

Marketing the library to families with passion and partnerships

To the five 'Ps' that make up the traditional marketing mix (Price, Promotion, Product, Place, and People), I would like to add two more – *Passion* and *Partnerships*.

Thanks to a year's maternity leave (the best source of professional development ever for my role as Family Network Librarian!) I became passionate about public libraries being the hub of community life for families, particularly those with young children. While on leave, I attended Baby Rhyme Time sessions at my local public library and found them to be a great way to connect with other parents in my area. My son and I have formed friendships with some of the mums and bubs we first met at the library! I enjoyed meeting like-minded mums who valued books and reading. Being able to connect with other parents is such a valuable aspect of the library service to market as so many new parents groups have waiting lists and there are so many playgroups and baby and toddler music classes which have a – sometimes hefty – price tag attached to them.

Since most library services are either free or low-cost, the price is nearly always right. What's important is to be constantly thinking of new ways to promote the library to new customers. Sometimes this involves coming up with innovative new services. Other times it simply involves marketing your core services more purposefully to new audiences. For example, during 2007/08 Burnside Library developed a community outreach program offering services to schools and child care centres so that we are liaising with them throughout the year, not just in the lead-up to Children's Book Week. We came up with brand new membership forms for Schools/Childcare Centres and school students and started marketing bulk loans to teachers, story time sessions for childcare centres, and R-2 classes. We even have an ongoing arrangement with a local school to visit with the mobile library truck every four weeks for story time sessions and special guests. Due to this ongoing liaison with schools and childcare centres, our children's library is constantly decorated with a plethora of beautiful artwork from schools, kindys, and childcare centres. Further, as these art displays are advertised to parents via the school or centre's newsletter, families that may not have otherwise visited the library come in to look at their children's artwork.

Partnering with others has been crucial to our success in enhancing Burnside Library's marketing effort to families in the following ways:

Working with other local council libraries

Adelaide Hills Library Service and Burnside Library are jointly hosting the Burnside Hills Children's Festival as part of Fringe 2009. By partnering with another library we have been able to increase the reach of our marketing effort and have received support from *The Advertiser Little Big Book Club*, which has provided us with some high-profile special guests including Fifi and the Flowertots and Jeannette Rowe.

Working with bookstores, cinemas, and museums

We are working with a local bookstore on "Book of the Month" promotions, where customers can buy the featured books from the bookstore at a discounted price by showing their library card. The bookstore also sourced us *Spot* and *Peter Rabbit* costumes that we were able to make use of as part of our Children's Festival. To promote our collection of dinosaur books and add interest to our outreach visits we ran colouring-in competition in conjunction with the SA Museum to win free passes to the museum's *Hatching the Past* Exhibition. This competition received much interest from school and kindy children and the loans of our dinosaur books increased. We are looking to partner with cinemas and film distributors to promote film-ties for books. We are particularly excited about the upcoming release of the film *Inkheart* based on the novel of the same name by Cornelia Funke which is about books coming to life when they are read aloud.

Working with local children's authors and illustrators

Working with Claire Richards, illustrator of *The Eleventh Sheep*, we were able to offer art workshops to primary school students and Bedtime Storytime for pre-schoolers. We even had two very cute real-life lambs for the children to pat at Bedtime Storytime! For our upper primary and high school students we ran a Science Fiction/Fantasy Short Story Writing Competition as an activity for Youth Week 2009 and have used it as an opportunity to work with local writers Sean Williams and Malcolm Walker, who are our judges for the competition. During Youth Week, winners of the competition will be announced at the launch of our revamped Youth Space and students will have the opportunity to meet the authors.

Working with the media locally and nationally

We send media releases to our local media and have spoken on the radio and the library's Marketing Coordinator appears regularly on Community Television. I have also written feature stories about the importance of reading aloud for parenting magazines and letters to the editor about libraries providing low-cost family outings and a great way to connect with other parents in the local community. The Feb/March 2009 issue of *Mother and Baby* magazine has articles on "How to Raise a Future Genius with Reading, Music and Craft". I'm going to write in and make the point that all of these are found in a typical library story time session!

Working with other early childhood specialists

We successfully piloted the *Ready, Set, Go*, Early Literacy program with Early Literacy Consultant Sharon Callen. We also have a Child Care Links Project Officer based at the council who holds parenting talks – I compile booklists relating to the topics for her and also try to attend some of the talks, handing out information about the library and letting parents who attend know about books relevant to the topic being discussed. We are working on building up relationships with Child and Youth Health so we can offer Baby Rhyme Time preview sessions to new parents through their "Getting to know your baby groups". I feel it is important for professional development for children's librarians to learn as much as they can about early literacy and how children learn to

read, so I have attended early literacy training facilitated by speech pathologists. In 2008, Burnside Library was fortunate enough to host Speech Pathology Australia's Book of the Year Awards which honoured Pamela Allen's *Is Your Grandmother a Goanna* as the year's best book to enhance language development in young children. I would love for us as a library to be able to host events of such calibre in the future which tie in so well with marketing our role in promoting children's literacy and literature.

Finally, I would like to see the position of children's librarian itself being marketed as an early childhood specialist in its own right. It takes time and knowledge to be aware of quality resources that support early childhood development, not only books but also parenting resources like books, magazines, DVDs, and websites. I think it's significant that at Burnside the role of 'children's librarian' has been renamed 'Family Network Librarian' – this shows that the focus of the role is on marketing and providing library services and community information to families.

For photos of some of the fantastic events Burnside Library runs for children go to <http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au/goto/kidzone>. We also have a Flickr site with more photos.

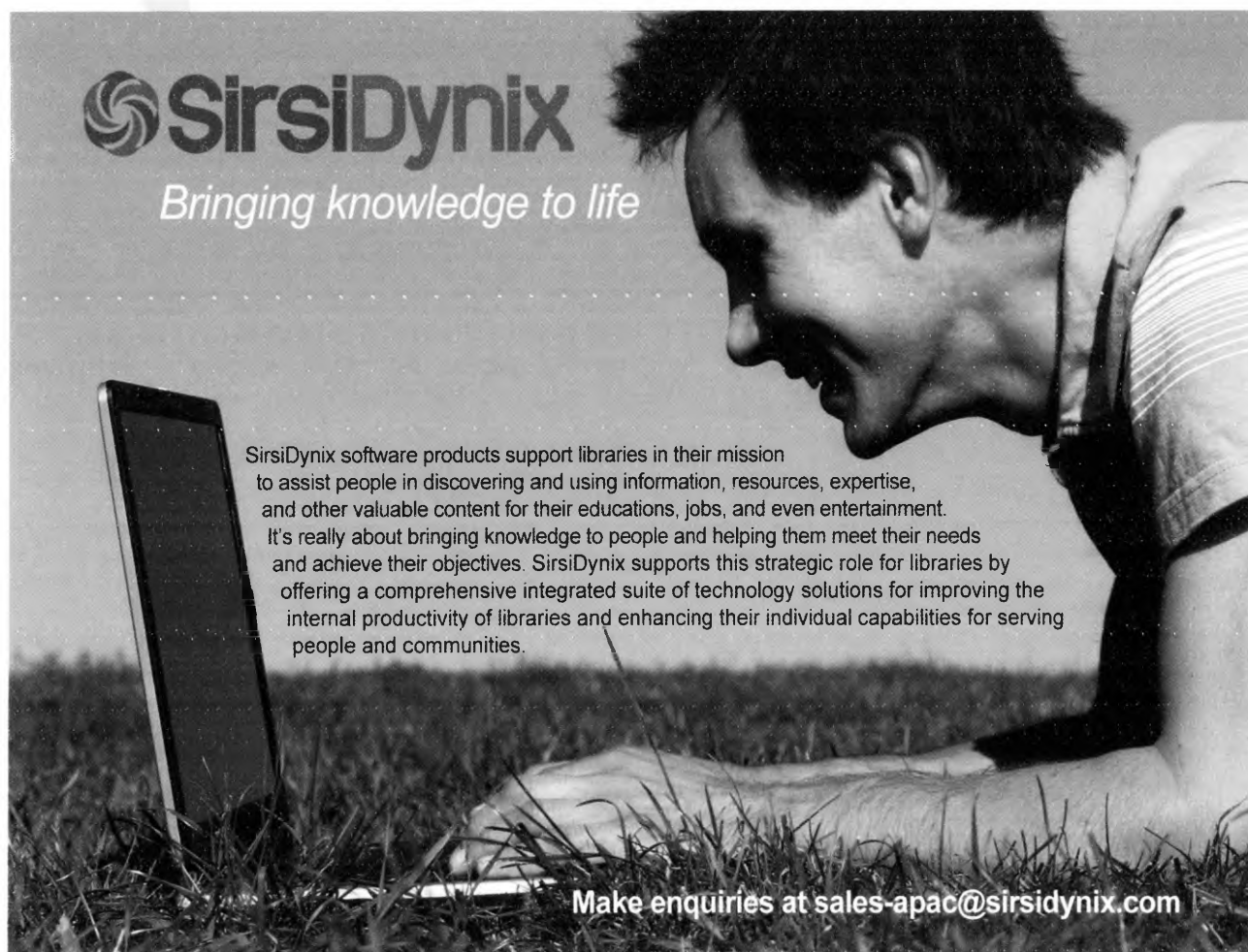
Caroline Munchenberg
Family Network Librarian, City of Burnside Library
cmunchenberg@burnside.sa.gov.au

Driving your programming dollar further with strategic partnerships

Gold Coast City Council (GCCC) libraries are committed to implementing a number of city-wide programs and events not only to enhance the reading experiences for customers, but also to raise the profile of libraries and promote our valuable resources and services. As is the case with many publicly funded services, funding for programs and events (and their marketing and promotion of those events) does not always stretch beyond the basics.

Faced with this challenge, GCCC Libraries have embarked upon a series of strategic partnerships, which have enabled the development of a number of significant events across the city. A feature event established to celebrate Library and Information Week 2008, and now in its second year, is *Literati*. Over thirty well-known and emerging Australian authors will be attending this special event on 29 and 30 May.

The event program for *Literati* opens with a feast of authors, *The Literary Feast*. Guests are seated at tables of eight and two spare seats at each table are filled with two different authors for each course, giving guests a unique chance to speak with the authors in a relaxed and convivial manner. The next day *Author Encounters* continues the experience with author talks and workshops held across the branch library network,



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