

Enterprise Community Partners

Transcript of Webinar

2021 ConnectHomeUSA

Working With Libraries: Best Practices and Case Study Examples

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Caila Prendergast: And take them into consideration when we're planning future webinars. So with that, I just want to pass it over to Dina to get us started.

Dina Lehmann-Kim: Thank you so much, Caila. I really appreciate it. Welcome everyone. So excited to have you on for our December webinar, the last ConnectHomeUSA webinar of the year. Happy holidays, everyone.

As I like to say, it takes a village to close the digital divide and libraries are an important part of that village. I know a lot of you work with your local library, so today we're very lucky to have Libraries Without Borders US talk about their work, provide best practices and case studies to give you more ideas about how to best engage the libraries in your areas and even to access the resources that they themselves offer that are available to you.

Before I introduce our speakers, I'd like to take a special moment to recognize Caila Prendergast for all the incredible work she's done planning and managing our webinar series for the past two years. We've done a webinar a month, basically for the past two years, and she's been both a great thought partner and great, as you can see, at the actual logistics of managing the webinars. So she not only manages the platform, but she helps troubleshoot while the webinar is going on for people trying to log on. She manages the chat box and much more. I'm sure that we just don't see.

So Caila, thank you so much for all of your great work for our audience. I want to say the reason I'm saying this is because our contract with Enterprise is ending. So this will be the last webinar we do with Caila. So I wanted to make sure to acknowledge her for the great work she's done. We will continue to offer webinars in the new year and we'll share more about that when they become available. So thank you for that.

And now let me introduce our speakers. So we're very lucky to have Aaron Greenburg, who is the executive director of Libraries Without Borders US. Previously, he managed workforce development programs, COVID-19 relief, and electoral campaigns for the hospitality workers union Unite Here Local 11 in Southern California and Arizona. While earning his PhD in political science at Yale University, he served three terms on New Haven City Council, representing the 8th Ward. That's awesome.

And next, we'll also hear from Kat Trujillo, who is the deputy director of Libraries Without Borders US, where she has spent the past five years launching pop-up libraries in Baltimore, Detroit -- those are two ConnectHomeUSA communities, by the way -- the Bronx, Oakland, San Antonio, another ConnectHome community -- Ecuador, and Puerto Rico. Those do not yet have ConnectHome sites. Previously, she worked to advance educational equity and opportunity at the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, National Head Start Association, and Humanity in Action.

Born and raised in South Central L.A., Kat is a proud Cal alum and a lifelong [inaudible]. With that, I will pass it to Aaron. Thank you so much.

Kat Trujillo: Good afternoon. I am going to kick us off, actually, so thank you for that wonderful introduction and thank all of you for joining us for today's webinar.

So as Dina mentioned, I'm Kat Trujillo and I'm joined by my colleague Aaron Greenburg, and we're here to tell you a little bit about the strategies that our organization, Libraries Without Borders, have used to engage public libraries and other organizations working to promote digital inclusion across the country. So before I dive into our national work, I'd like to give you a brief history of our organization.

So we were founded in 2007 in Paris as Bibliothèques Sans Frontières -- Libraries Without Borders. And since then, we've worked tirelessly to promote equitable access to learning and information resources. And we've done this all over the world, from refugee camps in Burundi to demobilization zones in Colombia, to homeless shelters on the outskirts of Paris, and even laundromats in major cities across the U.S. Next slide.

For nearly two decades, we've developed innovative tools and training techniques that allow us to meet people where they are and provide them with resources that they need to fully participate in society. Next slide.

Some of those tools are featured here. The very colorful box on the left is the Ideas Box, which is the pop-up library and multimedia center that we use in refugee camps and humanitarian emergency context.

In the middle, we have the Ideas Cube, which is a portable digital library.

And next to that we have Kajou, which is a social enterprise tech that we use to distribute quality digital content offline all over the world.

Internationally, Libraries Without Borders has been able to reach 1.5 million people in over 50 countries. In the U.S., we've had a comparable impact, albeit scaled, which I'll let my colleague tell you more about next.

Aaron Greenburg: Thank you. Yes, so in the US, where we've been operating for the last 10 years, we have, as we'll discuss shortly, created pop-up libraries, multimedia hubs, and community resource centers that extend library services in cities from Oakland to San Antonio to Luisa in Puerto Rico, to Detroit and Baltimore. Overall, as Pat mentioned around the world, our organization has deployed over 140 Ideas Box kit in 52 countries with materials in 26 languages. Next slide.

So whether we work in refugee camps or laundromats or church basements or community centers, the work that we do is the same everywhere. We work to transform underutilized spaces into connected learning places. We partner with residents and constituents, with public libraries, with community-based organizations. We work to build the capacity of local leaders in the communities where we're working.

And we create welcoming, functional spaces that meet the needs of the community and that feature the kinds of materials and resources from books and technology to internet connectivity that allow constituents, that allow residents to fully engage and navigate a very changing world, and that often does involve digital literacy and connectivity and broadband in particular.

Once the space is set up, we facilitate community-centered programming. We start with the needs of the community. We survey the community. We understand with community leaders what kind of programming, from health literacy to story time for kids, what kind of programming is going to be most appropriate and most necessary to meet the needs of residents and community members. Next slide.

So in our work across the country -- wanted to provide just a few examples of the partners that we have worked with to help create connected learning places to help transform spaces from laundromats to church basements to community centers into resource centers.

So in Maryland, we work with the Enoch Pratt Free Public Library, a Cash Campaign, the Digital Harbor Foundation, Esperanza Center. In Minnesota with the Albert Lea Public Library, the Anoka County Public Library, Hillcrest Community Cooperative, Park Plaza Cooperative. In Texas with BiblioTech and Goodwill, the Office of Innovation, San Antonio Public Library, and in Puerto Rico, LinkPR, US Ignite. It's an organization I know some folks on the call are familiar with, with the Information Technology Disaster Center and with Piñones Aprende Y Emprende as well.

So you can see from these examples, which we'll discuss in just a few minutes, the wide range of partners that we work with, from public libraries to community-based organizations to library services organizations like BiblioTech, to longstanding direct service organizations like Goodwill, and then in Minnesota, with low income housing cooperatives and their boards.

So we are a nimble organization. We are adaptable and we work with partners of many different kinds from institutional incumbents like public libraries to grassroots organizations across the country. Next slide.

Great. So we work in spaces where there are opportunities to provide learning materials and resources for underserved communities. Laundromats. Community centers. Low-income housing. But given some situations around COVID, some of our work has now gone from laundromats and community centers to the outdoors, so public parks, neighborhood gardens, parking lots, church functions.

Again, we are nimble and adaptable and do everything we can working with community partners to meet the needs of community members, constituents, and residents. And we have over many years learned how to transform ordinary or neglected or underused and underutilized spaces into library and learning spaces where there are resources and opportunities for people of all ages.

So next, I'm going to pass it over to my colleague, to Kat, who will take us through some examples of our interventions in various kinds of spaces, starting with laundromats.

Kat Trujillo: Thanks, Aaron. So yes, one of our most successful programs has been our work in laundromats.

Think about it, working families spend hundreds of hours every year at the laundromat. And for years [inaudible] we've partnered with local libraries, nonprofits, and community-based organizations, as well as small business owners to transform laundromats into places where community members can learn and obtain resources.

The idea is really simple. Instead of watching the dryer or having kids run around because they are bored out of their minds and don't know what to do, families and children are able to access carefully curated resources, which include books and digital content curated by our library partners.

And this allows the laundromat to become a place for learning and fun. And through those partnerships that I mentioned, specifically the ones with public libraries, we've also been able to connect laundromat patrons with resources that can help them do things like find a job or apply for rental assistance, seek legal aid and even sign up for affordable broadband internet at home.

We've been able to do this -- actually, if we can go back to the previous, yes, this is great. Oh no, sorry, we were on the right one. I just got confused the picture. Yes. So here, actually, I'm going to tell you a bit about what these three pictures are showing you.

The first one is one of the laundromats that we work in Baltimore. And here we were able to create a mini-computer lab, which is open to all of the laundromat patrons, but became particularly popular with some of the middle school kids.

And actually, one of the days that I was there, there was a little boy who came in with a folder and a notebook, and he had written out in pencil his book report, and he needed to submit it online because everything was digital. And he'd come to the laundromat specifically so that he could transfer his book report into a word doc and then email it to his teacher.

In the middle, we have one of my favorite librarians [inaudible] in Detroit, one of our other laundromat sites, hosting story time for two kids. And so her, Kew [ph], and Miss Jolly[ph] would switch off hosting story time and engaging children in early learning activities.

And I want to emphasize that we don't just set up these spaces for children, although children are often the most photogenic subjects, so we have a lot of pictures with kids.

And then the third one, it's a site, one of the laundromats we have in St. Paul, it's called Beautiful Launderette. And here we have a little boy who was being taught how to draw a hippopotamus.

So the resources can really vary according to the needs of the community. In these three communities depicted here, there was a clear need for early childhood education and learning resources, literacy and digital literacy.

Next slide. So we also work in community centers. Those community centers or -- that term is very loosely defined. But in Puerto Rico in particular, we have been able to transform abandoned buildings into places that community members of all ages can use.

And pictured here is [inaudible], which is one of our -- one of the community centers where we've actually taken the building itself. And this didn't happen overnight. It's been relationships that we've built over many years, but we've been able to essentially revamp, remodel the space, make it a warm and welcoming place where all community members can come and engage in various activities.

It's a bit different context here because we don't have a specific library partner. The library system is a bit different in Puerto Rico, and so we've worked with the network of the National Library of Medicine to provide health literacy content and -- as well as other local partners focused on digital literacy.

But there's also a huge emphasis on arts and culture and working with kids in STEM, using video games to promote some digital literacy skills and also the arts. So really engaging children and adults in a number of activities. And we also had a digital literacy workshop specifically for older adults so that they could have their neighborhood council meetings, so they could use laptops and schedule meetings and apply for a number of different grants on their own.

And our goal was really, we don't want to be the go-to person for all things. We want to make sure that we equip folks with the skills they need to do this beyond our immediate intervention. Next slide.

So we also work in low-income housing and one of the biggest types of low-income housing that we work in is manufactured housing communities. There are a ton of people, I think 22 million people, that are living in manufactured housing communities across the country, and this is the largest sector of nonsubsidized affordable housing in the country.

A lot of residents that we've worked with in particular are single mothers, recent immigrants, young families, unlimited income retirees, veterans. So the programing that we offer is very, very different, depending again, on the community.

But we've been very fortunate to work closely with our library partners, specifically in Fridley, Minnesota, and also in Clarks Grove, Minnesota. And there are partnerships with the Albert Lea Public Library has -- that partnership has enabled us to host virtual story time. Had to be virtual because of the pandemic, as well as a hot spot lending program and a back to school computer giveaway.

We were also, before the pandemic, hosting in-person story time, and that was through the Anoka County Library, as well as ESL classes for residents. Next slide, please.

Partnership opportunities. I'll pass it to you, Aaron.

Aaron Greenburg: Great. So over the last 10 years that we've been working in the U.S. and that our parent organization has been working abroad, we've learned a lot about how to really both provide the tools and work with partners and then engage community members, engage stakeholders and constituents with the tools once they exist.

And so we want to talk briefly and then leave lots of time for questions and conversation about some potential ways that we could partner with your housing authority on different projects to help fulfill the mission of ConnectHome and to bridge the digital divide in HUD properties across the country.

And I'll say, as Dina mentioned, at the beginning of the hour, my background in local politics in New Haven exposed me to a lot of the incredible work that housing authorities do on a daily basis. I represented a few major housing authority properties in New Haven and got an opportunity to work with residents and work with the housing authority there. And so really close to my heart for us to be able to have the opportunity to potentially work with additional housing authorities across the country.

So one way that we can partner with your public housing authority would be on resources for outreach and resident engagement. As you all know, putting a tool, especially a technical tool or a digital tool in a housing authority building or in a place does not guarantee that it's going to be used. And what we've learned over many years is how to really teach digital literacy, to expand access and to meet people where they're where they are on ways in which they might need to use technology.

So resident engagement is one opportunity. Another related to that is best practices for digital literacy program delivery, facilitator training. So for your staff who are working to implement programs to bridge the digital divide, we can offer consultancy and other kinds of programs based on best practices that we've developed from our time turning places where people work and where people --

Sorry, I think I just cut out for a second. Places where people live into opportunities for learning and for learning resources. Then we can help to install and activate tools that will make shared spaces places for learning.

So through human centered design and creative placemaking, be that the kind of work that we've done in laundromat, to turn really corners of retail businesses into adjuncts of the library, or the work that we've done internationally to install pop-up libraries like the Ideas Box in refugee camps, in homeless shelters, and in other unusual spaces and places.

Finally, we can offer training and technical assistance for libraries and other digital inclusion partners like ConnectHome. So given our experience rolling out offline internet tools like Kajou or the Ideas Cube, or also the offline and online capabilities of the Ideas Box, as well as our work turning laundromats and other spaces into places of learning, we have a lot of ways in which we can teach and share best practices with you and your team. Next slide.

Okay. So thank you so, so much. We are really looking forward to answering your questions and to the discussion. We'd love to talk about any more of the case studies in detail and get your feedback and ideas about how we can work together.

Dina Lehmann-Kim: Thanks, Aaron and Kat, that was great. This is -- so for folks who have questions -- Caila, I'll let you remind folks how to do that.

Caila Prendergast: Yes, sorry, I was double muted on my phone and on the computer. So doing my whole spiel. But anyway, yes, thanks, Aaron and Kat, that was a really great overview of your organization and all the great work that you're doing. And I think we can really see the synergy between the ConnectHome program and Libraries Without Borders.

So just a reminder to all of our attendees. You can send your questions to me in the chat, or you can raise your hand or let me know if you want me to unmute your line. We can do it that way as well, but I do have a few questions that came into the chat while you were presenting. So I'll just start with those and we'll go from there.

So first question: how would a PHA start the process of creating an on-site library?

Kat Trujillo: Well, we would suggest that you reach out to us. There are a number of tools that we've created to help you do that. We have --I know tool kits are very popular in these days, and we also have a tool kit that provides step by step guidance based on our experiences from developing partnerships.

And it's -- actually I was looking at the ConnectHome playbook, and I think it's a complementary resource in many ways.

But we also have things like a placemaking rubric and these are all freely available. We just would love to be in touch with you and also kind of guide you or support you through the process. And I think our emails were shared or will be shared at some point.

Caila Prendergast: Yeah, I think they're on this screen right here, so I'll just go back and as we get more questions.

Aaron Greenburg: I can add to that, and I know -- I don't think I appear as online anymore, I'm having some technical difficulties, but fortunately I dialed in, so I'm on an analog line.

Yeah, I would say that reaching out to us would be a great way to start the conversation. Our tools and techniques that we've honed over time are relatively cost efficient, and we work with partners on the ground with community organizations to locate funding and to make sure that we can do these projects in a really lean and effective way so we can obviously talk more offline if you're interested about the cost of something like an Ideas Box or the installs that we've done in various places and spaces, but we've learned to operate very efficiently over time.

Caila Prendergast: Awesome, thanks. So just following up on that, Kat, do you have a link or sort of instructions on how someone would access your toolkit?

Kat Trujillo: Yes, I can put it in the chat. Right now, so there's a website version, and this one is specific to the work we did in laundromats, but a lot of the suggestions are still relevant. We are creating a general version of this soon and that will be posted on our website.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Awesome. Thanks, I see it in the chat now.

Next question, how would you become a partner? We have a partnership with the library and two envision centers that would be perfect for an extended partnership with Libraries Without Borders, anything that you could provide about the process of becoming a partner would be helpful.

Dina Lehmann-Kim: So just quickly interject, an Envision center is a program that was set up under the prior administration and it is like a one stop shop that that several PHAs have adopted where they bring multiple resources from multiple organizations locally in one place under one roof. Just some background for you, Kat.

Kat Trujillo: Yeah, thank you. I hate to sound like a broken record, but really the best way or best place to start is reaching out to us and setting up an introductory call so that we can get to know you, your organization, the library, your library partners and figure out if this is going to be a good fit.

And it may be that we're able to provide some of the setup guidance. It may be that we become implementing partners and we, as Aaron mentioned, can pursue funding to grow the program. But it really has to start with that introductory call. I don't know, Aaron, if there's anything you want to add to that.

Aaron Greenburg: Yeah, I think that though we do similar kinds of work in many different kinds of places, at the end of the day, we want to customize everything that we do in terms of the content and the design, to the space and to the community.

I know, thinking back to again my time working with public housing residents in my ward, the kinds of materials and also the kind of space that we'd be able to work with in a building where there are mostly older residents -- it's pretty different than one where there are a lot of families. The geography of the buildings were different, where people gathered, where and what kind of space you might be using for a program like this is different. And of course, the contents is going to be different too, and the different partners on the ground we might have identified to work with and do programming and workshops would differ. So the best way is to start with the conversation with us and see where we can be helpful.

Caila Prendergast: Great, thanks, both of you. Next is, I wonder, have you found that all the computers have been safe even while staff are not present?

Kat Trujillo: Generally, yes, although there are always exceptions. One of the ways that we've been able to mitigate the risk of things being stolen or taken is by having community buy-in from the very beginning. So we find interactive ways to engage the community in, like, what tables

and chairs do you want? What color do you want the rug to be? So the space is very much owned by the community, and the technology as a part of that space is seen as a common good.

We do take certain precautions with very basic safety mechanisms, locks, but it's very rare that the technology is taken. I think it's only happened two or three times since we've been doing this. And I think it's that community-buy in. Go ahead, Aaron.

Aaron Greenburg: Yeah. On the community buy-in, that really starts even before we arrived to do any kind of install, we are working with community members on rolling out surveys, talking to the folks in the neighborhood or in the building or the complex where we might be doing the install to make sure that the services that we're providing are ones that people might want. And so we're really from the start engaging the community in an open process with both door-to-door kind of surveying and canvassing and then community meetings and listening sessions as well.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. So I think that leads nicely into another question that we got. Can you describe what participant -- participation at the pop-up libraries is like? Sort of starting with when you started and up till now, how do you promote or encourage participation?

Kat Trujillo: Going back to the last question, because we involve community members in the design, we know that the programing and activities will reflect what they actually -- their interest.

So for instance, we originally started almost exclusively focused on early childhood education and literacy, and we found that not every community has a demographic that -- where that makes sense. So by working with our library partners in particular and other community organizations, we identified existing services.

So for instance, there's a social worker in the library that we work with in Baltimore through the Enoch Pratt Library. And that's a service that was provided exclusively I believe in the library, but then was something that we were able to offer in one of our laundromats.

And similarly, whether it's in the manufactured housing community, we're able to tailor the programing to the community interests and the only other pieces -- is it offered at a time when it's convenient and when folks are actually able to participate in not working or otherwise occupied.

And so the timing has been a learning process. Sometimes folks think that they're available at a certain time. And when we get started, it turns out that that's not actually convenient or no longer convenient. So trying to also provide asynchronous programming and resources, things that folks can pick up at their convenience and making clear signage and announcements and communicating when there will be a drop in for different services like the social worker in the library or like text prep or rental assistance.

So trying to provide multiple ways so that people can remain engaged even if they can't sit down in a ESL workshop on a Thursday night, but they're able to know that they can drop in on a Saturday morning.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Awesome, thank you. I got a clarifying question. I just want to clarify if we -- if we're partnering with you, will we also be partnering with a local library? Can you clarify kind of what that relationship looks like?

Kat Trujillo: Sure. So we always, always, always, always try to work with public libraries because they're such an incredible resource and great institutions. They do it all. But that's not always possible. Sometimes the library, the librarians that we're working with don't feel comfortable working in certain spaces. And so a lot of the training techniques that we develop are focused around building capacity and confidence in these nontraditional, nontraditional spaces like laundromats.

But there are others. And once librarians go through these trainings, it's often a matter of, okay, let's get started. Let's start programing. But if there isn't, if there isn't capacity in terms of just human resources at all because of funding or for a number of other reasons or the public library is not actually nearby, then we try to identify alternative organizations that we can work with. But we always try to work with public libraries.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Awesome, thank you. So I think you maybe covered this already, but I'm just going to ask again to be triple positive. Do you have to convert a laundry room into a pop-up library or is there an opportunity to do this at a separate community area? Thanks.

Kat Trujillo: Anywhere, yeah, anywhere. The laundromat program that we operate is one of the most popular because I think it's easy to understand, but really, we can transform any space into a pop-up library or learning place or community engagement space.

Aaron Greenburg: Yeah, I would add, especially in the oh, in the age of Covid, where we're doing work outdoors, you know, depending on climate, we can also do this kind of engagement outdoors with something like the Ideas Box, which is a portable library that can be assembled in 15 or 20 minutes, that has computers, tablets, books, a screen, a projector to make a movie theater, basically, and tents and tables and chairs. It's a beautiful and beautifully designed portable library that could be set up indoors or outdoors. And if there's not a dedicated indoor space to be a community resource or learning center all the time, you can set this up, disassemble it and roll it into the corner.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Cool, thank you. I'm going to group a couple of questions here, mostly about funding and grant opportunities. So are there direct funding or grant opportunities through Libraries Without Borders? And to follow that up, does Libraries Without Borders provide equipment and at what cost would this be to the housing authority?

Aaron Greenburg: I can take that and then whatever I miss, Kat will add in. I think again, it depends on the particular needs that -- and the space that a housing authority has in a building or in buildings. I'll say that in the housing, low-income housing we've worked at before in Minnesota, we have done transformative work in common spaces for around \$50 to 75 thousand total, though it's been less again depending on exactly the needs, the tech, the furniture, et cetera.

Other options will vary in terms of the technical tools that we have.

But at the end of the day, when we work with a partner, we work with that partner to find funding, whether they or their organization has some funding that can match or with community foundations, family foundations, local state, federal funds so that it's not going to be a burden for the partner to be able to participate. I'll hand it over to Kat for anything that I missed there.

Kat Trujillo: Yeah, no, I think you captured it well. We really want to work closely with our partners to identify funding and to provide the most cost-efficient model, so with technology or training, but we don't ourselves give grants.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Thanks for that clarifying point. Next question, can communities purchase the toolbox that you mentioned?

Kat Trujillo: Oh, the Ideas Box. So we don't sell the Ideas Box itself, it's a tool that we integrate into programs, so it's not like an item that you can purchase. Aaron, I don't know if you want to elaborate on that.

Aaron Greenburg: Yeah, I hate to sound like a broken record, but you're interested, you should reach back out to us and we can we can definitely look into what the use would be and we haven't traditionally done that, but we're open to talking about it for sure.

Caila Prendergast: Awesome. Thank you.

Next question. Any suggestions to deter parents from using this as childcare? Do you limit occupancy or use adult or teen volunteers? Thanks.

Kat Trujillo: We have in the past worked with high school students who helped us in one of the programs we were running in the Bronx. They wanted to get some leadership training and public speaking training, and we wanted some folks to help introduce community members to the public library space.

So in the past, we have partnered with young people and we also worked with some college students. But we can't really do anything in terms of whether or not parents treat it as childcare because we keep our resources available as long as the space is available.

So if it's a laundromat or a community center in a public housing building, we work with that community to set the terms of when resources will be open to all. But we don't have any limits other than that in terms of tech use or even availability of books or digital content.

Aaron Greenburg: Yeah, that's something we'd want to in the housing authority context, work with the Resident Council or other residents' organization on terms and on ensuring like we were talking about before, measures to prevent theft or loss and to ensure buy-in and engagement in a healthy way.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Awesome. So can you talk about some of the struggles or challenges you've witnessed from your collaborations? I know you haven't worked directly with housing authorities, but you've worked with similar organizations, so just overall struggles or challenges that you've faced.

Kat Trujillo: Well, early on, I will admit that we were trying to integrate technology into all of our projects and making assumptions about how that technology would be used. I think the biggest learning has been starting with the community members and they're like, I want to learn how to talk to my grandkids. And maybe that's the connection to the technology piece. Not that we're going to offer computer basics or computer skills 101 and expect that people will be running to sign up.

It's really about making those practical connections to the things that matter to community members so that they're eager to participate and not making assumptions about -- there's a one size fits all tool or training technique or model that will work.

Early on, I think there was the temptation to say, like, we have the one model or we have the one tool. And as you can tell from our presentation, we have a catalog, you know, we have a toolbox and there are a number of tools that we can suggest, but not all of them will make sense.

And that's the biggest takeaway. It happened very early in our in our time as an organization. Big learning curve for us. But that's why we are where we are today.

Caila Prendergast. Okay. The next one. How do you identify communities to work with, are there specific criteria that you look for? Or is it on a case-by-case basis?

Kat Trujillo: We often get approached by communities, so, to date, it has been a lot of either community leaders or librarians that hear about our work, and setting up those introductory conversations and figuring out if it's possible to get started.

But we're open. We're open. There isn't -- yeah, there isn't -- we're not prospecting, necessarily, but we're always open to inquiries for folks who want to explore partnerships.

Aaron Greenburg: Yeah, I would say that the two very like loose criteria for a successful collaboration, especially with the housing authority, would be for there to be some space indoors or outdoors that could be even temporarily transformed to become a connected learning place or a pop-up library.

And the second would be a relatively high level of community engagement and organization where there is, for instance, like an active resident council or other community leaders in -- and resident leaders in the -- in a housing authority community that would be willing to work with us and help to strategize around engagement, we want to make sure that residents are really involved from the get go.

Caila Prendergast: Awesome. Thank you. So we have about seven minutes left and then a few more questions in the chat. So I think we're just going to keep on rolling. The next one -- I'm going to group into one -- they're in sort of a similar subject area.

So first question: being in a senior citizen complex has unique needs. What are some areas that you've seen addressed in this specific demographic? Do you have any tips on working with senior housing?

Kat Trujillo: Well, we have worked with a number of senior communities, not specifically in a senior citizen complex, and a lot of that work has involved trial and error conversations and iterative program design.

Obviously, safety, accessibility, those are key considerations. We want to make sure that when we're hosting programming or any activities that it's -- that we host those in a space that is accessible by all.

And we also work to survey residents to get a better sense of programming ideas because this kind of goes to the earlier question about some of the challenges in one of the communities where we work in Clarks Grove, Minnesota. It's a very diverse community. So there are a lot of immigrants and then there are a lot of veterans. And when we surveyed them, the program ideas or interests were very different.

So just trying to accommodate the needs of both and seeing that, for instance, while some of the younger residents were interested in workforce development, when we surveyed the older residents, they wanted more opportunities for connection, for social engagement. So being flexible and being open to things that are not necessarily tied to digital literacy or aptitude, those types of skills, but that are also important for well-being and living a good quality, or having a good quality of life.

Caila Prendergast: All right, thank you. Next one. Which time of the year would you say is the best time to do pop up libraries, or what would be the things to do or offer during the different times of year?

Kat Trujillo: This varies by climate and where you are. For instance, in Puerto Rico, we can have our Ideas Box pop-up library open pretty much all year, but we can also adapt based on the climate if it's cold, if you want to move things indoors.

And what was the second half of the question? I'm sorry.

Caila Prendergast: That's okay. It was in the Q&A box. So do you have like different sort of seasonal activities that vary?

Kat Trujillo: Yes, I mean, it's very similar to the library's seasonal activities in many ways. So we don't have a calendar of events that says in the spring or in the summer, in the fall we do x or y activities, but we find that we typically will hold holiday get-togethers at a particular time of

year and picnics and town halls in the summer. But there isn't a calendar of events or activities that go with specific seasons.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Thanks. I think we have time for two more, so I'm going to ask one first, and then we'll move on to the second one. But just, Kat and Aaron, so you're aware in your answer. First question, you mentioned that you help with connectivity. Can you talk briefly about that?

Kat Trujillo: Sure. Aaron, I've noticed I've been dominating, I'm not sure if you want to take this.

Aaron Greenburg: Go for it.

Kat Trujillo: So connectivity. Broadband connectivity, I assume, is the type of connectivity that we're talking about.

We have worked with ISPs, we've worked with public libraries and other digital inclusion organizations to set up connectivity in a number of spaces. Sometimes that is something that we factor into a budget, or a program budget, and we're paying for those costs through that. Sometimes it's provided in-kind. If we're working with an ISP or highly subsidized, sometimes we're helping folks sign up.

So it varies based on the community, but those are some of the ways that we help folks with connectivity.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Awesome, thank you. And then lastly, can you finish us off with sort of briefly how you build local capacity?

Kat Trujillo: Oh, briefly.

Caila Prendergast: I know, sorry.

Kat Trujillo: I can't answer that in one minute. But a lot a lot of what we focus on in terms of building capacity is giving folks tools for human-centered design. Essentially, that's kind of the shortest way I can answer it, and that can involve human-centered design to help make a space warm and welcoming. It can be the placemaking rubric that I mentioned.

So it gives you a much more formulaic but very consistently high-quality way to create a community space. It's facilitator trainings. We also host Train the Trainer series. So there are just a number of ways that we try to build local capacity, and those are a few of them.

Caila Prendergast: Okay. Awesome, thank you so much. And we are right at the top of the hour. Before I just pass it over to Libraries Without Borders to close this out, I just want to say that like Dina mentioned, this is this is my last webinar that I'll be hosting with ConnectHome.

It's been a great two years getting to know all of these. Some of you I've worked with directly. Others probably just recognize my voice and my email over the last few years. But it really has been a pleasure and I'll be around. I won't be a stranger. So thanks again for all your work and wishing you all the best. With that, I'll pass it over to Aaron or Kat for any closing remarks. And then to you, Dina.

Kat Trujillo: Thank you, Kayla and Dina. Yes. I mean, we've had a chance to work with you and you've been lovely and I'm sure that you're going to be greatly missed. Aaron, passing it over to you.

Aaron Greenburg: Yeah. I just want to thank everyone and thank ConnectHome folks in particular for inviting us to present and to have this conversation. We have worked in so many different kinds of places and we would love to be able to collaborate with you and your housing authority to help bridge the digital divide and help to bring essential information and services and resources to your community. I think the work that we do really transforms spaces and transforms people's experience of them, and that can do enormous good for people of all ages and backgrounds.

So we're really looking forward to hearing from you. I think our email addresses have been flashed on the on the screen for the last half hour or so and do not hesitate to get in touch. I know it's the end of the year, but we really want to start getting things going for next year, as soon as we can.

Dina Lehmann-Kim: Thank you, Aaron and Kat, and that's a great way to end this.

I think ConnectHome USA community, they're very well placed to work with Libraries Without Borders. I think you're also going to be very well placed to take advantage of the new funding that's going to be coming down the pike from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and hopefully also from the Build Back Better Act. Hopefully, that will pass.

So I want to thank Kat and Aaron for a tremendous presentation. Hopefully, not only did they plant some seeds, but hopefully we've planted seeds with you in that there hopefully will be some future collaborations with some of our communities. And also, before I close a big thank you again to Caila and a warm thank you to all of our communities for the incredible work you do day in and day out, 24/7. Throughout this pandemic, you have been really remarkable.

And so with that, I want to wish you a happy and safe holiday season, and I look forward to working with you in the new year. So thanks for joining us and we will be in touch. Take care.

Caila Prendergast: Thanks, everyone.

Aaron Greenburg: Thanks.

Kat Trujillo: Thank you.

(END)