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Finding new/better ways to become more engaged with the community is a necessity for all types of libraries today. Libraries continue to look for assistance in identifying resources to assist and train staff to find proven ways to have a greater impact on the communities they serve. The Community Engagement Summit and the Michigan Libraries Public Innovators Cohorts are two examples of opportunities for libraries to strengthen skills needed to “Turn Outward” in Michigan.

The Library of Michigan is committed to supporting and promoting the power of community engagement wherever we can. Working with the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) and The Harwood Institute has positioned Michigan libraries and librarians to become more successful public innovators and effective leaders. Be the change that improves your corner of the world.

Randy Riley
Library of Michigan
MCLS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MCLS is proud to have been part of the Libraries Engage project. We began our community engagement work in 2013 when we wanted input from libraries in our two states about the services they wished to see from us. We discovered and began using the framework from The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation to guide our activities.

At our early Community Conversations and presentations, librarians from all sizes and types of libraries asked us how they could learn to use these same tools in their communities. With our partners, the Library of Michigan and The Harwood Institute, we crafted an education program to teach librarians how to be effective public innovators.

We are gratified at the response and very happy to see libraries all over the state step up to become change agents and more effective leaders.

Randy Dykhuis
Midwest Collaborative for Library Services
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Michigan Libraries Engage has provided training in community engagement from The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation to over 150 staff from Michigan libraries since 2016. Through a competitive grant process, libraries have been selected to undergo two to three days of in-person training in community engagement methods, followed by nine to 18 months of group and personal coaching calls from certified Harwood coaches. The training also provided attendees with a Public Innovator toolkit for use with staff and partners, and a library of videos. With support and guidance from MCLS and the Library of Michigan, cohort members attended coaching calls, contributed to an online forum, and demonstrated how their efforts are making a change in their communities.

Each workshop was organized into five areas that participants were led through step-by-step.

Key to becoming a public innovator is a thorough understanding of the local community and environment. Attendees learned how to ask the right questions in order to collect public knowledge about their communities. Just as important as asking the questions is listening to the answers and understanding what is being said. The new public knowledge forms the basis for sound decision-making and developing partnerships with allies in the community.

It all starts with a personal choice to Turn Outward. Turning Outward makes the community the reference point to getting things done, rather than the boardroom or director’s office. By choosing to Turn Outward, libraries take the first step toward more effective community engagement. Attendees learned how to apply the decision to Turn Outward to their daily tasks and key functions. They learned how to engage others in their libraries and communities and encourage them to Turn Outward.

Every community is different. One community may be ripe for innovation while another may require work to lay the foundation for change. Workshop participants learned how to identify the stage their communities were in and the implications for effective action so they could identify the right conditions to accelerate and support change.

Attendees learned how to apply their sphere of influence, choose the best path forward, and create an action plan. With these tools in hand, they are on the way to creating meaningful change and innovation in their communities.

Libraries that have participated in the training have convened Community Conversations, created community narratives, and started new initiatives in their communities. From Putnam District Library’s "Nashville Street Fair Night" to the Caro Area District Library’s “community assessment,” participating libraries have started to take the lead to bring about change in their communities.
This project is supported by the Library of Michigan with federal funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The Library of Michigan is the state library administrative agency. The Michigan Legislature created The Library of Michigan to guarantee Michigan residents and their government one perpetual institution to collect and preserve Michigan publications, conduct reference and research, and support libraries statewide. The Library provides consultation and support services to libraries of all types in order to help them strengthen and enhance services for their communities.

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a nonpartisan, independent nonprofit that teaches, coaches and inspires people and organizations to solve pressing problems and change how communities work together. Founded by Rich Harwood in 1988, the Institute partners with some of the world’s largest nonprofits, and its tools and frameworks have spread to all 50 states in the U.S., as well as across Australia and Canada, and have been used by individuals in more than 40 countries worldwide.

The Institute teaches and coaches people, called public innovators, who are the leaders that move our communities forward. They come from nonprofits, businesses, government, the media, and educational and religious organizations. They are an essential ingredient to solving our most vexing challenges. We develop these individuals in a practice we call Turning Outward – using the community, not your conference room, as the reference point for your choices and judgments.

The Midwest Collaborative for Library Services is a nonprofit, member-driven organization whose mission is to facilitate sharing resources and to collaborate with other organizations to benefit Michigan and Indiana libraries. With more than 660 members, MCLS provides informational content, operational services, and personal oversight designed to assist libraries in helping themselves better serve and relate to the communities they serve.

Michigan Libraries Engage is made possible by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the State of Michigan through the Library of Michigan. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s approximately 120,000 libraries and 35,000 museums and related organizations. Their mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Their grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive.
PROJECT SCOPE

PROJECT GOALS
The goals of the Michigan Libraries Engage project were to support three cohorts totaling up to 150 library professionals in Michigan over a two-year period to:

• Understand what it means to Turn Outward and to assess the extent to which they are using the community as their reference point for choices and judgments in their work.
• Develop skills in engaging their local communities around shared aspirations to improve the relationship between libraries and communities.
• Generate potential new ways to support the community and improve civic culture by leveraging their assets and strengths.

PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES
Participation in Michigan Libraries Engage was determined through a competitive grant process. Applications were scored and ranked, and final selections included a representative mix of library types, size of population served, and geographic location. Throughout the two-year period, a total of 70 libraries were selected to participate in one of three Public Innovator Labs. Following is a list of the participating libraries.
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IMPLEMENTATION

“IN TURNING OUTWARD, YOU WILL PRODUCE GREATER IMPACT AND RELEVANCE BY USING THE COMMUNITY, NOT THE CONFERENCE ROOM, AS THE MAIN REFERENCE POINT FOR DECISIONS.” — THE HARWOOD INSTITUTE

WORKSHOPS
Each cohort participated in training in community engagement methods from The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. The March 2016 and October 2016 cohorts participated in a 1.5 day workshop, supported by two Certified Harwood Coaches that focused on core elements of the Turning Outward approach. The November 2017 cohort participated in a 2.5 day workshop for more in-depth training. During the training, participants actively explored and applied a set of proven ideas, frameworks, and tools that the Institute has developed and tested over the past 30 years.

The specific areas covered in the training were:
• Understanding our community—which starts with peoples’ shared aspirations
• Being Turned Outward—where the community, and not the conference room, is our point of reference
• Creating the conditions for change and sustainability—where we start with where the community is, and not where we wish it was
• Deciding on the right path—there are numerous paths for taking action
• Making an agreement with yourself—about what we value and staying true to that

WEBSITE
To provide a forum for cohort participants to share information, documents, recorded coaching calls, and a space to interact, the website librariesengage.org was developed. The website also includes case studies and videos which provide highlights of the program and some of the libraries participating, as well as their outcomes.
COACHING
To support participants taking action after they returned home from the workshops, Certified Coaches from The Harwood Institute hosted monthly 90-minute coaching calls for all participants. The coaching calls commenced for nine to 18 months following the workshops.

CARLTON SEARS
SENIOR FELLOW AND CERTIFIED COACH
Carlton is a Harwood Certified Coach with 40 years experience leveraging the assets of public institutions to strengthen communities. The Harwood Institute came to his attention while Executive Director of a 200–employee nonprofit corporation that operates a library system. Harwood’s insights into the underlying conditions of change resonated immediately with Carlton’s years of experience in nonprofit and governmental sectors in New York, Alabama, North Carolina, and Ohio. Those insights found their way into his organization’s strategic plan and the rest is history. The library successfully transformed into a trusted community asset, and annual income doubled. Carlton retired from the library system in 2011 to become a full-time Harwood Coach – supporting others desiring to make good on their urge to do good.

Carlton’s embrace of the Harwood approach led to speaking engagements across the United States and national recognition – he received the Urban Library Council’s Urban Player of the Year Award in 2005 and the Alumni Citation from Wittenberg University. In addition to a Master’s degree in Library Science, Carlton is a graduate of the Kellogg Leadership Institute, a member of his Village Council, and a hospice volunteer.

Carlton exercises regularly, enjoys woodworking, kayaking and golf, and writes of insights gained through Turning Outward.

CHERYL GORMAN
HARWOOD SENIOR FELLOW AND CERTIFIED MENTOR COACH
Cheryl Gorman is a proven leader in bringing diverse partners from all three sectors together with community members to create community-based programs and large-scale change initiatives. She specializes in supporting leaders and organizations to effectively manage relationships and change; develop talent strategies; build community capacity; and design, manage and evaluate community-based programs. Cheryl has supported the Institute in different roles, most recently as Vice President of National Programs. Her current role allows Cheryl to focus full-time on her passion – training and coaching practitioners in the field.

Prior to joining The Harwood Institute, Cheryl had her own consulting practice working with organizations like the national HR Council of the Nonprofit Sector, United Way Worldwide, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, and United Way of Canada. She has held senior leadership positions at the regional and national level. Examples include Executive Director of TalentWorks, an award-winning regional workforce initiative, and Senior Research Associate with The Conference Board of Canada responsible for managing the Canadian Business and Education Forum on Science, Technology and Mathematics.

Cheryl holds an M.A. in Organizational Management and Development (specializing in large-scale system change) from Fielding Graduate University, an Honours BA from the University of Toronto, a Bachelor of Education from Queen’s University, a Teacher’s Certificate from the Province of Ontario, and a Principal’s Certificate from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She is a committed volunteer and has served on local and national nonprofit boards.
The Benzonia Public Library was already on a good path when Amanda McLaren took over as Director in 2014. She knew the library couldn’t be everything to everybody, but she thought the library could be more than it was. Amanda wanted the library to become a boundary-spanning organization that connects the people who could make positive changes happen in her community. She wanted the library to be a central part of that change.

Amanda attended Harwood training in October of 2016 and participated in follow-up coaching. She set up Community Conversations and invited a variety of people from across the community to attend. She didn’t have hopes for any specific outcomes; rather she wanted the process to be community-led and driven.

As Matt Olson, Superintendent of the Benzie Central Schools, put it, “We have a lot of struggles up here. We have a lot of have a lot of haves and a lot of have nots.” Matt was concerned about the kids who came from troubled circumstances. The Community Conversation Matt participated in focused on the needs of those children. It developed into a conversation about, “What kind of struggles do we have in the schools, and with our kids, and how can the library…and our community in general, support these issues?”

The conversation drilled down and became one about the need for mentoring. Matt said, “When kids fall through the cracks is when they don’t have that person they can look to.” One of the elementary schools had recently closed. The timing was right to start a mentoring program. With the library as a community partner, and with input from others who participated in the conversation, an elementary school volunteer mentorship program was begun.

The program was structured to identify kids who had a need for mentors, and who to pair them up with. The mentors not only meet one-on-one with their mentees, but also help with reading in the classrooms.

Amanda recounts her favorite story of that first year of the program: The parents of one of the young men who was being recognized for student of the month couldn’t be there for the ceremony. However, his mentor was there with him, and was able to go up and receive the award with him. Amanda said that was an, “amazing moment,” and that through the conversations she saw action being taken in the community, and children were directly benefiting. She said it’s, “exciting to know that we helped make that happen.”

Amanda said that what going through this process did for her personally was to give a map “right in front of us of what to do...When you listen to your community, and listen to their needs, and when you answer them to the best of your ability, it’s amazing.”
Library Director Erin Schmandt was hoping to get an idea of what the community wanted from the library. Instead, she learned what the community wanted for itself. Armed with that information, she devised ways the library could help provide services and programs that aligned with the true aspirations of the Caro Area District Library’s community.

Erin and her Assistant Director attended Harwood training in October 2016, followed up by nine months of coaching. Over a five month period in 2017, the library conducted 15 Community Conversations and several one-one-one interviews, speaking to a total of 170 community members. At first, they were having a hard time getting people to show up for the Conversations. It was important to them that they speak not only to current library users, so they reached out to groups and individuals that they did not normally see at the library. After the second Conversation, word spread by those community members who attended, and it got easier for them to get residents to participate. After gathering all their Public Knowledge, the library put together a Community Assessment.

Meggen Farver, President of the Caro Chamber of Commerce, participated and said it was an eye-opening experience. Even in their close-knit, small town, she met people and learned useful information about the community. Caro City Manager Chris Olson said, “What do we want to be as a community, and how do we want to be, can be formulated by real conversation. The library has stepped into that role.”

In many of the Community Conversations people brought up outdoor, healthy, recreation opportunities. Running and biking paths were mentioned specifically. Caro has several path options, but they are not connected. Bisecting two paths is a state highway. One path is a city path. The other snakes through their local Exchange Club’s forested area. From these conversations the Exchange Club began conversations with the City of Caro. Working together, the city and the Exchange Club are putting in a crosswalk across the highway. This is a direct result of the library convening community members and sharing information. The city is also now working to connect all its paths and connect to the Tuscola County Fairgrounds.

As of the spring of 2018, the walking paths are well used. Weather permitting, community members are out there every day. There are walking groups, and people are excited and anticipating that there is momentum to connect the paths and trails. As Erin puts it, “These things are happening. They’re all small things, nothing huge, but collectively they can definitely make a big impact.” Erin also mentioned that the training reminded her that, “We [the library] don’t have to provide everything. We are providing the conversations and the knowledge, but other groups can also help provide things. We don’t have to carry the whole load.”

While Erin has always seen the library’s role as a facilitator and to share community knowledge, by going through the process of holding the Community Conversations and recognizing the positive impacts that are being generated from them, she believes she is helping others see that as the role of the library as well.
The Clarkston Independence District Library wanted to make itself more effective in how it serves the community. The library hoped that by learning the community-wide aspirations and gathering public knowledge of the Clarkston and Independence Township community members, it would be better able to make a greater difference in peoples’ lives.

After receiving training and follow-up coaching from The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation on how to Turn Outward, CIDL held a series of Community Conversations in the summer/early fall of 2016. Julie Meredith, Director of the CIDL, explained their process in the November 2017 Library of Michigan Dispatch Newsletter:

We started with Community Conversations between our library board and staff. Next, we head a few Conversations with the public that resulted in small turnout, but interesting discussions. We felt more energized after a lively Conversation with teens, but the real turning point was a Community Conversation with the city council. The council had been experiencing some tension with residents, so we asked them to take off their council “hats” and participate as residents. Because of the Open Meetings Act, the councils’ Conversation was open to the public, but we asked the residents to remain spectators during the process. It was an enlightening moment as each side was reminded that these elected officials were really just neighbors trying to make the community better for all.

One council member observed that this was a wonderful service for the library to provide, a neutral facilitation of a conversation about potentially contentious issues. Since then we have been invited to facilitate two Community Conversations about future plans for the city park, and we may do a third about the heated topic of parking downtown.

Some might question if this is something the library should be doing, but our mission is Innovate, Enrich, Educate. We’ve been given the opportunity to apply our training in a way that brings people together at a time when that’s what is needed most.

Clarkston City Council member Eric Haven remarked about the library facilitating Community Conversations for the city and residents, “What I like about it is that its done by a neutral party...They are there to ferret out honest public opinion, and that to me is a huge value. The Community Conversation tool is a great one. It’s a place of open conversation.”

Reflecting on the entire process, Julie said, “A library’s responsibility is to gather and disseminate information. Harwood is about gathering and disseminating information. We hear this all the time: ‘Why do we need libraries, we have Google?’ If libraries are really going to be here decades from now, that’s the question we need to ask. And we really need to listen and make sure that what we’re doing is actually delivering something that is going to be relevant into the future.”

As of the summer 2018, the revamping of Depot Park is well underway with new, safe equipment for children to play on, and a beautification effort to make the already aesthetically pleasing park more so.
PROJECT IMPACT

Participants from all three Michigan Harwood Public Innovators cohorts were polled about project impact. Here are some of the results.

We train staff on how to think about community engagement work:
- 27% strongly agree
- 46% agree
- 17% neither
- 10% disagree

I read about our library doing community work in our local publications:
- 22% strongly agree
- 52% agree
- 14% neither
- 5% disagree
- 2% strongly disagree
- 2% not sure

I now think differently about my library’s role in our community:
- 37% strongly agree
- 47% agree
- 13% neither
- 3% disagree
COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE TALKING ABOUT OUR LIBRARY DIFFERENTLY

- 24% strongly agree
- 26% agree
- 43% neither
- 5% disagree
- 27% strongly disagree

I FULLY SUPPORT NEW INITIATIVES AND PLANS THAT CAME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF TURNING OUTWARD

- 50% agree
- 3% neither
- 3% strongly disagree
- 3% not sure

OUR LIBRARY HAS BEEN ABLE TO TRAIN OTHER STAFF IN TURNING OUTWARD

- 11% strongly agree
- 37% agree
- 3% disagree
- 3% strongly disagree

OUR WORK HAS CHANGED BECAUSE TURNING OUTWARD HAS HELPED US REDIRECT OUR LIBRARY’S STRATEGIC PLAN

- 50% agree
- 13% disagree
- 24% neither
- 8% strongly agree
- 5% strongly disagree

DATA FROM MICHIGAN PUBLIC INNOVATORS SURVEY CONDUCTED IN MAY 2018.
NOTE: PERCENTAGES HAVE BEEN ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST WHOLE.
WE TRAIN OUR STAFF ON NEW APPROACHES TO DOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORK

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WE HAVE WORKED WITH DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY AS A RESULT OF TURNING OUTWARD

DATA FROM MICHIGAN PUBLIC INNOVATORS SURVEY CONDUCTED IN MAY 2018.

NOTE: PERCENTAGES HAVE BEEN ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST WHOLE.
TURNING OUTWARD HAS HELPED ALIGN OUR LIBRARY’S EFFORTS WITH COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

- 27% Strongly Agree
- 43% Agree
- 24% Neither
- 3% Strongly Disagree
- 3% Neither

OUR LIBRARY UNDERSTANDS THE ASPIRATIONS OF OUR COMMUNITY

- 19% Strongly Agree
- 5% Agree
- 5% Neither
- 21% Neither
- 5% Disagree
- 51% Agree

OUR LIBRARY HOSTS EVENTS OUTSIDE OF THE LIBRARY

- 49% Agree
- 33% Strongly Agree
- 9% Neither
- 9% Disagree
- 33% Agree
**PROJECT IMPACT**

| (WE STARTED A) **SOCIAL JUSTICE READING GROUP.**  
WE LISTENED TO WHAT THE COMMUNITY WAS ASKING FOR IN PROGRAMMING AND THE TOPICS OF DISCUSSION COME FROM ATTENDEES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS. |
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<td><strong>WE’VE PARTNERED WITH THE CHAMBER AND CITY TO CREATE A COMMUNITY CALENDAR.</strong></td>
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| **SUMMER MEALS**  
(ARE) NOW OFFERED AT THE LIBRARY  
(AND OUR) STRATEGIC PLAN IS UTILIZING {THE} HARWOOD MODEL FOR UPDATING ITS DIRECTION. |
| **OUR NEW PROJECTS INCLUDE**  
A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP WITH ADVANCED DISPOSAL WHICH HOSTED A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AT A LOCAL RESTAURANT AND HAS LEAD TO A GREATER ENGAGEMENT.  
(WE ALSO HAVE AN) EXPANDED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
DUE TO THE TRAINING RECEIVED THRU HARWOOD ENGAGEMENT; OUR PROFESSIONALS HAVE ENGAGED THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN MANY AREAS: ESL, LITERACY, SCHOOL INTERN PROGRAM. |
| (WE HAVE) EXTENDED PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY STEM AND MAKER ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS LOCAL HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES.  
INCREASED SENSE OF FAMILIARITY AND EASE OF DIALOGUE. |
| COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE COMING TOGETHER TO PLAN ACTION TO ENHANCE THE CITY. |

TAKEN FROM MICHIGAN PUBLIC INNOVATORS SURVEY CONDUCTED IN MAY 2018.
Our library has developed stronger partnerships with our local parks to bring programming out to the community, meeting them where they are and supporting efforts that we know the community values.

We are hosting a new series of conversations with a focus on each of the community aspirations that emerged...with hopes (of) educating (our) community about current situations/initiatives and perhaps we will see some forward movement from these focused conversations.

Partnering with Greater Ottawa County United Way on community conversations throughout the summer.

We have partnered more with our local educational service district in aligning programming with their early childhood needs.

As a result of a graduate student conversation we had in March 2017, we have developed a graduate student commons in our library. This will open in the next couple of months. It was our way of helping grad students who wished to have space that was set aside for them - both to study and meet other graduate students.

Since we aren’t that far into our 18-month process yet we are still just collecting information. We are, however, working on a grant application proposing something that has come out of the Harwood work we’ve done so far and where that work overlaps with our strategic plan.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMIT

The culmination of the Michigan Libraries Engage project was a Community Engagement Summit, held in September 2018. The Summit brought together many of the 150 members of the cohorts in Lansing, MI, for a full day event.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rich Harwood, Founder and CEO of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, was the keynote speaker. The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a nonpartisan, independent nonprofit that teaches, coaches, and inspires people and organizations to solve pressing problems and change how communities work together. Under his leadership, the Institute’s tools and approaches for deepening impact and change have spread to thousands of communities in the U.S. and nearly 40 countries, and through partnerships with some of the world’s largest nonprofits including United Way Worldwide, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the American Library Association, and AARP.

After working on numerous political campaigns and a number of respected national nonprofits, and against the advice of many of his mentors, Rich founded what became the Institute when he was 27 years old, driven by a belief that we needed to do more to make sure everyone had a fair shot at reaching their God-given potential and that everyone’s voice mattered. He continues this work today, helping people address the acrimony and divisiveness that have taken hold of our politics and public life and stand in the way of progress. He has authored a number of books and has spoken extensively on these subjects over the course of his career.

Rich, a native New Yorker, is a graduate of Skidmore College and Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He is a father of two and lives in Bethesda, Maryland, with his wife Jackie, and their two dogs.
ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS
The day also included presentations from:
• Courtney Breese, Director of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD)
• Mary Davis Fournier, Director of Public Programs for the American Library Association
• Cindy Fesemyer, Director of the Columbus (WI) Public Library

There was also a panel of Michigan library cohort participants who shared their stories of successful community engagement
• Amanda McLaren, Benzonia Public Library
• Julie Meredith, Clarkston Independence District Library
• Erin Schmandt, Caro Area District Library.
CONCLUSION

Libraries Engage began not as an initiative at all. It began as a means to help one organization become more effective and engaged with its members. Conversations with the Michigan, multi-type library community grew and budded new ideas and prospects of how libraries across the state could better serve and lift their communities. It was evident libraries wanted to better connect, leverage their underutilized assets, and help make their communities more cohesive. With partners and funding, library staff began training in the Harwood framework. Outside of the formal cohorts, other libraries took it upon themselves to seek training and began exploring what it means to Turn Outward towards their communities.

A few take-aways highlight the inspiring work of those individuals involved with Libraries Engage:

• **They are resilient.** It is hard to engage, and sometimes one is met with resistance. Facilitating knowledge creation leaves one vulnerable. Those who persevere are both strong and tough.
• **They are innovative.** The tools and framework open the door and give a roadmap of how to engage. It is then up to the individuals, armed with Public Knowledge about their community, to make creative decisions about how to use that information to improve society.

Now, nearly five years after those initial conversations with the greater, multi-type library community, examples of libraries acting on their communities’ authentic aspirations and becoming true public innovators continue to blossom. Stories sharing their success and struggles cross pollinate ideas from one library to the next. From utilizing food, art, recreation activities, community pride, student success, and the idea of libraries as a central hub of community information and gathering place, all have inspired other Michigan libraries to try something new and better engage with their community. The Libraries Engage initiative continues to strive for libraries, and everyone who works in and for them, to Turn Outward, learn your communities’ authentic aspirations, span boundaries, share what you learn, act on those authentic aspirations, and make deep, resounding, positive impacts.

While this phase of the Libraries Engage initiative has come to an end, the hope is that the initiative will continue, that stories of success will embolden and motivate others to act, and that stories of struggle will help guide.