

What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community with Pat Wagner

What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community

~~~~~  
Thursday, March 18, 2021



with Pat Wagner  
Pattern Research, Inc., Denver, Colorado - [patternresearch.com](http://patternresearch.com)

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## Meet Pat Wagner

- Library consultant and trainer since 1978
- Proud graduate of Tremper HS in Kenosha
- Frequent visitor to Wisconsin libraries
- Focus: Skills that support library success
- First library leadership institute: 1993
- Images: *Pixabay.com*

Gilbert M. Simmons Memorial Library  
Dedicated May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1900



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## Key Idea

***Community Collaboration***  
**is a win-win proposition:**  
**More resources for the library,**  
**more programs and services**  
**for your community.**

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# What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community with Pat Wagner

## Outcomes

- **Identify potential partners.**
- **Start with small-scale projects to learn about each other's style when it comes to managing people and projects.**
- **Create strategic alliances where you can share missions, visions, values, and goals with other organizations.**

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## Agenda

- **The Benefits of Community Collaborations**
  - Reports From System Libraries
- **Examples of Potential Partners and Collaborations**
- **The Challenges**
- **Where to Start: Small Steps**
- **Creating Strategic Alliances**
- **Managing Joint Projects**
- **Evaluating Collaborations**
- **Resources: Orton Family Foundation**

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**Caveat**

**Ensure that everyone benefits!**

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**Benefits to Libraries**

- Leverage resources and reputation.
- Build library presence outside of building.
- Test services before committing money.
- Expand expertise with minimal cost.
- Offer services from other government agencies outside of their normal office hours.
- Bring library services to new audiences.
- Attract new people to the library building.
- Funders *love* collaborative projects.

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**Benefits to Partners**

- Leverage their resources and reputation.
- Borrow the library's credibility.
- Test services before committing money.
- Expand expertise with minimal cost.
- Offer services outside of their normal office hours.
- Bring their services to new audiences.
- Attract new people to their organization as clients, volunteers, supporters, or funders.
- Funders *love* collaborative projects.

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# What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community with Pat Wagner

## Benefits to Communities

- Services more convenient: time and location
- More and different services and programming
- Appreciate careful use of tax money
- Better addressing community issues
- More opportunities to participate
- New awareness about community resources
- Funders *love* collaborative projects.
- Bring more visitors with money!

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## Discussion

**Has your library collaborated with another agency or organization in your community to partner for services, programs, resources, staff, facilities, or events?**

**If so, how did your partnership benefit the partners and the greater community?**

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# What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community with Pat Wagner

## Homework

- What are three organizations that you have recently worked with to deliver services to your community or institution?
- Why did your library partner with them? Are you happy with the outcome?  
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- What are three organizations that you would like to work with but never have, so far?
- Why do you want to work with them?

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## Recently You Worked With

- Health Department
- Lions Club
- School District
- Historical Society
- UW - E. Asian Studies
- Kiwanis Club
- Police/sheriff Depts.
- Community television
- 4-H Clubs
- Chamber of Commerce
- Girl Scouts
- Teen Court
- Community Club
- Residential Home
- Hospitals/Clinics
- Local Fair

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## Why Partnered With Them

- Offered community room to school during construction; showed library is open and safe
- Grant opportunities to improve programming and collection development and produce historic video.
- Community garden working with city department
- Cops and Kids', reading via Zoom to second graders
- Movie nights, educational programs, and summer activities

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# What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community with Pat Wagner

**Why Partnered With Them**

- **Public meeting spaces, WIC clinic, adult literacy program.**
- **Combine summer school/summer reading, share and disseminate information, lunch with a librarian, EASP programming, Zoom to your Room, delivery of materials.**
- **Blood pressure kits, opioid education, Narcan supply/training, Reach out and Read, community story times**

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Happy With the Outcomes?

**Universally  
!!!!YES!!!!**

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**You Want to Partner With...**

|                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • <b>Chamber of Comm.</b>  | • <b>Western Tech College</b> |
| • <b>Community org</b>     | • <b>Health organization</b>  |
| • <b>American Legion</b>   | • <b>Dairy Council</b>        |
| • <b>Health department</b> | • <b>Agricultural groups</b>  |
| • <b>City departments:</b> | • <b>Food pantry</b>          |
| <b>Park and recreation</b> | • <b>Police department</b>    |
| <b>Fire department</b>     | • <b>Arts community</b>       |
|                            | • <b>H. S. educators</b>      |

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## Examples of Partners

- Hospitals
- Social services
- Orchestras
- Music groups
- Academic libraries
- Higher ed
- Special libraries
- School libraries
- Performance groups
- Humane societies
- Museums
- Public libraries
- Chambers of commerce
- Service orgs
- Prisons
- Nonprofits
- School districts
- Homeschool orgs
- Religious orgs
- Clinics
- Medical
- Professional associations
- Art galleries
- Historical societies
- Foundations
- Military bases
- Veterans' groups
- Bookstores
- Retailers
- Small Business
- Corporations
- Federal agencies
- State agencies
- Community groups

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## Examples of Partnerships

- (NM) Public library and church offer homework evenings on church property with library staff in attendance.
- (CO) Public library partners with local nonprofit agency to provide immigrant/refugee office and services.
- (PA) City has library manage the city's art and culture budget.
- (WA) Library and social services agency partner on services.
- (KY) Public library partners with academic library, Chamber of Commerce, and federal agency to create business and job creation center.

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# What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community with Pat Wagner

## Examples of Partnerships

- (IL) Partner with agency to sell hunting and fishing licenses
- (NM) Boys and Girls Club hosts library branch onsite.
- (ND) State library offers cataloging to historical society.
- (WI) Library offers space for community policing office.
- (NJ) Certified by federal govt to offer passport services
- (CO) Public and community college libraries share building, staff, services, and collections.
- (CA) Desert public library partners with local garden club to host rose gardens onsite.

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## Examples of Partnerships

- (CA) Library uses school buildings to provide programming.
- (ID) Partner with Hispanic businesses to host fair
- (NY) Public library and hospital create patient family collection
- (MT) Partner with courts to produce self-help divorce packets
- (KS) Provide offices for visiting nurses; they offer services
- (KS) Partner with animal shelter to host adoption events onsite
- (CO) Public library and church offer secular after-school activities for children bussed to school building.
- (CO) Partnered with Russian embassy in San Francisco to offer onsite validation of papers for Russian citizens in Denver

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## Examples of Partnerships

**Colorado Libraries Collaborate (CLC) allows library cardholders to borrow materials from all public libraries, most school and academic libraries, and several special libraries and cultural heritage organizations.**

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## Discussion

**Has your library collaborated with another agency or organization in your community to partner for services, programs, resources, staff, facilities, or events?**

**If the answer is no, why not?**

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## Challenges

- **Personal challenges**
  - How you think and feel
- **Library challenges**
  - Resources, staff, existing plans
- **Community challenges**
  - Culture, personalities, history

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# What Leaders Do: Creating Great Community Collaborations and Sharing Resources in Your Community with Pat Wagner

## Personal Challenges

- Emotional discomfort with collaboration
- Making time for community outreach
- Don't know what to say to important people
- Don't know what to say to "different" people
- Don't know where to start
- Past bad experiences with joint projects
- Don't want to "make waves"
- Reputation: What if I fail?
- Overwhelmed if the project succeeds

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## Library Challenges

- Do we have the staff?
- Do we have the budget and resources?
- Do these projects fit our strategic goals?
- What training will be needed?
- What will we have to stop doing?
- Who is going to be angry at us for stopping something?
- Do we have trustee and local government support?
- Will it require building modifications?
- Will the projects be sustainable: New overhead?

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## Community Challenges

- Not stepping on toes of current projects and partnerships
- Need to coordinate community calendars
- Who did we forget and will be upset with us?
- Dealing with existing power structures
- People we want to work with today have bad history with previous library partnerships
- Dealing with local legal barriers
- What happens if the partner backs out?
- Building relationships with underserved populations

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## Discussion

**Has your library collaborated with another agency or organization in your community to partner for services, programs, resources, staff, facilities, or events?**

**What first steps did you take?**

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## Small Steps

**Every collaboration is an experiment. Mistakes will happen; keep them small and recoverable.**

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**The Secret**

**Look for professional and personal points of commonality.**

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**Build Your Support Team**

- Engage staff from the beginning for buy-in and to tap into their networks.
- Ensure you have trustee/official support.
- *Map your community:* Which are the potential partners that you already have strong connections with?
- Recruit library-friendly champions and mentors from the greater community for advice and support.
- Find experienced “salespeople” to go with you on calls.
- Keep asking: Who did we forget to ask?

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**Staff Guidelines**

- What kinds of projects would support the library’s strategic plan?
- The project calendar: Is there time?
- What information do they need to collect? Why-What-When-Who-How-How Much
- What will they have to give up?
- Then, allow staff to initiate partnerships with their peers in other organizations.

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**Test the Waters**

- **Research their reputation.**  
The pros and cons of charismatic leaders
- **Modest budgets and staff commitments**
- **Single events or projects with end date**
- **Limited involvement – name on a banner**
- **Send a volunteer to their event**
- **Short agreement letter or email: required**

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**Caveat**

**Never Assume that:**

*You can get the permit.*

*Your insurance will cover it.*

*The weather will be fine.*

*Life won't happen.*

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## Discussion

**Does your library have a current strategic plan? Have you ever created a joint strategic plan with another library or organization?**

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## Creating Strategic Alliances

- **Combine individual strategic plans:**
  - **Vision and mission**
  - **Goals and projects**
  - **Staff and resources**
  - **Customers**
- **Create one joint strategic plan.**
- **Create shared operations plan.**

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## Focus on the Shared Goal

- **Hybrid libraries: shared facilities**  
School/public and public/college
- **Joint public library/school district programs**
- **Joint public libraries across municipal and county lines**
- **Sharing facilities with museums, art galleries, and performance centers**

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**Caveat**

**Each party will lose  
some autonomy;  
Be transparent  
from the start.**

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**Discussion**

**Have you ever managed  
a collaboration?  
What worked? What didn't?**

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**Executing Joint Projects**

- **Start small - test and fail.**
  - **Small chunks**
  - **Specific deadlines.**
- **Clarify concrete outcomes.**
- **Governance: Legitimate authority.**
- **Who is responsible?**
- **Written contract: no surprises.**

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**Governance**

- **Who is in charge, meaning who makes the biggest, hardest decisions?**
- **Who makes which smaller decisions?**
- **Who enforces deadlines and quality?**
- **Staff: Who supervises whom?**
- **Money: Who approves and writes checks?**
- **If it is governance by committee, who is accountable?**

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**Discussion**

**Can you create a shared organizational chart that makes sense to everyone involved?**

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## Evaluating Partnerships

- **Who supervises the partnership?**
- **Weekly reporting is the minimum, daily for ongoing projects and events.**
- **Inputs versus outputs**
- **Descriptive versus measurable**
- **Out of touch means you don't care.**
- **Everyone gets more than they give.**

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## Common Mistakes

- ***“Professional visiting,”* meaning much much talk (and eating) but no action.**
- **Expecting too much, too fast.**
- **No oversight of the team.**
- **Not reaching out to new groups.**
- **Stuck in “process”.**
- **Not serving all parties involved.**

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## The Heart of Community

“...haunted by an ever-present longing for communit ...  
an irresistible need for communication with each other.”

-William H. Willimon and Thomas H. Naylor

*The Abandoned Generation: Rethinking Higher Education*

A **community** is a place where people  
are seriously concerned about each  
other's well-being and act on those feelings.

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## communityheartandsoul.org



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