



Community Engagement in Libraries: A Primer

Presented by: Amy Butcher

Manager, Community Engagement at Georgina Public Library



- **About me**
- Been working in public libraries since 2016
- Have worked two Downtown Urban Libraries (Barrie Public Library and Regina Public Library)
- I currently work at Georgina Public Library which is more rural



What is community engagement?

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with community members — be they library customers, residents, faculty, students or partner organizations— to address issues for the betterment of the community. (From ALA)



- **Community Engagement Exercise**
- Pretend that I am a non-profit organization in town. What questions may you ask me to better understand my needs?



- **Questions you can ask organizations to identify your shared goals/priorities.**
- What does your organization do?
- What demographic/s does your organization primarily serve?
- What are some goals your organization has?
- What are some things your organization does well or is most proud of?
- What are the goals of your organization?
- Is there anything you feel you might not have enough of that is preventing you from achieving those goals?



What does it mean to be community-led?


- Learning about the needs of the community you are trying to build a relationship with.
- Letting the community/organization tell you what they need.
- Making relationship building a priority.

- **From the Working Together Project-Community-Led Libraries Toolkit:**

- *“Librarians have important skills and information to share with low-income communities. The community has important knowledge of itself. The effort in this project will be to take a community development approach to putting library skills at the service of the community by working with them to link library services to community understanding of its needs.”*



- **Knowing your community**
 - What services/businesses are in your community?
 - Which services (grocery, doctor etc) are easy for people to get to?
 - Which services are harder for people to get to?
 - Which non-profits are in your Town?
 - Which businesses are in your Town?
 - Which demographics does my community primarily consist of?
 - What schools are in my community?
- **How do I gather this data?**
 - Look at the Canada Census
 - Town Website (living here section)
 - Google search
 - Asset Mapping (walking around community, how far away things are)

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- **Types of Community Engagement in Libraries**
 - **Outreach:** Delivering a message out in the community that the library believes to be important.
 - **Consultation:** Consists of getting information on what the community wants or needs. (surveys, focus groups)
 - **Social/Community Development:** Libraries sit as service provider partners at the table during community undertakings, such as the development of community-wide crime reduction strategies, literacy initiatives, or early childhood education strategies.
 - **Community Development in a Library Context:** Working directly with marginalized community members/groups to plan library services. Strives for meaningful community member engagement in library services.



- **Community Engagement examples**
 - Early Literacy
 - School Age
 - Tween and Teen
 - Adults
 - Seniors
 - Newcomers
 - Indigenous
 - Vulnerable Individuals

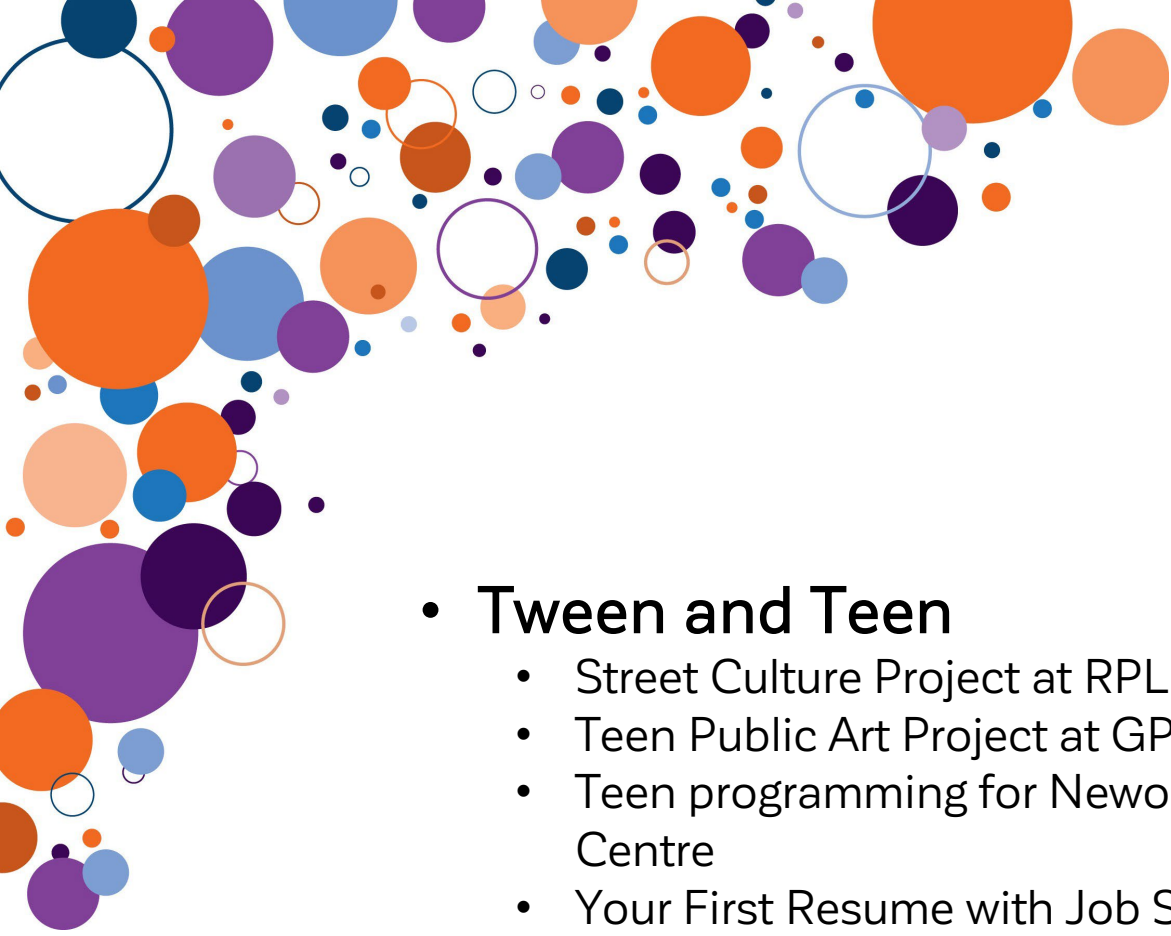


- **Early Literacy**
 - Offsite Family Storytime at EarlyON
 - Library visit with Play YQR



- **School Age**

- Pi Day Community Event with Saskatchewan Science Centre
- Having a GPL booth at school wellness events to promote Summer Reading and Learning Club
- Hockey Night at GPL– community partnership with Georgina ICE Hockey Team to celebrate release of “The Three Canadian Pigs: A Hockey Story” by homegrown author Jocelyn Watkinson



- **Tween and Teen**
 - Street Culture Project at RPL
 - Teen Public Art Project at GPL
 - Teen programming for Newo-Yotina Friendship Centre
 - Your First Resume with Job Skills at GPL
 - Therapy dogs for High School Students at GPL (Partner Dogs Canada)
 - Regina Open Door at RPL



- **Adults**

- All Candidates Meet and Greet Event
- Library information booth at wedding shows
- Library information booth at Seedy Saturday
- Library information booth at Music in the Streets
- Literary Trivia at a local pub
- Georgina Chamber of Commerce Networking events



- **Seniors**

- Literary Trivia at Hospice Georgina
- Seniors Social event with Routes Connecting Communities
- Caregiving movie screening with CARP (Canadian Association for Retired Persons)
- Club 55 Outreach



- **Newcomers**

- Library presentation at Georgian College
- Showcasing Arabic Culture event at BPL
- Newcomer Welcome Centre services at GPL
- English Conversation Circle at GPL
- Partnering with Regina Open Door to run a Reconciliation for Newcomers with speaker John Lagimodiere
- Ancestral Voices BIPOC virtual author speaker series with York/Durham Libraries



- **Indigenous**

- Celebrating Metis Heritage and Culture (partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute and Metis Nation Western Nation III)
- Louis Riel Birthday Celebration
- Elder in Residence
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation partner programming with Georgina Island

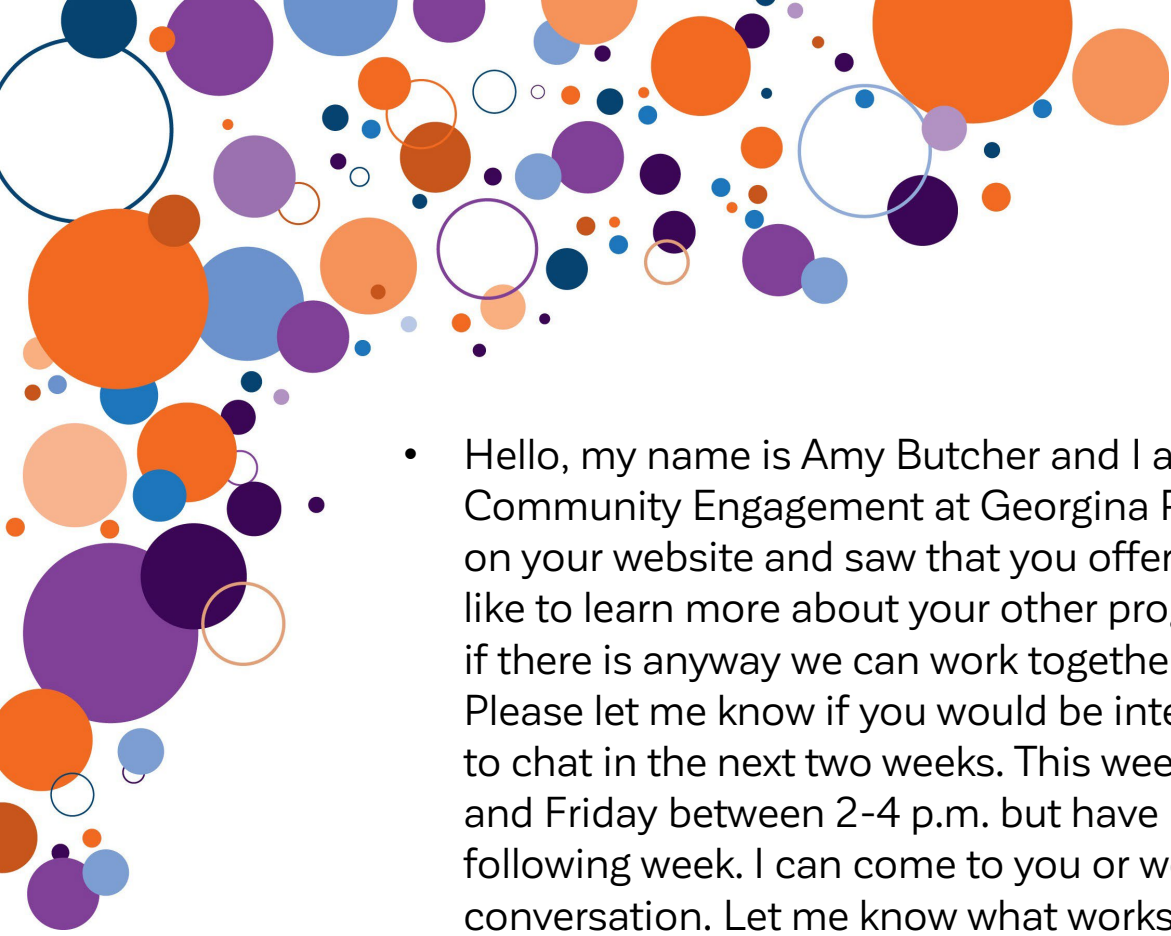


- **Vulnerable Individuals**

- How to Create an Email Address presentation at Carmichael Outreach
- Computer donation to YWCA and Carmichael Outreach
- Partnership with University of Regina to host social Work practicum students
- Library information booth at YWCA and Carmichael Outreach
- Soup in the Park with Street Culture Project
- Library information booth at Souls Harbour Rescue Mission



- Tell me about an organization you would like to approach after this presentation and 1 to 2 questions you may ask them.



- Hello, my name is Amy Butcher and I am the Manager, Library Community Engagement at Georgina Public Library. I was looking on your website and saw that you offer programs for youth. I would like to learn more about your other programs and services and see if there is anyway we can work together to support your programs. Please let me know if you would be interested in setting up a time to chat in the next two weeks. This week I am available Thursday and Friday between 2-4 p.m. but have more availability the following week. I can come to you or we can have a Zoom conversation. Let me know what works best for you. Looking forward to hearing from you!
- Sincerely,
- Amy



Questions?



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