

# Creating a Culture of Contribution

A Fresh Look at Participatory Learning in Libraries

# Greetings and Salutations

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# Today's Agenda

- Share definitions of participatory learning, cultures, and institutions
- Put theory into practice with an activity
- Hear about our favorite participatory learning examples
- Learn how to gather feedback and measure impact
- Apply what you've learned and share
- Q and A

Nina Simon defines a participatory cultural institution as:

“A place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content....The goal of participatory techniques is both to meet visitors’ expectations for active engagement and to do so in a way that furthers the mission and core values of the institution.”

## A Participatory Culture is:

1. With relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement
2. With strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others
3. With some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices
4. Where members believe that their contributions matter
5. Where members feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created).

*Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century* by Henry Jenkins, Ravi Purushotma, Katie Clinton, Margaret Weigel and Alice Robison

# Our Definitions of Participatory Learning

**Alicia:** Participatory experiences are a fun way to get in touch with our community in unexpected ways. By providing open yet structured opportunities to create and share, libraries are offering unique ways to connect with our communities as well as create connections between community members.

**Amy:** Participatory learning is a self-directed learning experience that is physically active or involves active discussion with other participants. There is sharing involved -- of knowledge, of supplies, of experience.

**Vicki:** Participatory programs and learning in the library are a way for library staff to step back from curating an outcome for patrons and instead facilitate experiences around an idea.

# Designing Participation

# Tips to Create Participatory Experience in Your Library

1. Make the activity visible to as many people as possible.
2. Use scaffolding to create interest.
3. Remember the spectator when assessing.
4. Make sure to share on social media.
5. Start conversations with participants.

# To Be Successful, Participatory Projects Must

- Be more than just fun
- Provide personal fulfillment when participation is completed
- Provide clear guidelines, roles, and information on how to participate
- Include the tools to be successful
- Must align with the mission of the institution

# Group Art



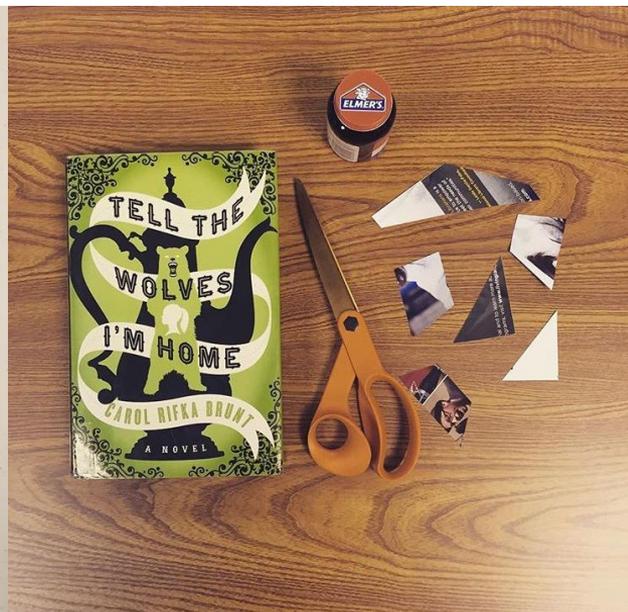
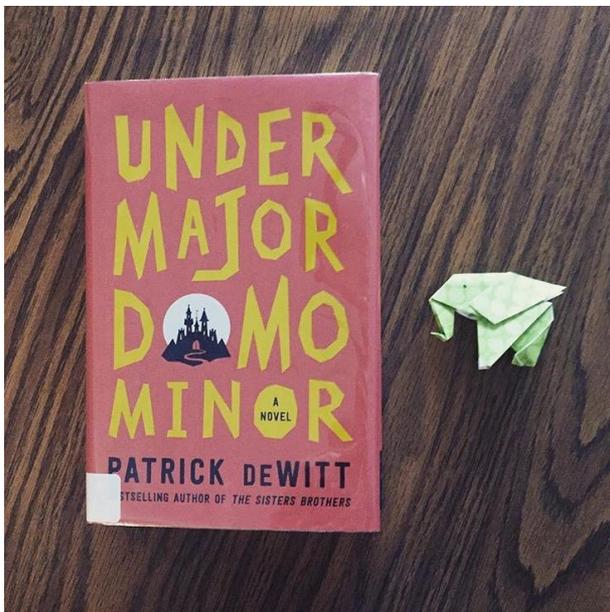
# Teen Advisory Board





# Technology Class

# Book Club for Creatives



Time to Participate

# The Long List Activity (Inspired by IDEO)

Get in group and assign a moderator & secretary.

Get an assigned topic and worksheet.

Brainstorm as many ideas as possible (100+).

You will have 10 minutes.

Teams will report results at the end.

**Remember: The early ideas are the easiest and least creative. Real creativity occurs after the easy ideas have been said.**

## Ground Rules:

**\* Defer judgment \* Encourage wild ideas \* Build on the ideas of others**

**\* Stay focused on the topic \* One conversation at a time \* Be visual \* Go for quantity**

Take a 10 Minute Break

# Examples





# Puzzles



# YS Projects (Forest Park Public Library)



# Knit and Crochet Events (Skokie Public Library)



# Open Sew (Skokie Public Library)



# Sticker Mosaic



# Nature Play (Skokie Public Library)

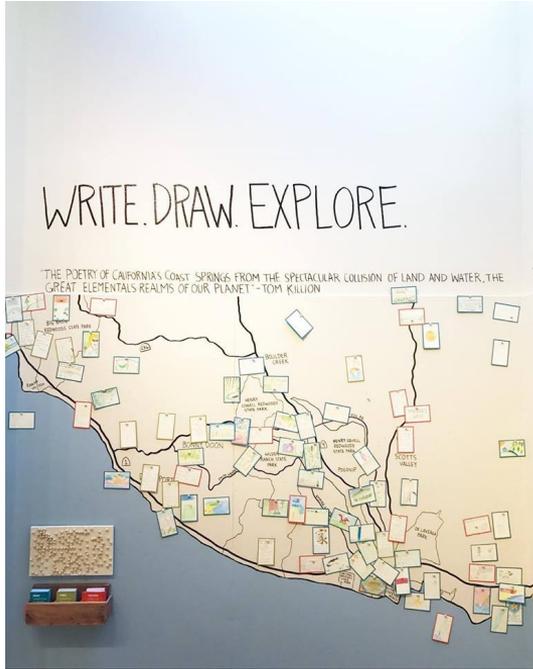




# Subway Therapy (NYC)



# Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (CA)



# DNA + Data Workshop (Skokie Public Library)



# Stargazer Night (Skokie Public Library)



# Catalog the Community (Forest Park Public Library)



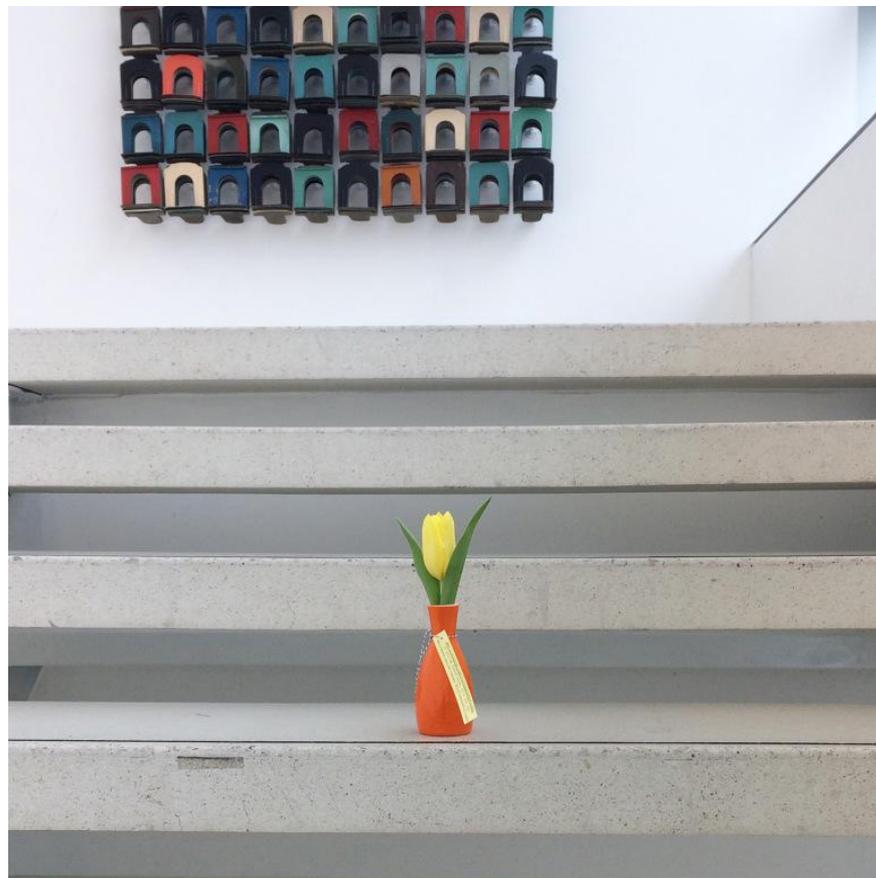
# Community Walking Tours



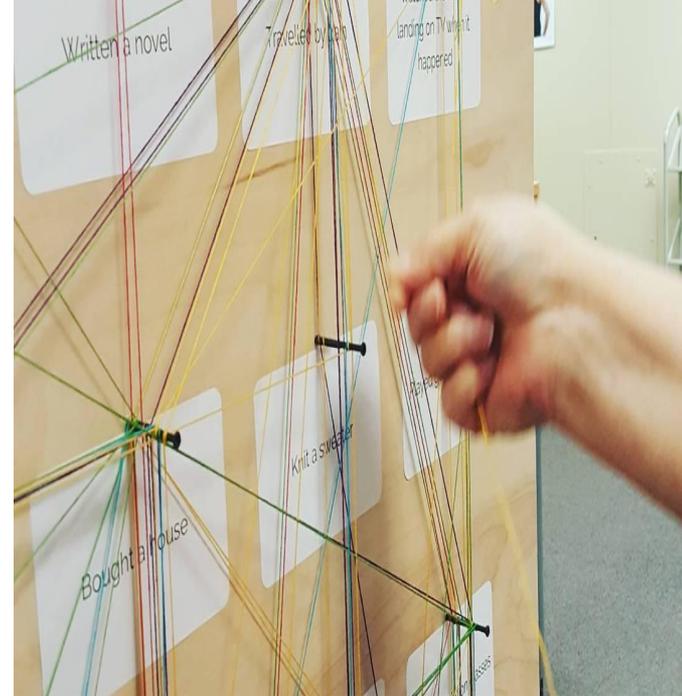
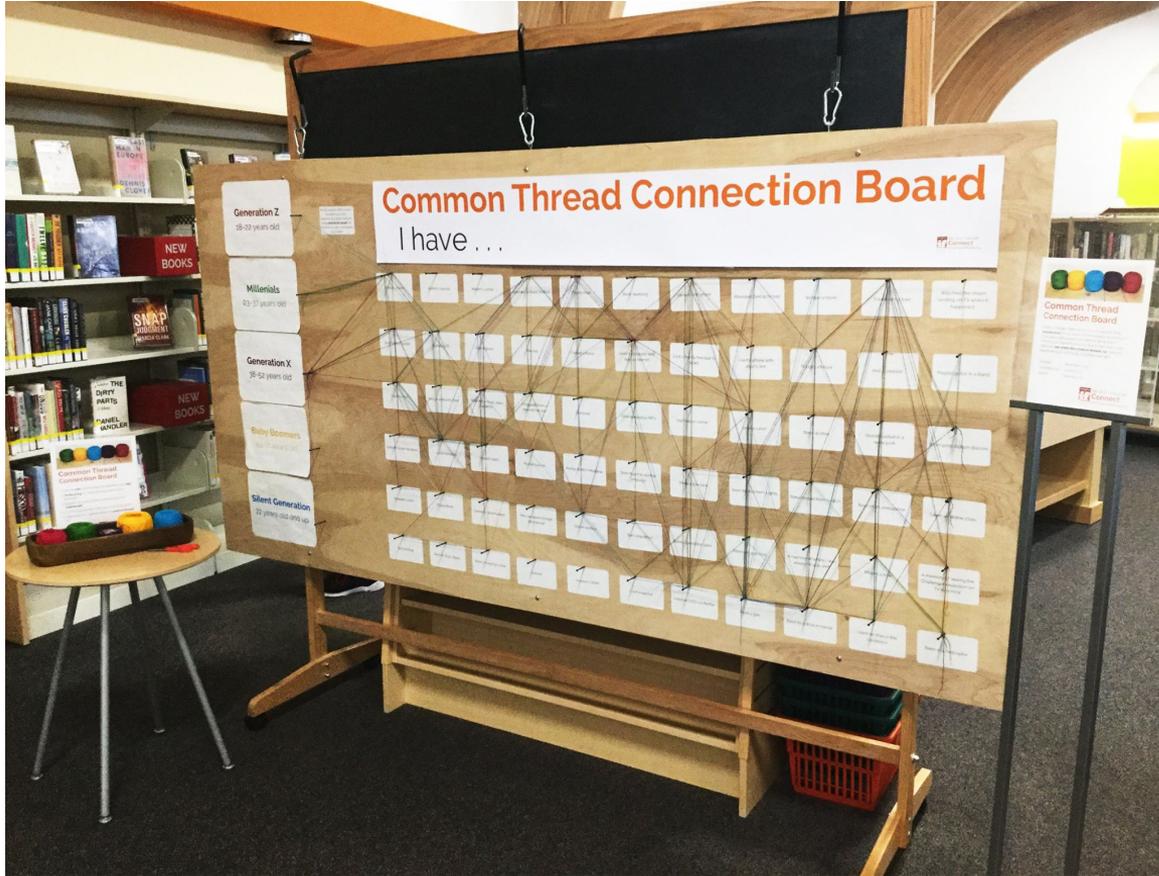
# The 100 Artists Project (Forest Park Public Library)



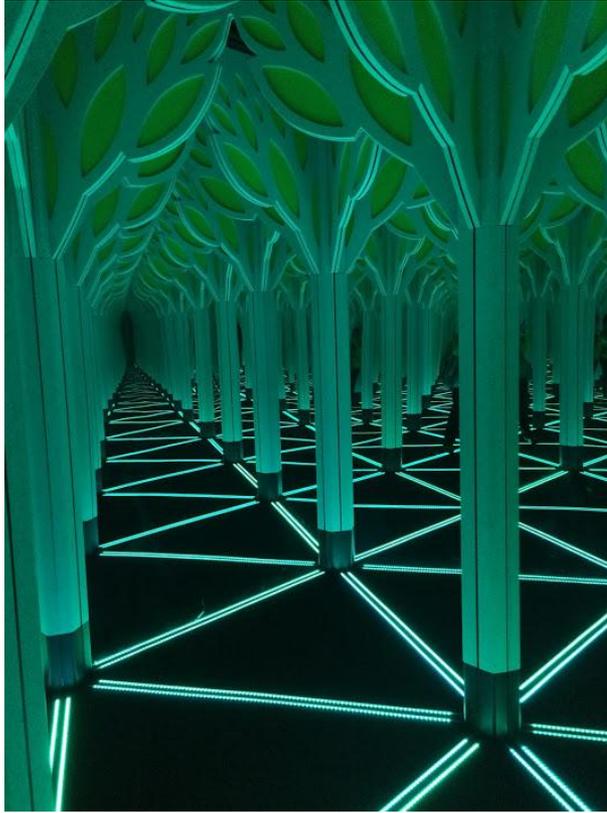
# For the One Who Finds Me (Madison, WI)



# ImagineIF Libraries (Flathead County, Montana)



# Museum of Science and Industry



# Art Institute of Chicago



# Newberry Library (Chicago, IL)





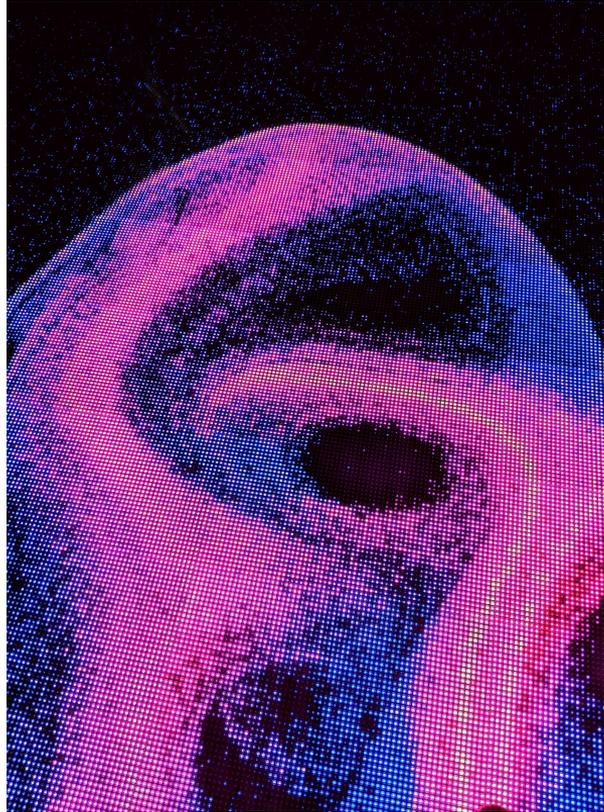
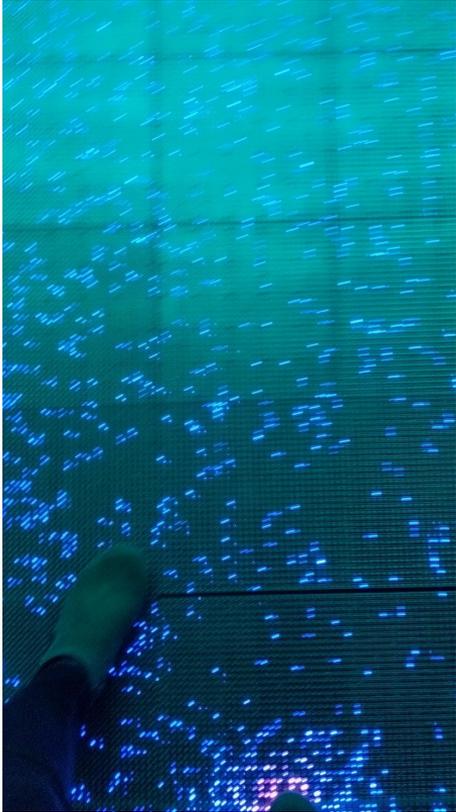
# We All Live Here (Chicago, IL)



# Public/Street Art



# Wndr Museum



# Big Art Fun (Participatory “Museum” Concepts)



# Social Media & Libraries



# Social Media Call to Action (LaGrange Public Library)



# Measuring Success

# Gathering Feedback

- Participation surveys
  - Use first person questions
  - Connect questions to the why of the event
- Staff observations
  - Use a form or guide for consistency
  - Connect to goals of the event
- Staff discussions with participants
  - Document responses immediately
  - Ask for contact information to follow up

# Examples of Survey and Discussion Questions

- Today's activity brought me joy and/or a sense of accomplishment.
- I learned or tried something new.
- I made a connection with another participant today.
- I helped or received help from another participant today.

**Putting it All Together**

# Activity Planning Framework

<b>Concept/Activity</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>How will I know it worked?</b>	<b>How do I facilitate?</b>
Family storytime -- littler kids help older kids create something from shapes, older kids talk about what it is to caretakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Shape by Shape (McDonald)</li><li>❑ Basic felt shapes</li><li>❑ Background music</li><li>❑ Caretakers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Grownups will ask questions of kids</li><li>❑ Laughing!</li><li>❑ Kids build off of each others' creativity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Clear set up (pre- organize props)</li><li>❑ Circulate, ask questions, build off of kids' ideas</li><li>❑ Explain concept to adults</li></ul>

# How might we... (Inspired by IDEO)

- Take a moment and consider an area or service at your library that you'd like to make more participatory.
- Write your question at the top of the paper -- "How might we...  
\_\_\_\_\_"
- Tape your paper to the wall.
- We'll take some time and help our co-participants out by writing ideas, thoughts, and encouragement on their papers. When we're done, everybody can take their paper home. (If you want to sign your name and contact info by your comment to carry on the conversation later!)

## Ground Rules:

**\* Defer judgment \* Encourage wild ideas \* Build on the ideas of others**

**Questions + Sharing**

# Thank you!

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See slides and resource guide at [rechargecommittee.org](https://rechargecommittee.org).