Jim Crawford Award for Innovation in Libraries 2014

Adelaide City Libraries

Nomination:
The City Library staff and volunteers- facilitating lifelong learning through participatory, hands-on, experiential learning

“The Library environment is genuinely amazing: having been involved in University libraries for 30 years or more, I thought I understood them pretty well, but the dynamic here really is very special, helped in no little way by the wonderful staff. It was a real privilege just to sit to the side and listen to their interactions with the spectacularly diverse patrons!!” Poet in Residence - Ian Gibbins

Nominators:
Anne Rundle – Team Leader Libraries
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Therese McGowan – Senior Coordinator – Library Customer Service
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Summary

"Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand." — Confucius, around 450 BC

The City Library has been developed using the Community’s Vision for the Adelaide City Library Service that encourages new ways of thinking and supports lifelong learning through creativity, innovation, discovery, play and experimentation. The vision describes a library service that helps people connect, learn and express themselves; that welcomes all ages and histories; is a leader in social, technological and environmental sustainability; is surprising and fun, and provides an iconic city destination.

The City Library, it's philosophy, spaces and method of operation are all about the possibilities and opportunities of life. Library staff are facilitators and together with our volunteers, they have the shared skills and passion for libraries and technology combined with a desire to share this knowledge with others. Staff and volunteers provide informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed on to novices.
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"Libraries need spaces that allow people to test ideas, experiment, make a temporary installation and engage with others in their community that they might otherwise not meet." - City Library architects Hassell

The City Library provides a new space bringing together the physical and digital libraries with a focus on lifelong learning, digital literacy and experimental learning. Working in partnership and collaborating with individuals, community groups and organisations, not for profit, government, educational and private sectors, together we provide opportunities for participation in the development and delivery of services and content.

"If You Let Them Build It, They will learn" Nelson, Christine (2006).
Innovation Lab volunteer Philip said:

“I’m loving it ... How great the other volunteers are, and how they helped me with learning about the 3D printers ... Can I help in any other way?”

Our aim is to provide a variety of opportunities to support all kinds of learning, both formal and informal for people of all ages. The City Library both welcomes experienced digital users and helps people to develop the digital literacy skills they need in order to reduce the digital divide and support the information needs of the knowledge economy. It is a socially inclusive place for all; a place to share, create, discover. A place to visit, to make connections, exchange ideas, find surprises and inspiration. To communicate, interact, teach, and learn.

“The City library has a people focussed strategy with community at its centre. The ‘plug into the pop up’ design aims to encourage disengaged people to participate and ‘plug into’ their community by providing an ever changing and welcoming platform.” - City Library architects Hassell

The City Library offers a flexible space with areas dedicated to physical collections, digital learning, reflection, relaxation, innovation and engagement in social, historical and cultural activities. The library is a meeting place where informal knowledge exchange and informal social learning takes place. The community are welcome to relocate the furniture so that people can create the spaces they need and want to be in. The layout of the library is intended to provide spaces that can be re-configured to suit the requirements of events, talks, exhibitions and residencies (artists, historians, poets, musicians, toy makers, inventors, writers, creators, students). This allows people to discover the spaces and experience events and programs within the library in an incidental and unplanned as well as a deliberate way. It also enables access to resources and spaces in an informal way without the need to book, by the level of volunteer engagement encouraging experimental learning and participation.

Toy Maker in Residence - Shane Haddy said:

“The journey behind my work is essential to my art. Throughout my residency at the new Adelaide City library, I had multiple opportunities to display and demonstrate my process to a wider range of individuals I normally wouldn’t reach. ... A key point to relating with the public was through my installation display and studio time. Having the ability to clearly display my work and process was essential to connecting with the public; some enjoyed just looking at the display while others were keen to meet me and ask more questions when I was in the studio.”
The City Library

The City Library offers learning opportunities and cultural attractions for people who come to the library for a specific purpose and for others entering out of curiosity and interest who have no specific goal in mind. We are the facilitators of the space providing resources and tools for encouraging curiosity, excitement about ideas and creativity and meaningful interaction between people of all histories and ages.

The City Library would greatly benefit from being selected as the winner of the Jim Crawford Award with the $10,000 being used to:

- Provide additional training for Volunteers and Staff
- Run residencies for emerging artists, writers, historians, poets, inventors, innovators, writers, musicians, creators
- Support Community co-creation of content
- Introduce innovative new technology or ideas to support experimental learning

Appendix A: City Library Infographic 07/02/2014-25/05/2014
Adelaide City Council Libraries
The City Library staff and volunteers-facilitating lifelong learning through participatory, hands-on, experiential learning

IN JUST 15 WEEKS From 7 February to 25 May

110,708 People have visited the library
14,959 in the first week alone!

1,971 NEW MEMBERSHIPS City Library attracts new members

19 NEW PARTNERSHIPS
Spoken Word SA, Tandanya Aboriginal Visual Arts Centre, SA Writers Centre, Arts SA,

4,023 People attended FREE programs and events

1,589 People visited the Innovation Lab

134,897 Items borrowed since opening

That's an average of 1,309 PER DAY!

(from 7 February - 25 May 2014)