some hands-on things that they don’t get to do on a regular basis,” says Dara Schmidt, branch manager at Anythink Brighton.

ENVISIONING ALL THAT A LIBRARY CAN BE

Through its innovations, Anythink ultimately wants to change the way that libraries have historically been perceived, and demonstrate how they can be so much more than just a place to find books. Doing so will help Anythink become that third place for many people – not home, not work or school – but an idea laboratory where people come to explore, experiment and relax.

To help with the “seismic shift of community understanding” that Sandlian Smith says is necessary in changing perceptions of what is generally the 1950s library, Anythink will enrich its library services by continuing to seek ongoing partnerships around the metro area. Anythink has already formed relationships with the Children’s Museum of Denver, KWGN TV’s Everyday Book Club, Denver Open Media, and the University of Denver’s Library Information Science Program, among others.

In the near future, Sandlian Smith envisions Anythink as being embedded in both the center of the community and the lives of community members. More than anything, she hopes a new standard is established when community members describe a library like Anythink.

“It would be great to not have to say, ‘It’s not a normal library’ – it is a normal library. This is how all libraries are.”

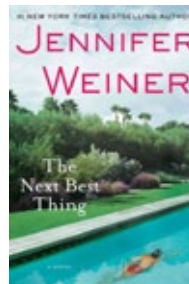
To view the Strategic Plan in full, go to anythinklibraries.org/about.

New Books: Check 'Em Out

We’ve got great new titles in July for children and adults at Anythink.

CHILDREN

- *I, Michael Bennett* by James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge
- *Backfire: An FBI Thriller* by Catherine Coulter
- *The Next Best Thing* by Jennifer Weiner
- *Judgment Call* by J.A. Jancer
- *Where We Belong* by Emily Giffin



ADULT

- *How to Train Your Dragon, Book 9* by Cressida Cowell
- *The Land of Stories: The Wishing Spell* by Chris Colfer
- *Goosebumps: The Haunted Mask* by R.L. Stine
- *Amelia Bedelia, Cub Reporter* by Herman Parish
- *Shark Wars #4: Kingdom of the Deep* by Ernie Altbacker



Check Out Anythink’s New Catalog

On June 11, Anythink launched the beta version of its new library catalog. There are numerous benefits for Anythink customers, including better search results, numerous filtering options, the ability to place multiple holds at once, and mobile access – to name a few.

“We’re excited to offer some great improvements for the customer experience, including ebook integration, access from your mobile phone and tablets, and easier ways to discover your next favorite book or movie,” says Matt Hamilton, Anythink’s IT manager.

Anythink is asking customers to give their feedback before the new catalog officially launches on Monday, July 16. Customers are encouraged to visit catalog.anythinklibraries.org on their computer, tablet or smartphone, then share their thoughts through an online survey, comment card, or by emailing ithink@anythinklibraries.org. Anythink’s development team will take all feedback into consideration when making improvements to the catalog.

FACES OF ANYTHINK



Kay Riddle, president of the Rangeview Library District's Board of Trustees, has been proudly serving the district since 1969.

Board Member, Baseball Fan and Anythinker for Life

Kay Riddle describes herself as an open book. And if there are two obvious things about her life and career, they are her commitment to service and her knack for being a part of a revolution.

Throughout her life – from growing up in Boulder, raising her six children and serving on Rangeview Library District's Board of Trustees – libraries have been a second home to Riddle. Since becoming a board member in the early '80s, she's one of the few people in Adams County who has played the role of customer, observer and change agent through the library district's transformative times.

"From being on the front page of the *Denver Post* as the worst library district in the metropolitan area to being one of the most honored in the country, it's just been an amazing ride," she says. "Watching these libraries grow up has been one of the highlights of my life."

Currently serving her second consecutive term as board president, Riddle's interest in the district began many years ago when she watched out her kitchen window as the Northglenn library was being built. She started working there part-time after it opened, a position she held until she got involved with politics in 1981.

That's when she began a 12-year stint as the Republican National committeewoman for Colorado, the first half of which she spent as political director and executive director of the Colorado Republican Party while serving under Ronald Reagan. In 1986, Riddle took on executive director duties of the GOPAC under former congressman Newt Gingrich, who she still sees once or twice a year. During that time, she was appointed by President George H.W. Bush to serve on the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

For Riddle, politics was a year-round job filled with recruiting and training candidates, supporting legislators, finding speakers and traveling all over the state – as well as frequent trips to Washington, D.C. She was there when Reagan was inaugurated, went to several White House galas, and got to know Reagan's family. But after Gingrich was elected as the Speaker of the House in 1992, she decided it was time for her to step away.

"Politics is a job for young people because you're never off, especially working for Newt Gingrich," she says. "But it was a really exciting time. It's fun to be there at the revolution."

In what she says was the perfect transition from politics, Riddle became executive director for the newly founded Opportunity Through Baseball Foundation, a position she held for 15 years. The organization ran three-week-long baseball camps at Regis University for at-risk inner-city boys from across the nation, and also provided mentorship and academic instruction. Riddle calls the experience "incredibly rewarding," with no shortage of remarkable success stories and life-changing turnarounds.

"[The boys] weren't used to that kind of attention," she says. "It gave them an idea of what life could be like if they stretched a little. In three weeks, you can make a big difference."

Riddle says she still gets wedding invitations and birth announcements from some of the program participants who have gone on to receive college scholarships, been drafted by major league teams, and now have successful careers.

Since retiring from the position in January 2009, Riddle has been able to devote her days to traveling, cross-stitching and spending time with her

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husband and grandchildren. She also makes it over to Anythink Huron Street a few times a week to check out biographies and historical fiction ebooks on her iPad.

When she thinks about the future of the library district, she sees a bright one due to the forward-thinking leadership of Director Pam Sandlian Smith and the hardworking Anythink staff. But she also realizes that the board, which is responsible for Anythink's finances and formulation of policies, is just as critical in supporting innovation and the needs of the community.

"Libraries have to grow and change, and this board is strictly interested in making the library better," she says. "I think we'll be on the bleeding edge of that from here on out."



Riddle at the White House with Anythink Director Pam Sandlian Smith to accept the 2010 National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

Eric Litwin to Perform at Anythink



Author Eric Litwin is known for his hilariously entertaining performances for kids.

Acclaimed children's author Eric Litwin will perform for free at three Anythink libraries in July. In true troubadour fashion, Litwin brings comedic stories to life with interactive songs that get kids singing, dancing, laughing and falling in love with literacy.

In addition to being a popular performing artist at schools and libraries across the country, Litwin is a five-time national award-winning author. His book,

Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes, reached No. 1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Litwin's books will be on sale at each performance.

ERIC LITWIN EVENT DETAILS

Monday, July 9, 7 pm
Anythink Huron Street*
9417 Huron St.
Thornton, CO 80260
303-452-7534

Thursday, July 12, 2 pm
The Armory at Brighton Cultural Center
300 Strong St.
Brighton, CO 80601
303-655-2026

Thursday, July 12, 7 pm
Anythink Wright Farms
5877 E. 120th Ave.
Thornton, CO 80602
303-405-3200

*Online registration required.

Cool Tech Upgrades Are on the Way

In the coming days, the customer experience with technology at Anythink libraries is going to take a nice step forward. What follows are improvements to look forward to....

Wireless Printing

Beginning Sunday, July 1, wireless printing will be available at all Anythink branches for customers who want to print documents from their laptop computers on the library's printer.

Microsoft Upgrades

By Monday, July 16, Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010 will be running on computers at Anythink Washington Street, which is serving as the pilot branch before these upgrades are later rolled out to all branches.

New Self-Checkout Stations

Toward the end of July, customers will get to use our brand-new self-checkout stations at all branches. The new self-checkout process is easier, elegant and more intuitive, and the stations have more responsive screens and scanners.



Anythink's new self-checkout machines will be in branches by the end of July.

Events Not to Miss



Giant Lawn Games Wednesday, July 11, 10 am & 2 pm

Get in the game! Go outside and become part of popular games as you play giant lawn-sized versions of checkers, *Jenga*, *Twister*, and more. The supersized versions of these games will come alive and bring a new meaning to fun. Appropriate for kids. Space is limited; registration required.

Anythink Bennett
495 7th St.
Bennett, CO 80102
303-405-3231



Move Your Pen, Open Your Mind Saturday, July 14, 10 am

Find your inner writer in this workshop on journal writing and memoirs led by author Lisa Jones. Recollect memories, explore your inner geysers of truth, and design an inviting journaling style. Journals provided. Appropriate for teens and adults. Space is limited; registration required.

Anythink Huron Street
9417 Huron St.
Thornton, CO 80260
303-452-7534



Cover Things in Chocolate Wednesday, July 25, 10 am

At this tasty program, you'll learn the history of chocolate and get to try the traditional Aztec drink. You'll also get to sample this amazing food by dipping treats into a chocolate fountain. Appropriate for adults. Space is limited; registration required.

Anythink Brighton
327 E. Bridge St.
Brighton, CO 80601
303-405-3230

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

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check. We couldn't hear him, and asked if he could go to another phone. He agreed to switch phones and went into another room. Problem was, he didn't hang up the phone, so we couldn't call him back, and then his voice disappeared...no Ray Bradbury. We tried calling back, but just kept getting a busy signal. We were stuck. An interview without Ray Bradbury was not going to work.

Naturally, everyone started panicking. Some people called the LAPD to see if they could get to his house. Some people called relatives in LA to see if

they could help. It was a scene out of *Noises Off*, with everyone trying to call someone to help.

I called the reference desk at the West Palm Beach library. Our wonderfully calm librarian, Fawn, answered the phone. I explained our conundrum and asked if she could use the crisscross directory to get phone numbers of Ray's neighbors. Within moments, she had a couple of phone numbers of houses adjacent to Ray's home in LA. The first number we called worked. The neighbor walked across the lawn, knocked on his door, explained the situation, and hung up the phone. We

called back, the connection worked, and the show was back on. And what a show it was. Great questions, lovely, passionate engagement, and wonderful conversation.

The next day we made the cover of the arts section in the *Palm Beach Post*. The headline: "Librarian saves the day."

Thank you, Ray Bradbury, for giving us your words, your stories, your support.

- Pam Sandlian Smith



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