We’re giving them even more things to love. Even better: digital services have no fines or fees! Brainfuse homework help, HelpNow, and job search help, JobNow; and much more. We’ve added Digital Services to our website, LibraryVisit.org, any time, 24/7. Digital services include: databases for research; digital books; audiobooks; and magazines. These services are available to all patrons, plus in-library supporters of the Library. With the Library’s new website, anyone with internet access can have access to the Library’s digital services and materials, plus in-library services, any time, 24/7.

The work continues: the Library hasn’t stopped listening and hasn’t stopped improving. Just last year, we added the Library Visit program to the website. LibraryVisit.org gives patrons access to the Library’s digital services and materials, plus in-library services, any time, 24/7. We were able to do this because of innovative technology, new funding sources, and a willingness to evolve. In the Library’s 120-year history, this is the first time we’ve announced new services on the Library’s website. What does this mean for you? It means, for one, that you can shop online for the Library’s physical materials, such as books, magazines, and audio and video materials. It also means you can place a hold on physical materials and have them delivered to the library branch of your choice. In addition, you can renew your books online or online and over that people want to be sure children have access to books," said Janet Loew, My Library! Communications and Public Relations Director. She explains that the READ Card was so successful it quickly got her back into good standing with the Conditional Card*, a card which carries no fines, and over that people want to be sure children are free to explore, explore, explore. We’re pleased to announce the introduction of the READ Card. The READ Card can be obtained at any time, 24/7, at any library branch, at any十分钟, or by calling the Library’s Access Line. It’s a card that allows children to borrow books and hearing a story. To make things easier and get baby started on the path to reading, the Library offers a READ Card for children under the age of 12.

Can I get free streaming music? Yes, you can! Can I get magazines? Yes, you can! Can I renew my books online? Yes, you can! eBooks? Yes, you can! Movies? Yes, you can!

Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can!

Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can!

Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can!

Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can!

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Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can! Yes, you can!
New Library Cards & Services Remove Barriers

How the Library Got to ‘Yes’ in Innovative New Services

Since Executive Director Heidi Daniel arrived in town almost three years ago to lead Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County (PLYMC), she set about seeing how the Library could best respond to customer requests and get to “yes!” whenever possible. Couple that strong desire with an outreach to the community to discover what they needed and wanted from their library system and the result is that today, the Library is able to say, “Yes, You Can!” more often than ever, thanks to a number of innovative new services.

“We sat down with community members in small conversational meetings throughout the county, and at almost every meeting, we heard concerns about people’s inability to use their library. For example, there are those who cannot get to a library, children who have difficulty getting a library card, and patrons with fines and fees which block their access to library materials,” Ms. Daniel says. “I thought it was interesting that many of the roadblocks were our own internal policies and decided that it was time to examine if we still needed them.”

Community conversations were an important part of the My Library 2020 Strategic Planning Process. The conversations, in the style of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, have been used by the Library for a number of years. At these small, kitchen-table style meetings, people are free to share their aspirations for their community and, in doing so, many elements come up as part of the conversation that are pertinent to the services and materials the Library offers or is considering.

“The comments I heard were food for thought and I wanted more than ever to locate road blocks to library service and see how we could remove them,” Ms. Daniel said. She worked with Library administrators and staff in meetings in which brainstorming was encouraged and ideas and innovations were put on the table. “I’m happy to say that we’ve made quite a few changes with the goal of making our library system more accessible to everyone.”

POP-UP LIBRARY BRINGS THE LIBRARY TO THE COMMUNITY

At many community conversations we heard nostalgic talk about the bookmobiles which the Library no longer operates. We were asked, “What if you could do a temporary library that can be in the community and circulate books, like those pop-up events that happen?” That was a question that started her thinking. If people don’t come to the library, can we bring the library to them? The answer was, “Yes, We Can!”

For the solution, we looked for a fast and cost-efficient way to get into the community and offer real services, not just information and promotion, but collections and services. Much planning went into what would be called the “Pop-Up Library,” giving a nod to community input. And within a few weeks, the Library launched a Pop-Up Library service. In this outreach service, Library staff members take computers, books, A/V materials and library information off-site to locations such as festivals, schools, businesses and more. Their tables are clearly marked with banners and tablecloths identifying them as the Library. Staff members check out materials, sign up people for library cards, and answer questions.

“The Pop-Up Library isn’t just outreach, it’s much more. And we’ve already seen ways it has touched the lives of our customers,” notes Ms. Daniel.

PLYMC Librarian Hayley McEwing, who brings the Pop-Up Library to the community, has relayed stories that show how this service inspires and enriches lives.

Our Pop-Up Library team regularly visits a local low-income housing facility. Ms. McEwing notes that at one such visit, an expectant mother came with her two children, both under age 5. Library staff saw that she was blocked due to fines and fees; they quickly got her back into good standing with the Conditional Card*, which provides a second chance for blocked customers. This mom asked about the READ Card* for kids, a card which carries no fines, and she decided it was a good fit for her little ones.
While the family was at the Pop-Up location, librarians connected the kids with books which they explored together. They pointed out letters in “An Alphabet Salad: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z,” by Sarah L. Schuette. “It was a good experience for both our customers and our staff,” says Ms. McEwing. “We reconnected this family to library services for an hour.”

In recalling another visit to a Pop-Up visit, Ms. McEwing recalled helping a childcare group that surprised them by shouting ‘I Love My Library!’ when they left. She says, “It warmed our hearts! Hooray for creating a special community and Library space outside of the Library’s walls.”

**READ CARD – SO KIDS ARE NOT BLOCKED FROM BOOKS**

“As we listened to the community in the various kitchen conversation sessions, we heard over and over that people want to be sure children have access to books,” said Janet Loew, Communications and Public Relations Director. "We'd hear comments like: ‘You need to get books into the hands of kids who don’t otherwise have an opportunity to read’ and ‘What about kids who are blocked because of fines?’ And we agreed.”

Staff members put their heads together and ideas bubbled up. What if we had a card that did not require a parent’s signature because there was no financial obligation? Fines can block a child, so what about a children’s card with no fines?

Ms. Daniel listened and approached Library Trustees with the idea of a new card for children which would not require a parental signature and which would be fine-free. The child could take out two books and once those books were returned, they could take out two more. The Executive Director wanted to start a pilot program in one or two Youngstown City Schools to test this card. Trustees agreed. The schools were then chosen by Josephine Nolfi, Director of Programming and Youth Services for the Library, based on literacy test scores for K-3 students.

A card with a fresh new image on it, which simply said “READ,” was created by the Library’s graphics department. And thus, this new card is called the “READ” card.

“Once we had worked out all the logistics of this new card, the next step was getting into the schools. The Pop-Up Library seemed the perfect way to accomplish this,” Ms. Loew said. Partnerships were formed with several Youngstown schools. Books and materials suitable for the age of the students being served were placed on carts, the staff took laptops, portable WiFi and a willingness to sign kids up for this new, experimental card.

When Pop-Up Library staff began visiting the classes with this new concept and books to check out, they reported feeling warm and welcomed by the students, teachers and school librarians. One library staff member said, “Most of the kids want to show you what they have borrowed. They are so excited and proud!”

Staff members enjoy hearing comments such as this from the students: “You’re from the library! Are you coming to our school tomorrow? I wish you could come every day!”

“Yay! We get books today!”
Two girls who got the same book said, “We’ll read it together.”
“Awesome! New books!”

And from the teachers and school librarians:
“Our third grade students are LOVING their new READ cards! This is one of the best student programs I have ever been part of. We (kids, teachers, and myself) are very grateful that you are offering this type of card and how easy you made it for our students to gain access to eBooks. The impact this is having, especially on struggling readers, is phenomenal.”

“This has been so good for the kids. You are really helping them become readers by putting books in their hands. Most of these kids never visit the library and don’t have access to books.”

“This [pop-up] made literacy soar through the ceiling!”

“Library Day was the favorite of parents and kids and getting a card was their favorite activity.”

One of the teachers mentioned that one girl was so excited about her library card that she slept with it that night!

Ms. Nolfi, who helped design the program, notes, “It’s a huge leap of faith, but we want these kids to be successful.” She explains that the READ Card was so successful it was soon expanded to other schools and is now available to any Mahoning County child.

Involvement from the teachers is significant, as it is important for someone to keep track of the students’ READ cards and make sure their books are returned the next time the Pop-Up came to visit. Teachers reported they were inspired to help because they felt this service was valuable.

Linda Bohannon-White, supervisor of libraries and media services for Youngstown City Schools and one of those who helped develop the program, notes, “I think this is an invaluable asset to our district. Any possibility or opportunity for our students to have access to more materials to read is great. I also hope we’ll be able to establish this throughout the district on a permanent basis.”

**MORE SERVICES ADDED**

A number of other services have been added with the same goal: get more library materials and services into the hands of Library customers. Ideas for these were all sparked by input from the public at conversations and in surveys. These services are detailed below.

**SIMPLY TEEN CARD**
The READ card was such a success for children that the Library created the Simply Teen card to serve teens to age 17. The criteria is the same: check out up to two books, regardless of past history, and have access to computers and digital services. No fines, but materials must be returned.

**DIGITAL CARD**
“Because we know that not all patrons use physical materials or come into a library building, but are avid Internet users, we came up with a special card that serves their needs,” Ms. Loew notes. The Digital Card
gives patrons access to the Library’s digital services and materials, plus in-library computer use and mobile printing. Digital Card holders can use the Library’s website, LibraryVisit.org, any time, 24/7. Digital services include: databases for research; Overdrive downloadable eBooks and audio books; Zinio downloadable magazines, hoopla streaming music, movies, TV shows and audio books; Brainfuse homework help, HelpNow, and job search help, JobNow; and much more. Even better: digital services have no fines or fees!

INSTITUTIONAL STATUS
Institutions, businesses, and schools often have a need for a card to be held by the organization rather than an individual. The answer is the Library’s Institutional Library Card. Identification must be provided, along with the signature of the person who can authorize financial responsibility. This service, while not new, is an important one.

CONDITIONAL STATUS
“We heard stories about adults who were blocked by fines and fees and could not take out materials or use library computers,” notes Ms. Daniel. From the public, we heard things like: “My friend is blocked, but needs the Library’s Internet because he lost his job. He needs a computer and the Internet to find a job.”

Many area residents are dependent on library computers and Internet service for important functions like searching for a job, creating a resume, filling out an application, applying for government services, and more. This second-chance card helps the customer, but still allows the Library to be fiscally responsible in collecting fees.

Patrons with blocked privileges can see a staff member to explore the possibility of having borrowing and computer privileges restored with a Conditional Library Card or go to www.libraryvisit.org.

SENIOR STATUS
“The idea for senior card status came from our awareness that many seniors are retired and living on a fixed income and many find it difficult to get out, especially in severe weather,” Ms. Daniel says.

The Senior Card was created for cardholders aged 65 and over, who will automatically be placed on Senior Status. This allows them to borrow materials with no fines. Also, Mahoning County seniors can choose to have their Library materials mailed to them FREE and returned free through U.S. Mail. For mailed materials, loan periods are extended to 4 weeks for print materials and 2 weeks for DVDs.

SPECIAL DELIVERY
The Special Delivery service has been in place for many years at the Library. It’s for those who have a qualifying reason why they cannot come to a library, such as chronic illness, disability, or inability to drive or find transportation. Services include free Books-By-Mail, similar to the Senior Status. Books are sent to qualifying patrons free of charge through the U.S. Mail. Patrons can mail them back free.

BABY AND ME - ON BOARD
“New moms and dads often find they have little time to get to a library, and yet they have a baby age one or under at home who would benefit from interacting with books and hearing a story. To make things easier and get baby started on the way to a lifetime of reading, the Baby and Me On Board kits were created,” said Ms. Nolfi. Kits are available for families with children from birth to 12 months. They are mailed out to families and contain two books for Mom or Dad, plus five books and one music CD to share with little ones. Kits have been created for two age groups: birth to 6 months old and 7 to 12 months old.

The work continues: the Library hasn’t stopped listening and hasn’t stopped looking at input to determine what’s next. “Through the Library, people connect with materials, they learn and are inspired to grow, and they explore ideas which can enrich their lives. We often hear from the community, ‘I Love My Library.’ We’re giving them even more things to love.”

The year 2014 was a year devoted to responding to input from our community, exploring new services and possibilities, and finding ways to get to “yes” for the benefit of our customers.

With technology expanding at such a rapid rate, each year we are presented with new opportunities to expand or streamline our services, in both the virtual and the real space that the Library occupies.

Our Library staff members are always looking for new ways to get to “yes” and provide our customers with the services they have asked for and value. Additionally, we understand the value of a Library Card to an individual or family-particularly those with the greatest needs.

At PLYMC, we believe in working to get books into the hands of children, with the goal of an even more well-prepared and educated community. We know that access to both books and technology are important components to our community’s success, and we have been focusing on identifying ways we can open up the library to more and more Mahoning County residents. Removing barriers to library service remains one of our top priorities.

We have formed new partnerships and instituted new types of library cards and new services, which are bringing to the community support for education, for workforce development, and even for quality of life. Our dedicated, caring, and friendly staff members are here to help me say, as often as we can, “Yes, yes you can!” at the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County.
connect inspire enrich

We're giving them even more things to love.

The Senior Card was created for cardholders aged 65 and over, who will enjoy the Card for free. To receive a Senior Card, the applicant must be 65 or older, and one form of identification must be presented showing the person's date of birth and current residential address, such as a driver's license, state ID, or a birth certificate. No application forms are required. Library staff will verify the applicant's age and residential address. The Senior Card is issued to the individual who applies for the card.

The Digital Card gives patrons access to the Library's digital services and materials, plus in-library computer use and mobile printing. Digital Card holders can use the Library's services even if they have fines and fees, which block their access to library materials. The service, while not new, is an important one. The Library's Institutional Administrators and staff will evaluate the service and report their findings to the Board of Trustees with the idea of a new card for people who are still blocked from accessing library materials. The new card is called the "READ" card.

The Pop-Up Library isn't just outreach, it's much more. It's a mobile service that provides materials, programs, and services to various populations that have difficulty getting to a library. They are mailed out to families and contain two books for Mom or Dad, plus five books for the children. People can read and return the books and then check out new materials. New moms and dads often find they have little time to get to a library, and yet they have a strong desire to read to their children. The Pop-Up Library allows them to do that. In one case, a family was so grateful that they took the books and read them to their children. They reported feeling warm and fuzzy about the experience.

The Pop-Up Library is a service for those who have a qualifying reason why they cannot come to a library, such as chronic illness, disability, or inability to drive or find transportation. Services are available to any Mahoning County child. The Pop-Up Library is a service that provides materials, programs, and services to various populations that have difficulty getting to a library. They are mailed out to families and contain two books for Mom or Dad, plus five books for the children. People can read and return the books and then check out new materials. New moms and dads often find they have little time to get to a library, and yet they have a strong desire to read to their children. The Pop-Up Library allows them to do that.

Through the Library, people connect to their community, have relayed stories that show how this service has made a difference. They are so excited and proud!
computer use and mobile printing. Digital Card holders can use the Library's digital services and materials, plus in-library access. "Through the Library, people connect to the community," Ms. Daniel says. "I thought it was interesting that many of the people who could not get to a library, children who have difficulty getting a library card, and patrons with fines and blocked privileges were happy to have access to the READ Card.* They are free to share their aspirations for their children in the future."

The Library has come up as part of the conversation that are important functions like searching for a job, creating a resume, filling out an application, and even things like: "My friend is blocked, but needs the Library's Internet because he lost his job." We are always looking at input to determine what's next. 

"I'm happy to say that we've made quite a few changes with the My Library 2020 Strategic Planning goal of making our library system more accessible to everyone." Mayor, City of Youngstown, Cottage of the Blackfeet. And from the teachers and school librarians: "This [pop-up] made literacy soar through the ceiling!" Two girls who got the same book said, "Yay! We get books today!" Isn't that what this is all about?

While the family was at the Pop-Up location, librarians connected with a childcare group that surprised them by shouting 'I Love My Library." In recalling another visit to a Pop-Up visit, Ms. McEwing recalled this type of card and how easy you made it for our students to get more library materials and services into the hands of Library Card holders and patrons. Ms. Daniel listened and approached Library Administrators and staff in meetings in which brainstorming was going on, and she disseminated this information to the organization rather than an individual. The answer is the Library's Institutional Card or go to www.libraryvisit.org. Patrons with blocked privileges can see a staff member to explore the possibility of becoming a Conditional Card holder. Any possibility or outcome is open to exploration. Our Pop-Up Library team regularly visits a local low-income housing facility. Ms. McEwing notes that at one such visit, an expectant mother came with her two children, both under age 5. 

Two girls who got the same book said, "This [pop-up] made literacy soar through the ceiling!" Two girls who got the same book said, "Yay! We get books today!" Isn't that what this is all about?"