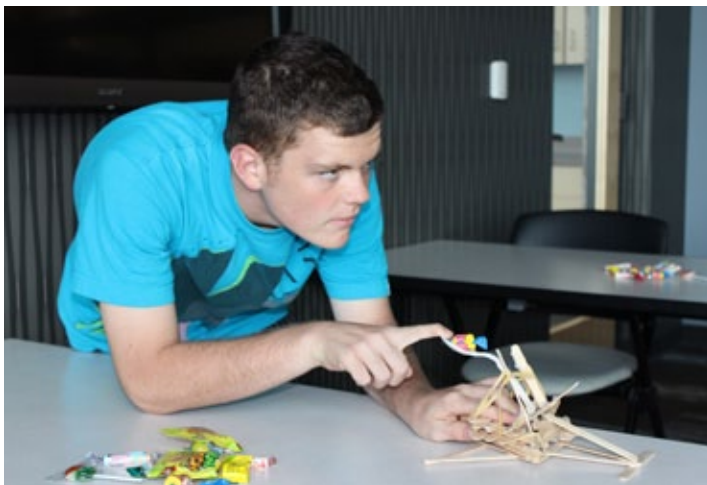


spark

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Harvesting the Interactive Spirit



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: From L-R: Quinten Musser, Andrew Wilson and Zac Johnson present their creations from the Catapult This! program at Anythink Wright Farms.

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303.287.0063

Anythink Huron Street
9417 Huron St. • Thornton, CO 80260
303.452.7534

Anythink Perl Mack
7611 Hilltop Circle • Denver, CO 80221
303.428.3576

Anythink Washington Street
8992 Washington St. • Thornton, CO 80229
303.287.2514

Anythink Wright Farms
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303.405.3200

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303.288.2018

Visit us at anythinklibraries.org.

A Letter from the Director

“Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it – they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things.”

– Steve Jobs

At R-Squared – The Risk and Reward Conference held this September in Telluride, one of the keynote speakers reminded us how creative thinking is both critical and undervalued in our world today. Josh Linkner, author of *Disciplined Dreaming: A Proven System to Drive Breakthrough Creativity*, spoke about this essential ingredient in his keynote speech.

“Let's face it,” he says, “we're not an economic superpower anymore based on our ability to manufacture things cheaply or our natural resources. The reason we are economically viable is because of our innovation and creativity. If we don't invest in those things, I think we could have some long-term problems.”

According to Linkner, creativity is 85 percent learned, yet only 2 percent of graduating high school seniors see themselves as creative. Why is that? Is it because we don't understand creativity, or don't teach enough creative skills?

Maybe it's because we often associate creativity with the arts, with musicians, painters and dancers. We teach people to follow directions at a time when using our imagination is more important. When was the last time you took time



Nevaeh Torres (left) and Olivia Lambrecht make a splash with the water pump in the Nature Explore Classroom at Anythink Wright Farms.

to daydream or solve a problem in a creative way?

At Anythink, we have been concentrating on creativity from the inception of creating library spaces that support people, and we are beginning to see a number of initiatives that support our philosophy of learning and creativity. With the opening of the Nature Explore Classroom at Anythink Wright Farms, children (and adults) are already interacting with nature in simple, thoughtful ways. Every time I hear someone playing the marimba outside, it makes me smile.

Our community gardens at Anythink Perl Mack and Commerce City are other examples of hands-on learning and growing community. The addition of a

see page 8

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Season of Interaction and Creativity	3
Hold the Phone – A New Way to Check Out Items	5
Faces of Anythink	6
Risk and Reward Conference Gives Libraries New Hope	7
Events Not to Miss	8



A group of teens rock out in the teen area at Anythink Wright Farms. When the space is transformed into a digital learning lab next spring, teens will have more opportunities to play, create and collaborate.

A Season of Interaction and Creativity

Fall is here, and for Anythink, an abundant season of innovation and interaction is at hand. To meet the needs of the community in an increasingly social and technological age, Anythink is providing more opportunities to spark learning, collaboration and creativity. From community gardens to a digital learning lab, Anythink continues to shake up perceptions about the potential of libraries as they shift from places of access and consumption to centers of creation and collaboration.

MAKERSPACE COMING TO ANYTHINK BRIGHTON

Leading the way is a teen makerspace scheduled to open at Anythink Brighton this December. Makerspaces – also known as hackerspaces – are community workspaces where people who like to tinker with things can collaborate on projects and share tools and ideas. These

social spots have traditionally given both hobbyists and first-timers a chance to learn a new skill or pursue their passions in trades like woodworking, electronics or machinery.

With the maker movement taking off over the past decade, makerspaces can now be found in warehouses, community centers, museums and college campuses across the world. However, makerspaces in libraries are just starting to catch on. Unlike independently run makerspaces that operate on monthly membership dues, library makerspaces offer free workspace and access to professional tools, making them invaluable assets to the community.

Thanks to a federal grant just acquired through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), the

see page 4



The makerspace at Anythink Brighton will have a 3D printer that can print designs like this vase art by a student at the University of Nevada, Reno. Photo by Nick Crowl.

from page 3

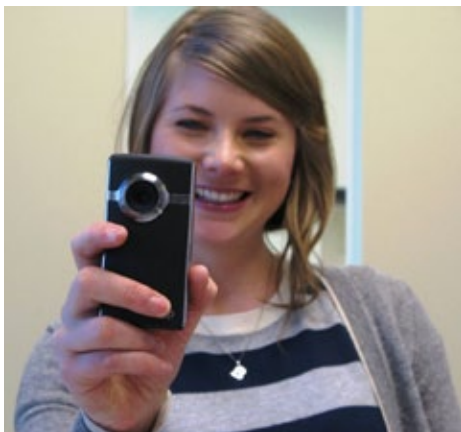
makerspace at Anythink Brighton will support young entrepreneurs, inventors and artists with state-of-the-art tools and materials for crafts, robotics, textile design, digital photography and 3D printing. There will also be a “computer guts” area where teens can take apart a computer to learn about its parts and see all that whizzes and whirs inside.

With skills that correspond to the areas the makerspace will offer, staff members at Anythink Brighton supported the makerspace idea from the beginning, and can't wait to see what inventions customers dream up.

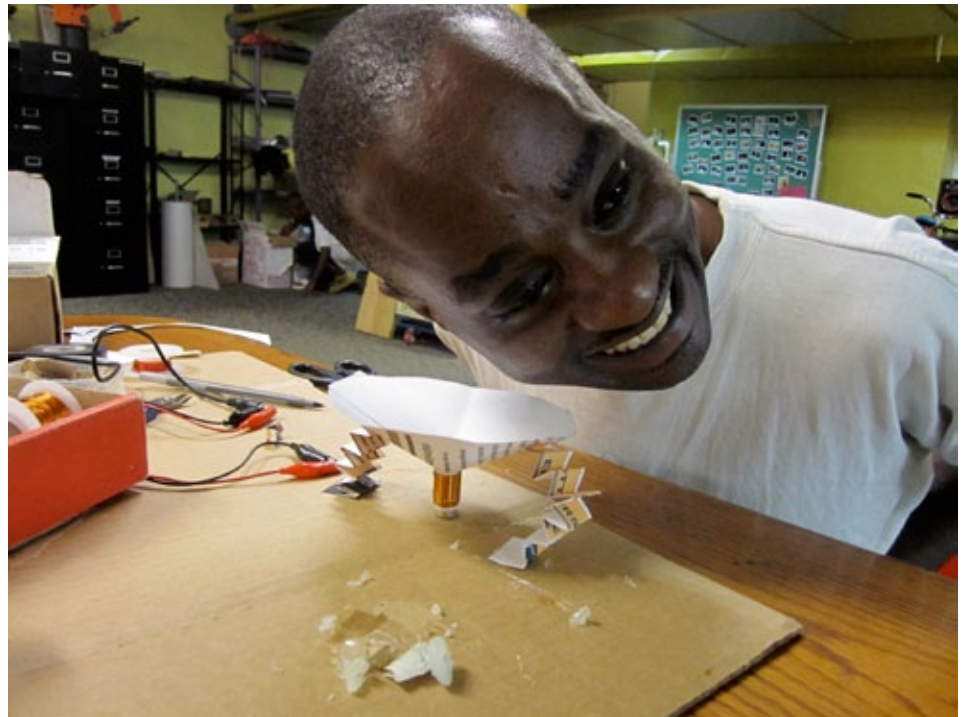
“I'm excited that people will be able to create tangible things out of their imagination,” says Anythink Brighton adult guide Kathy Lane, who plans on using the space to offer more of her signature do-it-yourself craft programs.

Tech guide Aaron Bock is also looking to build on some of his existing computer classes, including the Computer Guts program that was part of the inspiration behind the makerspace. Bock says that he'd like to have programs where customers can play and build with computer parts and LEGO robotics.

For teen guide Deirdre Caparoso, digital photography will be her initial area of expertise, but she's eager to master the 3D printer, which renders solid objects from a digital model. With 3D printers now being used in many industries, Caparoso believes that it's only a matter



The makerspace at Anythink Brighton will offer plenty of creative learning opportunities, including digital photography.



A member of the Mt. Elliott Makerspace in Detroit is happy to hear streaming music from his phone through his own paper speaker. Photo courtesy of Mt. Elliott Makerspace and Detroit Public Library's HYPE Teen Center.

of time before they're popular with the general public.

“It'll be neat for kids to say, ‘I first did that at the library,’” she says. “That's a really big breakthrough.”

To some, the library may not be the first place that comes to mind when building a rocking chair, designing a 3D model or repairing a bike. But to Tod Colegrove, head of DeLaMare Science & Engineering Library at the University of Nevada, Reno, there isn't much of a distinction between a library and a makerspace within its walls. Colegrove was instrumental in launching his library's makerspace in 2010, which has become busy with students eager to use the 3D printers, wireless helicopters, helmet cameras and programmable microprocessors.

“From the library's standpoint, we're just doing what we've always done – getting the materials people need to get more engaged in learning more effectively,” he says. “Ideas are only 20 percent of making something happen – you have to have the tools for your idea to actually become a reality.”

This notion is echoed by Nate Hill, assistant director of technology and digital initiatives at Chattanooga Public Library. There, one of Hill's main projects is The 4th Floor, a 14,000-square-foot space that's in the process of becoming an art and technology facility stocked with various resources for the public, including a makerspace, a multimedia lab and an art center.

“We're living in a time of the creative economy, but many people don't realize that there's so much they can do themselves if they just have access to the tools,” he says.

MORE WAYS TO INTERACT

The makerspace at Anythink Brighton is just one way that the library can stir ideas and engage customers in interactive experiences. As covered in the March 2012 issue of *SPARK*, the variety of experience zones that crop up at Anythink locations each month provide many opportunities for customers to discover new ideas through touch and play.

see page 5

from page 4

Play is also a central theme in the recently opened Nature Explore Classroom on the back lawn of Anythink Wright Farms. For adults, Anythink has provided flourishing community gardens at its Commerce City and Perl Mack locations for the past two summers, with a third garden in the works at Anythink Wright Farms and set to open next spring. Another opportunity for creation and collaboration will be the digital learning lab at Anythink Wright Farms, which will put professional creation tools in the hands of teens for exploring and expressing their creativity as content creators.



The community gardens at Anythink Commerce City and Perl Mack have brought together the community in a new way.

CREATING LIBRARIES OF THE FUTURE

In order for its libraries to become community hubs where learning, collaboration and creativity thrive, Anythink will give its customers the tools and skills needed to succeed in the world today. Whether an idea is born in the makerspace, an experience zone or the digital learning lab, customers have many opportunities to see their ideas come to life.

According to Schmidt, this truth is already evident at Anythink Brighton, where a particular group of teenage girls are ecstatic about getting to design their own clothes in the makerspace.

“Clothing designer is a really cool-sounding job, but where are you going to get the skills to do that?” says Schmidt. “It could be here at the library.” 🍷

New Books: Check 'Em Out

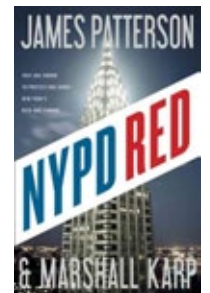
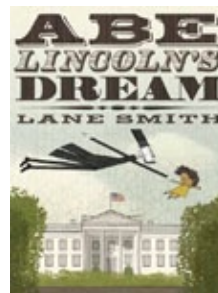
We've got great new titles in October for children and adults at Anythink.

CHILDREN

- *Daniel X: Armageddon* by James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein
- *Son* by Lois Lowry
- *I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- *Skippyjon Jones* by Judith Schachner
- *Abe Lincoln's Dream* by Lane Smith

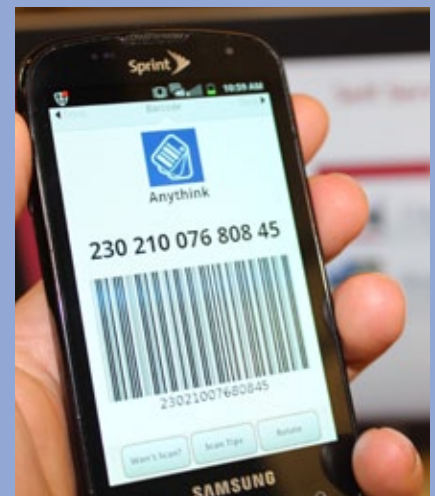
ADULT

- *Total Recall* by Arnold Schwarzenegger
- *America Again* by Stephen Colbert
- *The Perfect Hope* by Nora Roberts
- *NYPD Red* by James Patterson and Marshall Karp
- *Live by Night* by Dennis Lehane



Hold the Phone – A New Way to Check Out Items

Anythink customers with smartphones no longer need to rely on using their library card to check out items. Using free barcode apps like CardStar or Key Ring, customers can easily scan or enter their Anythink barcode into their phone, which they can then use at any self-checkout station. These apps, available for Android, iPhone, Windows Phone and Blackberry devices, allow users to scan or enter any barcode, helping people go cardless while making wallets and purses a little lighter.



This is how an Anythink barcode looks using the Key Ring app for Android.

FACES OF ANYTHINK



Manager Dara Schmidt led the charge in getting funding for a makerspace at Anythink Brighton.

Risk-Taker, Change Agent Leads by Asking, “Why Not?”

When talking to Dara Schmidt about her four years at Anythink – first as a librarian generalist at the old Northglenn branch, then as a teen guide at Anythink Huron Street and now as manager of Anythink Brighton – there’s one can-do phrase that keeps coming up.

“Why not?”

From experimenting with new experience zones to helping launch the mySummer reading program to spearheading the makerspace initiative at Anythink Brighton, Schmidt has thrived at Anythink with her open-minded, risk-taking mentality. She credits Anythink’s empowering philosophies for bringing out these qualities in her, as well as Anythink Huron Street manager Sandra Sebbas, for giving her creative license.

“You’re never going to get in trouble for trying something here,” she says. “That’s one of the reasons why we said, ‘Hey,

let’s try for a makerspace at Brighton. Why not?’”

Schmidt’s inclination to take risks goes back to her school days. After majoring in English at Baldwin-Wallace University, the Manchester, Iowa, native was accepted into multiple law schools upon seeing her high test scores. But Schmidt, following her heart, decided to take the more difficult path and move to Southern California to pursue screenwriting for Hollywood.

“[Being a lawyer] was the path that was out in front of me, and everybody was telling me that was the right thing to do,” she says. “But it didn’t feel right, so I did the crazy thing and went to Los Angeles.”

But after dabbling in it for a few years, Schmidt decided that the lifestyle of a full-time screenwriter wasn’t for her. As she began soul-searching again, she realized that the happiest job she’d

had was when she was in high school, working as a page at the Manchester Public Library. Following her heart once more, Schmidt returned to school and got her master’s in library and information science from San Jose State University.

“Although [screenwriting] is not where my life has ended up, I don’t regret it for a second, because that experience has shaped who I am now,” she says.

Over the next few years, Schmidt worked at Downey City Library and at two libraries in the County of Los Angeles Public Library system. In what she describes as trial by fire, Schmidt was given immediate responsibilities in her internship at the Culver City Julian Dixon Library, managing youth crowds and tending to the reference desk. When she began working at the Willowbrook branch a year later, she became acting manager on her second day, after the branch manager had to resign for health reasons. She was told, “It’s real easy to get five years of experience here in a year.” And Schmidt says that she definitely did.

Eventually, Schmidt and her husband Brandon looked to move to the Denver area to be closer to family and friends. That’s when she landed a position with Rangeview Library District in June 2008 as a librarian generalist. Nearly three years later, she had a life-changing week in which she was promoted to branch manager at Anythink Brighton. But there was another reason to celebrate – actually, two.

“On Monday I found out I got the job and I was the actual branch manager,” she says. “On Friday I found out I was pregnant with twins.”

At Anythink, Schmidt was a driving force

see page 7

from page 6

behind the conception of mySummer, Anythink's popular reimagined summer reading program that emphasizes fun and creative experiences over prizes. With mySummer, Schmidt wanted to break down barriers found in traditional summer reading programs by introducing unique, interactive experiences for customers of all ages.

"It's a huge risk to say, 'We're going to do a summer reading program where we don't require reading and we don't give away any prizes,'" she says. "But we had to start somewhere."

Judging by customer enthusiasm and sharp increases in membership and program attendance, mySummer

proved to be a risk that was well worth it. According to Anythink Director Pam Sandlian Smith, Schmidt has a gift for sniffing out success.

"Dara is a brilliant manager with great instincts and team-building skills," she says. "She's also nurtured a sense of collaboration at her branch, as well as her own sense of creativity."

Whether it's summer reading or the upcoming makerspace at Anythink Brighton, Schmidt says the goal is always about changing lives.

"You never know what's going to be the pebble in the pond that starts the ripple," she says. "Why couldn't it be something



Schmidt with her sons, Elliot (left) and Hugo.

like a camping program at the library that inspires a family to go camping for the first time and create some of their best memories? It's not outside the realm of possibility that we can be changing people's lives every day.

"And so why not?" 🌀

R-Squared Inspires Innovation, Creative Thinking in Libraries



Keynote speaker Josh Linkner encouraged attendees to question conventional thinking.

Faced with diminishing budgets, new technologies and changing customer needs, the traditional library faces extinction. We must adapt and innovate to transform from a quiet storehouse of books to a dynamic center of free engagement with knowledge.

– from the R-Squared website

In the past three years since Anythink revolutionized library service for Adams County residents, the district has

repeatedly proven what a small group of passionate people can accomplish.

This was reiterated once again with the launch of R-Squared – The Risk & Reward Conference, an innovative conference geared towards library professionals curious about creative thinking in libraries.

On Sept. 9-11, 350 library professionals from across the country, and even as far away as Canada and Sweden, traveled to Telluride, Colo., to learn what it means

to take smart risks to move libraries forward. Anythink worked closely with members of the Colorado State Library and others to launch this innovative library conference inspired by some of Anythink's philosophies on reinventing library service.

What made this conference unique was that there were not librarians presenting to librarians. Change agents from industries like architecture, retail, marketing and technology talked about the ways they've innovated in their industries in a format that encouraged hands-on involvement with the attendees.

see page 8



Two conference-goers successfully navigate their way through the Culture track's Minefield Challenge.

Events Not to Miss



Anyteen Cooks Tuesday, Oct. 9, 4-5 pm

Learn how to make something festive and delicious for the Halloween season. We'll provide the recipe and ingredients – all you need to bring is your appetite. Students in grades 6-12 welcome.

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



Rocket Works Wednesday, Oct. 17, 2:30 pm

Blast into physics! As the engineer, you'll go full-throttle and experiment with the basic principles of flight and motion, then launch your own paper rocket. Brought to you by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Students in grades 6-12 welcome.

The Armory at Brighton Cultural Center
300 Strong St.
Brighton, CO
303-655-2026



Guinness World Record-Breaking Saturday, Oct. 20, 1-2 pm

Think you and your family have what it takes to break a world record? Put your skills to the test during this event filled with thrilling trials, shocking facts and the chance to be in history books.

Anythink Wright Farms
5877 E. 120th Ave.
Thornton, CO
303-405-3200

from page 2

makerspace at Anythink Brighton, funded by the Library Services and Technology Act, provides us with yet another opportunity to create active learning spaces in our libraries. Last but not least, the digital learning lab that we will open at Anythink Wright Farms in spring 2013 is our first digital creativity lab, helping us support teens in content creation and creative collaboration.

All of these projects form the basis of library services in the future. Libraries aren't just a place to check out books – they are places to learn new skills. They are places where you might get an idea, then build something, make something, invent something. And that invention might be a new career, a different life path or a new way of thinking.

Welcome to the new world of libraries....

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

from page 7

Josh Linkner, entrepreneur and bestselling author of *Disciplined Dreaming*, kicked things off with an outstanding session on how to nurture and celebrate creativity as one of our main cultural assets – and how this can drive innovation. He wove storytelling with multimedia and workshop-style activities that inspired attendees to self-identify as creative individuals. In fact, 95 percent of attendees surveyed after the conference left saying, "I am a creative person."

Described as an "immersive experience," R-Squared attendees selected a specific track or "experience" rather than bouncing between one-hour sessions. There were four main areas of focus: Customer Curiosity, Creative Spaces, Abundant Community and Culture. Attendees were with their same group over the course of two days to help build a strong network of fellow risk-takers while closely examining themes related to these topics.

"I believe that active engagement promotes learning and transformation more than sitting in the room and watching PowerPoint or Keynote slides go by," says Michael Stephens, assistant professor at San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science, in his "Office Hours" column for *Library Journal* about R-Squared. "We were up, we were talking, we were writing and sharing. We were walking around the room answering questions."

Topher Lawton, R-Squared attendee and student of Syracuse University's iSchool, writes in his blog: "R-Squared brought together an incredible group of people, and showed them what a difference can be made when we all work together. The ongoing conversations will change the nature of librarianship."

Learn more about the conference at rsquaredconference.org.



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