

spark

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Prepare for the Unexpected

Be a part of the
experience

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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.

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On the cover: Goats at Anythink Wright Farms.

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Visit us at anythinklibraries.org.

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A Letter from the Director

"If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."
- Marcus Tullius Cicero

Harvest time at Anythink is filled with abundant gardens. When the idea for community gardens first came to my attention from Anythink Commerce City Manager Deborah Hogue and Public Services Director Ronnie Storey-Ewoldt, it seemed like a natural fit. Anythink had extra land on a number of our properties. Creating opportunities for people to work together, learn from each other and grow their own vegetables and flowers is an extension of a learning/participatory library.

The base funding came originally from a federal grant through Tri-County Health Department, "Communities Putting Prevention to Work." The goal of this project was to increase opportunities for people to make healthy choices related to food and physical activity. Working with Denver Urban Gardens as our community-based advisor, Anythink coordinated, built and funded the balance of the infrastructure for our three community gardens. Our original idea of creating opportunities for our community to grow and harvest their own food was and still is the key goal.

However, working with Denver Urban Gardens, we quickly began to understand the larger goal was as important as healthy vegetables. Their mission statement:

"Growing community, one garden at a time."

The concept of our community gardens is unique: The gardens are organized and op-

erated by the gardeners themselves. There is a garden steering committee at each library comprised of volunteer community gardeners. These steering committees guide the decisions of the gardens and in effect "own" the management. The result? Creating a community that works together to foster both individual and common goals is as important as growing food.

According to the 2009 *Health & Place* article "Strengthening neighborhoods and health through community gardens," community gardens "give rise to a range of social processes, including social connections, reciprocity, mutual trust, collective decision-making, civic engagement and community building, all important processes associated with improving individual health and strengthening neighborhoods."

As we enjoy these last days of summer, Anythink is grateful to be part of our Adams County community that supports growing healthy communities, one garden (or library) at a time.



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The Idea Box at Oak Park Public Library engages customers in new and exciting ways.

Transforming Spaces for Creativity, Interaction

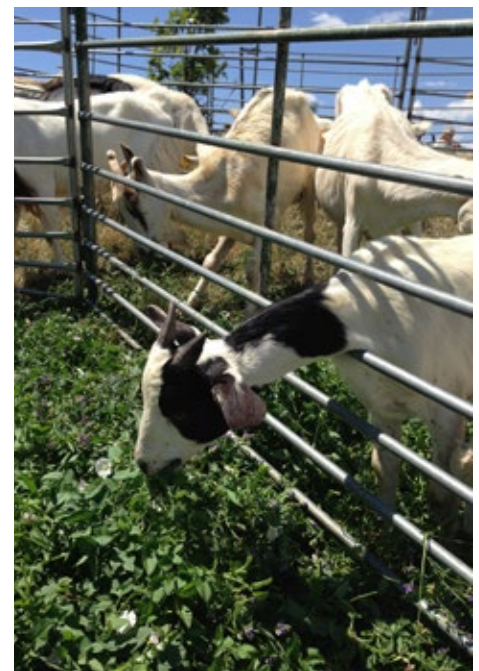
If you happened to stop by Anythink Wright Farms during late July and early August, you might have noticed something a little different. Whether it was the sight or the sound or maybe even the smell, it was hard not to take note of a herd of goats grazing on the weeds and plants scattered across the grounds. The 296 goats did more than landscape the area; they also captured the attention and curiosity of customers, neighbors and passersby. Young community members, some of whom had never been to a farm or seen a goat in action, were petting and feeding the animals, asking their caregivers if they could return the next day for one more glimpse.

Libraries are no longer just about checking out books and media. They're also

about creating experiences and memories. At Anythink, we work hard to make our libraries places where customers can stumble upon something new and interact with the people and spaces around them. Whether that means turning the library grounds into a goat feeding area or setting up an exhibition inside a meeting room, there's always a way to transform spaces to make them more interactive.

MAKERSPACES

Their name alone lets you know that these are spaces for creation. Increasing in popularity among libraries across the country, makerspaces allow customers to turn their library into a space for collaboration. Much like The Studio at Anythink Brighton, these



see page 4 Landscaping goats from Urban Kids

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spaces provide the opportunity to host community workshops, whether they be focused on technology, textiles, culinary arts or any number of interests.

At Mountain View Public Library in Mountain View, Calif., Technology Librarian Ann Awakuni is all about engaging with a library customer's sense of curiosity. After being inspired by a presentation by Nina Simon, director at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History and author of *The Participatory Museum*, Awakuni decided to explore different ways of implementing more active and interactive programs and displays. Together with her supervisor Paul Simms, Awakuni launched STEAMLab, a series of makerspace programs that support peer-on-peer learning in a culture of creativity.

What can customers find in these workshops? Try: soldering irons, 3D printers, laser cutters, Arduino, eTextiles and even molecular gastronomy like apple juice pearls and chocolate spaghetti. Their tagline: "Because adults need playtime, too."

The workshops allow customers to create and collaborate, and turn the library into more than just a space to study or check out books.

"What I find most important about libraries is our ability to forge important connections," says Awakuni. "We connect people to ideas, to information and

to other people. As someone who likes to dwell in possibility, I love that libraries represent vast possibilities and opportunities for all kinds of people."

NOT JUST A ROOM

Imagine walking inside from a frigid February day into a beautiful, green park space. Now envision yourself moving from a lobby into an underwater adventure. This is what happens in the Idea Box, a participatory space at the Oak Park Public Library in Oak Park, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. Housed in a 19x13-foot space in the library's vestibule, the Idea Box gets a remake every month in an effort to engage with library visitors.

"Every person walking into the main library goes by that area twice: on their way in and their way out," notes Monica Harris, customer service manager at Oak Park Public Library. "We use that experience as a way of bookmarking their library visit."

For Harris, the Idea Box is also an opportunity to connect with customers.

"We want the library to surprise and delight [customers], and we want them to feel amused, enlightened and entertained by the unexpected things they find here," she says. "We also feel that we are a hub of community interaction, and we're often looking for new ways to facilitate that kind of interaction."

It's that connection to the unexpected that helped create the Happiness exhibition here at Anythink.

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The Idea Box brings the outdoors in.



September's Idea Box is devoted to dance, disco ball and all.



Chemicals associated with happiness were on display at Anythink Wright Farms.



Justina Wooten shares the Happiness exhibition

FACES OF ANYTHINK



Beth Massey (top left) with the Mission Wear staff at their downtown location.

From the Streets to Steady Employment

Mission Wear is changing lives, one bag at a time

Have you seen the new bags and purses available for purchase at the Anythink Café at Anythink Wright Farms? Made from the weather-damaged banners that hang in the libraries' parking lots, these bags are more than just recycled chic and sturdy gear. They're also a means of helping women who have had a difficult road get back on their feet. Anythink caught up with Denver-based Mission Wear founder Beth Massey to learn more about how the organization is changing lives, one bag at a time.

Q: Can you explain the mission of Mission Wear?

Beth Massey: Mission Wear is a non-profit sewing business that hires women with obstacles to employment. We work to create reusable products: laptop bags, totes and messenger bags among other great products. They're all made from upcycled materials like marketing banners, denim, T-shirts and burlap coffee

bags, as well as other scrap fabrics from interior designers – all fabrics that would otherwise be in a landfill.

We have a passion to provide a place for women who are in recovery, need the opportunity to begin building their confidence and, sometimes for the first time, a job history. We hire them because they have a past. Mission Wear is a safe place for women to re-enter the workplace.

Q: How did the organization get started?

BM: I started Mission Wear in August 2006. In the spring of 2005, I had mentored a woman coming out of prostitution and addiction, Carrie. Carrie was not able to find a job for several months during our mentor relationship. When she relapsed back into a life of doing drugs and working on the street, I couldn't help feeling that if Carrie had been employed, she would have made different choices.

So in early fall of 2006, when my 4-year-old twins started preschool, and I couldn't stand the idea of using plastic bags any

“We have a passion to provide a place for women who are in recovery, need the opportunity to begin building their confidence...”

longer, I made a reusable shopping bag. It was then that I realized that making bags could be a job for women like Carrie. It began as a small business started in my home with one employee.

Q: How has it grown over the years?

BM: We now have six to eight employees, six industrial sewing machines and our sewing shop.

Q: Are there any particular success stories that stand out in your mind?

BM: We have one gal that worked with us for two years and, after being separated from her family for over 15 years due to incarceration, moved to join them in North Carolina last March 2013. She's now reunited with her family.

Q: What else would you like people to know?

BM: I just think people don't realize how hard it is for women to get jobs if they have a background (felony or incarceration), and employment is so crucial to their recovery and re-entry back into our society.



Anythink banner bags made by Mission Wear are now for sale in the Anythink Café at the Wright Farms location.

In this Day and Age, Why's it so Hard?



Photo by Maximilian Schönherr

At Anythink, our mission is to “open doors for curious minds,” and we have taken great strides to create amazing experiences for our customers. Getting people what they want, when they want it is an important part of making Anythink a destination for our community. And what do people want? Ebooks! In 2012, we had a 76 percent increase in ebook and audiobook checkouts over the previous year. Our online collection is our fourth-largest “branch.” People are reading on tablets, phones, computers – on everything they can, anywhere they can.

So, why's it so hard sometimes to find the title you want? And why is the process so darn cumbersome?

We want to get you that popular title you want, when you want it. We want to provide our customers better service – which means making the process as easy as possible. But libraries everywhere are facing huge challenges when it comes to ebooks and the publishing industry.

Here's the current model:

- **Pricing:** Some publishers charge libraries up to five times more for an ebook than the print edition. For example, Jus-

DID YOU KNOW...

Did you know that by using the “buy it now” button on OverDrive to purchase your own ebooks, Anythink gets a portion of the money back to help buy more ebooks for our collection? This is another great way to support your local Anythink in providing access to information for our community.

tin Cronin's bestseller *The Twelve* costs \$15.51 for the print edition, \$9.99 for the ebook on Amazon and \$84 for a library ebook.^[1] This makes it hard for libraries with limited funds to purchase these bestsellers. It's a huge strain on library budgets and frustrating for organizations trying to meet community needs.

- **Availability:** There are some publishers who won't even sell ebooks to libraries. This is changing little by little, but it makes getting access to some of the biggest bestsellers very difficult. This is not an issue among all publishers. It's the “big 6” who will not sell to libraries under the same conditions they sell to the pub-

lic. These publishers control 90 percent of the bestsellers.

- **Non-ownership:** When the library does buy an ebook, this does not mean that they own the content. It's basically “leased” to the library for a certain number of checkouts. This also means that we can't move these ebooks to a different server, change the terms of checkout, or make them available on certain devices – as much as we'd like to.
- **Accessibility:** Because of these restrictions, it's not always easy to check out ebooks and audiobooks. There's no one-click solution like there is with companies like Amazon. It's why we have different platforms that each require different software and different apps.

We're working with publishers, vendors and the library community to help find solutions. But what can you do?

- **Contact leaders** – Find contact information for your elected officials and tell them you're concerned about this issue.
- **Read ebooks** – No matter where the book comes from or the format, one thing is for sure – we love reading! Whether you checkout ebooks from Anythink or buy them from your favorite bookseller, reading ebooks is a great way to show that libraries and their customers can be great partners with publishers.
- **Contact publishers** – Visit anythinklibraries.org/blog/why-is-it-so-hard for a list of publishers and their contact information. If you feel as strongly as we do about this, let them know that their inequitable practices hurt our communities and constituents who depend on their public libraries for unrestricted access to information. ^[1]

^[1] From Urban Libraries Council one-page summary “Libraries, Publishers and Public Access to Ebooks,” urbanlibraries.org/filebin/pdfs/EBooks_Summary.pdf

See more at anythinklibraries.org/blog/why-is-it-so-hard.

New Books: Check 'Em Out

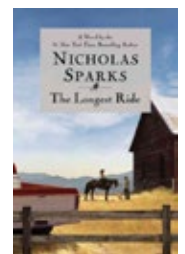
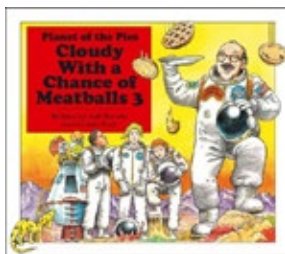
We've got great new titles in September for children and adults at Anythink.

CHILDREN

- *Frog Trouble* by Sandra Boynton
- *The Screaming Staircase (Lockwood & Co., Book One)* by Jonathan Stroud
- *Survivors #3: Darkness Falls* by Erin Hunter
- *The Missing: Risked* by Margaret Peterson Haddix
- *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 3: Planet of the Pies* by Judi Barrett, illus. by Isidre Mones

ADULT

- *The Secret Keeper* by Beverly Lewis
- *Second Watch* by J.A. Jance
- *Who Asked You? A Novel* by Terry McMillan
- *The Longest Ride* by Nicholas Sparks
- *Martha Stewart's Cakes* by Martha Stewart Living editors



ADULTS LEARN THROUGH PLAY, TOO

We all have great memories of visiting the library as kids, checking out books and participating in crafts or story times. But the library isn't just a great place for kids. It's also a destination for adults to get their hands dirty and have some fun. At Anythink, we understand that adults learn through play, too. That's why we offer some great adult programs just for you.

Like what? Here are some of the topics our most recent adult programs and events have covered:

- Cooking
- Books
- Financial planning
- Music
- Immigration
- Jewelry-making
- Genealogy

DID YOU KNOW...

- **You can save money.** In 2010, the average American spent \$2,504 on entertainment, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. All adult programs at Anythink are free.
- **You can get in on the fun.** This summer, Anythink saw a huge rise in attendance at adult programs. Some locations saw up to an 80 percent increase.
- **You can make new friends.** Adult programs give you the opportunity to meet and collaborate with other people in your community.

Have a suggestion for an adult program you'd like to see at the library? Share it with us at ithink@anythinklibraries.org.

Events Not to Miss



Fashion U **Tuesdays, Oct. 1, 8, 15 & 22, 6:30-8 pm**

Join Artist in Residence Daisy Reyes for a design adventure. Create fashion and accessory pieces, including pouches, hats, capes and more. No sewing experience required. Appropriate for teens and adults. Please visit our online calendar to register.

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



Zombie Dance **Tuesday, Oct. 22, 4-5:30 pm**

Get in the Halloween spirit with a zombie dance session! Recreate “Thriller” moves, dress in your favorite zombie gear and apply creepy makeup. Snacks provided. Appropriate for students in grades 6-12.

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



From the Page to the Stage **Friday, Nov. 1, 6-7 pm**

Experience the wonder of ballet with dancers from the Colorado Ballet Studio Company. This performance takes place in the auditorium at the Skyview Campus for Mapleton Public Schools. Appropriate for all ages.

Anythink York Street
8990 York Street
Thornton, CO 80229
303-405-3234

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

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In October 2012, Anythink Wright Farms concierge Justina Wooten had an idea. It came to her after watching *Happy*, a documentary that follows people from around the world to find out, through observation and scientific research, what it is that makes them happy. The conclusion?

“It showed that the people who had the most gratitude were the happiest,” says Wooten. “It had nothing to do with possessions.”

This concept sparked in her an idea for a small interactive area in the library, otherwise known to Anythink staff as an “experience zone”: Create a fish bowl full of prompts for people to experience happiness by “paying it forward.” The prompts could be as simple as holding a door open for someone or calling an old friend. But then the idea grew. What would happen if Anythink took an already

participatory experience zone and turned it into an even larger exhibition? Could the library engage with customers in a new and comprehensive way?

Staff took on the challenge and, inspired by the Idea Box, wound up completely transforming a plain conference room into a fully hands-on exploration of all things happiness. Panels explained chemical compounds and the science of happiness. Participants were met with a series of quotes to help jog their thoughts. Herbs and coffee were collected to be touched and smelled. A small fountain was installed to give the room a calming sound and sense. And then there were the action elements: origami leaves with notes of personal happiness, postcards, a guest book and, of course, the fish bowl full of pay-it-forward prompts.

The end result was a full transformation of one room into an area where customers

could relax, learn, create and be inspired. And they did just that. Staff received dozens of compliments about the space, and one family even made it their new destination.

“We don’t have to go out to a restaurant or to the mall,” they remarked. “We can just come here and have this experience.”



Customers share their happiness in the form of origami hearts in the Happiness exhibition.



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