

CITY OF TORRANCE
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: January 6, 2011

TO: Aram Chaparyan, Assistant to the City Manager
FROM: Hillary Theyer, Acting City Librarian
SUBJECT: Torrance Public Library/Torrance Unified School
District Joint Projects

Torrance Public Library (TPL) staff has taken part in several meetings with the Torrance Unified School District (TUSD) regarding joint projects and collaboration, particularly on the subject of the two entities' libraries. Most recently, I met with Mary Lou Cordaro, West High School Librarian, to discuss several issues raised by the Council Citizen Development and Enrichment Committee.

The first issue discussed was a joint catalog:

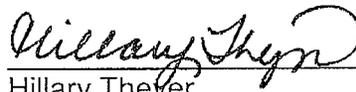
- The four TUSD high schools do not currently maintain the same online catalog, thus the concern is not the merging of two systems, but at least three;
- High school libraries handle textbook distribution and use their online catalog system to track the books. TPL does not currently have a system module to handle textbooks;
- High school library books are not intended to circulate outside of a school's student body, thus a joint catalog would have to be configured so as not allow general TPL patrons to place requests or reserves on TUSD books. Currently, TPL's online catalog is *open* – any library user may view and place a hold on a circulating item. The current system would need to be modified to limit the requesting of books only to the applicable student body; a comprehensive review to determine if that is possible, and the cost, would need to be undertaken.
- The cost of an online catalog depends (in part) on the size of the collection. A determination of how many books would need to be migrated, the type of cataloging required for each, ease of converting from one system to another, and the additional cost to add the resulting items would need to be made.
- West High students can use an Internet terminal in the school library to access TPL's website - search the catalog, use the databases, and place holds on materials. This requires the use of a current TPL card.
- Fees to request material at TPL are currently \$.75 each for adult items and \$.15 each for youth items. If requests were to be delivered directly to a TUSD facility, collection of these fees would need to be resolved.
- TPL and TUSD may have different limits and restrictions on library use, and may have different laws relating to privacy and confidentiality of library records. Combining records into an online system would require legal guidance.

- A joint catalog, with the books delivered and returned to any TUSD high school along with any TPL facility, would require additional resources, i.e., an additional part-time employee along with a vehicle. TPL currently employs one part-time employee (20 hours per week) using one vehicle for this purpose. Although stops at TUSD headquarters to return District books left in Torrance's libraries is accommodated approximately once per month, the current schedule cannot accommodate visits to all four high school campuses on a regular basis. In addition, the burden would fall on TUSD staff to sort its books from TPL books, and in turn ready TPL books for transport. If TPL staff were responsible for the transport, regulations regarding driving a vehicle onto campus or having access to each would also need to be examined.

We also discussed current barriers that prevent students from using TPL, the primary being that students often incur fines and/or fee balances with TPL – for lost library cards, lost items, overdue materials, etc. We brainstormed about structuring a potential amnesty program* tied to high school entry supported financially by both the City and TUSD (*any fines and/or fees incurred prior to entering high school would be expunged on a one-time-only basis). TPL and TUSD would jointly need to determine exact costs and logistics of such a program.

Also discussed were ways to encourage TUSD students entering high school to use the Library, i.e., TPL staff conducting orientations at the schools or being present at the school librarian's orientation. Opportunities for cross-promotion and collaboration will continue to be pursued.

In addition, Youth Services Supervisor Gail Van Vranken recently met with two reading specialists to discuss the future of TPL's Reading Partners and Writing Partners programs. Though each was placed on hiatus for 2011, the specialists were in favor of both programs in concept, and agreed with Gail's desire to reinstate both during the school year at a time when extra assistance for elementary school students struggling with reading would be the most beneficial. Due to reduced staffing levels, TPL will be unable to implement the programs in 2011, however the Youth Services Supervisor will continue to plan and discuss its realization with TUSD.



Hillary Theyer
Acting City Librarian