What is Library Link?

• Daily deliveries to 27 schools, both public and private, within the Westerville City School District

• Serves a population of over 20,000 students, teachers, and staff

• Connects those who lack transportation or time to valuable library resources

• Expands school library collections

• Serves the diverse needs of special populations within schools
Some Quick Facts!

- Library Link began in 2004 and in its first year 8,615 items were delivered to the district schools.
- 13 years later we are averaging roughly 17,000 deliveries per school year.
- Each school year we drive 8,000 miles and make 4,860 visits to schools, all in 180 days!
- Before the Public Library took control of the program, materials were given to the school custodians who then distributed them to the students and teachers.

Looks like spring break is over! Back to deliveries!
How it works...

1) Patrons request materials online, selecting their school as the pick up location

2) Pages gather and prepare requests, later placing them in a bin for Outreach

3) Each morning Outreach gathers and organizes the items. Everything is checked out and bundled by patron, then school.

4) Each bundle is placed into a bin according to the route. Empty bins are left in the van for returns.
5) We visit all of our schools, dropping off and picking up materials. This takes about four hours.

6) Afterwards we check in all of the materials and backdate to the last day we were at the school.

7) After everything has been processed we handle any patron requests or issues and prepare for the next day.
Aside from salaries, our program cost is about $1,650 per year.

* We were fortunate to have The Friends of the Library donate our vehicle, a Ford Transit Connect.
Why School Partnerships Matter

• Supplementing school collections helps to address the educational needs of special populations.

• The School Library Journal’s 2016 Spending Survey states that 97% of schools report that at least a portion of their student population can be characterized as struggling readers or having some kind of learning disability.

• Additionally, the same 2016 report by SLJ states that 81% of schools serve English Language Learners yet fewer than half the schools surveyed report adequate funding for materials educators believe are required.
Why School Partnerships Matter

• A lack of transportation creates serious barriers to resources for entire families and even communities.

• A huge benefit of the Library Link program is that the population you are trying to reach are, for the most part, all in one place. You can connect with a lot of new or hard to reach patrons quickly. This allows you to continue to provide personalized service in an incredibly cost effective manner.

• An unstable home life may prevent consistent access to resources for those who need it most.

• Students who see their peers receiving books are more likely to start ordering for themselves. Likewise, teachers who use Library Link are more likely to have students who also utilize the service.

• Teachers can use Library Link to rotate classroom sets, helping to keep their collections fresh and engaging for students ever evolving interests and needs.

• Instead of digging for titles teachers can spend more time preparing for the next lesson, helping them to focus on their students.

And the 2017 Library Link Award for the most items delivered goes to Mark Twain Elementary!
“Doesn’t the school already have a library?”

- In 2009, the School Library Journal recommended 19 titles per pupil for middle school libraries. Many school libraries lack either the funds, space, or both, to meet this standard.

- Until recently, our local elementary school libraries were understaffed to the point where they were only open two to three days a week. One librarian was typically rotating between two to three schools each year. This left little time to be a resource to the students and teachers as too much of their time was spent playing catch up.

- Working together can help public and school libraries advocate for each other’s needs.
Outreach as Marketing!

• Patrons experience what the library has to offer

• Provides an opportunity to engage those who otherwise may not visit or seek out the library and its resources

• Shows how we adapt to the evolving needs of our communities

• Creates meaningful connections with the communities we serve while simultaneously promoting resource sharing, programs, and other library opportunities

We partnered with Parks & Rec to begin installing Little Free Libraries in our local parks
We want to inspire a lifelong love of libraries.

Kids who utilize Library Link often share their experience with their family and friends!

Providing outreach services to children helps to build a growing community of support.
Common Concerns

**Frequency and staffing issues:**

Each library will need to find the right schedule to suit the needs of their institution. Pick ups and deliveries could instead be biweekly to keep up with demand while still providing regular service. The impact this service has on patrons is worth the staff time. You can reach a lot of people in a relatively short amount of time and the positive exposure the library receives encourages strong community support.

**Children requesting Inappropriate material:**

We cannot censor, parents are responsible for their children’s accounts. Out of the last four years, and almost 67,000 items delivered, we have only had about 8 items returned by schools for being inappropriate.
Tips for a Successful School Partnership

• Find your advocate! Have a school liaison to be the point person for each school. It is helpful for teachers and students to have a clear idea of who to ask about the service when a public library representative is not present.

• Offer an alternative to coming into the library in order to receive a library card. We have family members that have signed up who otherwise would not have been able to obtain a library card had we not met them half way.

• Offering automatic enrollment through the schools so that each student has a public library card at the beginning of school. When they need a book for class they are ready! Making the student's ID number their card number allows library card sign ups without taking up precious staff time! For extra security using a pin number is recommended.
Tips for a Successful School Partnership

• Building relationships should be a priority. Creating an emotional connection with your patrons builds trust and therefore community. Libraries genuinely want to help people, let them know that!

• Encourage your patrons to communicate with you. Be open and engaging. Sometimes patrons will see busy individuals and don’t want to “bother them” this is why we’re here!

• Fine forgiveness for younger users, not implementing a fine system until or after fifth grade. Children who can no longer use their cards are not necessarily learning the lesson we intend, what they have learned is that the library is no longer available to them.

• Attend school and community events when possible. Even if you come across a person who may not need to utilize Outreach services you still have a great opportunity to share something else the library could offer them. Be flexible and stay aware of what is going on around the library, you may be the only public library representative your patrons see.
Questions? Feel free to contact me!

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