THE READMOBILE:

OR HOW WE LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING IN A GIANT VEHICLE
WHERE WE STARTED

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
NEED FOR OUTREACH

- County Goal: Safe, Healthy, and Liveable Communities

- 2017-2019 Objective: Early Childhood Development
  All children have the opportunity for safe, healthy lives
  - **Indicator:** 3rd grade reading level as a predictor of success
    - Strategy: Engage in the 50x30 public/private partnership to develop and implement a community strategic plan preparing children for success in school.
  - **Strategy:** Develop and launch an early learning outreach program targeting children and their caregivers.
SO YOU GET A SURPRISE BEQUEST!

• So we checked “giant outreach vehicle” off of the library bucket list
• But then you need to make it a reality
A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- Initial Dream
- SMSC Funding
- May 2016
- August 2016
- February 2017
- December 2017
- February 2018
- March 2018

- Surprise bequest letter arrives!
- Initial planning committee meeting
- Public kickoff event
- First payment from Sachs Trust arrives
- Vehicle arrives; Ally transfers from Youth Services to Learning & Outreach
- First public visit (in a snowstorm)
INITIAL PLANNING TEAM

- Consisted of library, public health, childcare licensing staff, and other county departments to determine
  - What should be offered on the Readmobile
  - Who should be reached through the Readmobile
  - Staffing/funding/sustainable funding

- Determined we needed to develop a long-term partnership to assist with staffing and provide additional support in reaching underserved families
- We met with the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership
WHAT IS SHIP? WHAT DOES IT DO?

- Engage priority populations in efforts to:
  - Promote healthy eating
  - Support breastfeeding
  - Improve opportunities for safe and active play

- Through:
  - Establishing trusted relationships with child care providers
  - Changing child care provider practices
ALIGNING GOALS

• Created a unique position funded partially through library funding and partially through SHIP grant funding
  • Identify family, friend, and neighbor childcare networks
  • Help provide additional support to the Readmobile as an afterschool location/summer reading program location
SUSTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

- Change happens
  - New SHIP Coordinator
  - New Learning & Outreach Specialist (SHIP/Library)

- Finding additional ways to partner
  - Program and meal assistance on the Readmobile
  - Identify and provide training for identified family, friends, and neighbor childhood caregivers
  - Additional library events
CURRENT COLLABORATORS

• Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
• Diane J. Sachs Foundation
• Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)
• Jake Grussing, Library Director
• Lisa Brodsky, Public Health Director
• Scott County Board of Commissioners
• Scott County Library Board
• Library Staff
• Project Team Members
• 4H (U of M Extension)
• Partner sites
• Donors, including Allina Health, Sider’s Foundation, Prior Lake Optimists, MATTER and local businesses
WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

THE PANEL PORTION OF THE PRESENTATION
HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM A LIBRARY BRANCH OR A BOOKMOBILE?

- Lending model
- Promotion
- Collection
- Programming
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF LARGE COLLABORATIONS?

- More, more, more! Through partnerships:
  - Additional staffing
  - More site visits

DID WE JUST BECOME BEST FRIENDS?
WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS OF LARGE COLLABORATIONS?

• Takes time and energy
  • Additional work
  • Partnerships aren’t equal
• Miscommunication
• Different needs

Nope. Don't like that.
HOW DO YOU SET EXPECTATIONS?  
(OR GETTING TO NO)

• Capacity versus priorities
  • Staffing (yes, you do need two people and sometimes three)
  • Ideal site visit times (bus drop offs, nap times, summer versus school year)
  • Vehicle size versus streets, parking lots, road conditions (potholes, constructions)
  • The weather

• Communicating adjustments
HOW DO WE BUILD TRUST?

- Public versus private visits
  - What to publicize
  - Being aware of community issues
- Continuity
  - Day-to-day relationships
  - Large scale networking/partnerships
HOW DO YOU PICK LOCATIONS?

Readmobile Site Selection - Flowchart

Is this a continued partnership from the previous season?

NO

Have we made a visit to the site before?

NO

Using maps, does there seem to be a safe, level place for the Readmobile to park and families to visit?

NO

Drive to the site in a non-Readmobile. Is there a safe, level route, accessible parking, and easy exit?

NO

Not a viable site. Decline if it is a visit request.

NO

Look at previously letter of agreement and send email to contact person.

NO

YES

YES

Drive out to site to possible route and parking possibilities. Is the site still viable?

YES

YES

Congratulations - you've found a great potential Readmobile site! Now find a contact person. For private locations, contact the office manager of the building. For public locations, contact the organization or the city (speak with Branch manager to see if they know who you should contact).
WHAT ELSE HAVE WE’VE LEARNED? (GIANT VEHICLE MAINTENANCE)

- Things will not go smoothly (aka you will crash).
- Create a giant checklist
- If you do not have a mechanic on staff, become friends with your Public Works team.
HAVE WE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

**SUMMER 2019**

- 8 regularly scheduled sites
- 5 Scott County cities
- Partnerships with Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), Allina Health, Prior Lake Optimists, Sider’s Foundation, 4-H (U of M Extension), MATTER, Esperanza is Hope

**NUMBERS**

- **1721** Readmobile visitors
- **962** items checked out
- **56,431** pages read by youth ages 2-13 (self-reported)
- **372** for-keeps books awarded
- **121** youth tracked summer activities
- **327** healthy snacks eaten
- **7** average visitor age

**SURVEY RESULTS**

- 35 completed surveys
- 94% read more because of the Readmobile
- 97% visited Readmobile more than 2 times this summer
- 32% of Readmobile customers do not visit their local library for a variety of reasons

**QUOTES**

“I think the Readmobile is awesome cuz you get to learn.”
- Vaida, age 11
WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT OUTREACH WISHLIST?

Lisa’s perception of Ally’s vision

Lisa’s perception of reality