Link Up
CONNECT I CREATE I COLLABORATE
#NCLAYSS2020
Better Together!

Erin Foley & Melissa Green
Wake County Public Libraries

NCLA Youth Services Section Retreat
October 2020
1. How can colleagues effectively share the load in a youth services department?

2. What are the benefits of collaboration for the institution?

3. What are the benefits of collaboration for the employee?
• Youth Services Librarians work with a specific age group

Regional Libraries:
• Baby/Toddler Librarian
• Preschool-2nd Grade Librarian
• School Age (3rd-5th Grade) Librarian
• Teen Librarian

Community Libraries
• Young Child Librarian
• School Age Librarian
Our Experiences

Wake Forest Community Library
- Melissa: Young Child Programs
- Erin: School Age & Teen Programs

Northeast Regional Library
- Shared the Baby/Toddler Librarian position
Question 1:
How can colleagues effectively share the load in a youth services department?
Divide and conquer!

• Work toward your strengths
  • Examples:
    • Melissa would source songs & rhymes for toddler storytime, Erin would source songs & rhymes for baby storytime and also format the powerpoint for both
    • Melissa would stay on top of readers' advisory and new books, Erin would build displays

• Make sure the division feels fair and equitable

• Optimize your time
  • While one person is hosting the program, one person is available for readers' advisory for patrons
Provide consistent programs without losing your autonomy

- Work together to decide on themes
- Create a template together
  - Decide which elements are going to stay the same each week
- Change or adapt to fit your comfort, style, and personality
Acka Backa Soda Cracker

Acka backa soda cracker,
Acka backa peek-a-boo,
Acka backa soda cracker,
I love you!

Acka backa soda cracker,
Acka backa peek-a-boo,
Acka backa soda cracker,
Up goes you!
Put your **hands** up high,
Put your **hands** down low,
Put your **hands** in the middle
And wiggle just so.

Put your **elbows** in front,
Put your **elbows** in back
Put your **elbows** to the side
and

**QUACK**, **QUACK**, **QUACK**!
Where is the Flower?

Oh, little **flower**
where is your
hiding spot?

Could it be under the
__________ flowerpot?
Can we find a red flower, red flower, red flower?
Can we find a red flower?
We want to say hello!
Oh, Mr. Rabbit
Tune: Down by the Station

Oh, Mr. Rabbit
You’ve got a mighty habit
Of running through my garden
And eating all my...
Oh, Mr. Rabbit

(Yes, ma’am)

Got a mighty habit

(Yes, ma’am)

Of running through my garden

(Yes, ma’am)

And eating all my...
In order to work together, you have to work together.

- It is important to make sure your schedules overlap at some point each week.
- Use email or text to frequently check in.
- Use clear communication.
Question 2: What are the benefits of collaboration for the institution?
Prevent Burnout and Boosts workplace morale

Splitting up the workload feels lighter
Built in partner to troubleshoot, problem solve (and sometimes vent)
Stronger Customer Relationships

• One partner in storytime, one on the desk providing RA and greeting families provided families with a strong sense of who the young child librarians were.

• Partners helped each other place names and faces and were able to share information with each other to help meet each family's needs.
Stronger Program of Service

- Balance strengths and weaknesses
- Brainstorming and Resource Sharing
- Ability to focus in on best practices by using shared experiences
Flexibility in Coverage

- This worked best at Northeast Regional where there was overlap—but had its moments at Wake Forest Community as well.
- Seamless Storytime coverage in cases of illness, sick kids, or vacation.
- Ability to switch with each other provided benefits for employee as well as institution.
Breadth of Knowledge

- Institutional knowledge
- Double Reader's Advisory
- Double program experience
- At Northeast Regional able to provide leadership working collaboratively
Question 3: What are the benefits of collaboration for the employee?
Grow Skillset

- Offered opportunities to grow but having a partner eliminated fear of failure
- Front row seat to partner's expertise allowed employee to see the process
- Built in sounding board for new challenges
Time Management

- Developed a strategy for collaboration that allowed for an equitable division of labor
- Allowed employees to do our best work without duplicating efforts
- Degree of flexibility - could team up if needed for time sensitive tasks
Flexibility

• Easy to re-arrange schedules
• Banish the working mother guilt
• Helped establish life/work balance
Engagement and Morale

- Reduce burnout - not solely responsible for entire program of service
- Support - co-worker who is always "in your corner"
- Snowball effect - one person's excitement is contagious
Thank you!

Any questions?