Café to Go Summary

1. What are the benefits to the organization and to the library in creating a working partnership?

- Branches our knowledge and experiences
- Added people for benefits – expand staff
- Sharing talents
- Help underserved clinicians with up to date information
- Work – overlaps of goals and missions, not equal workload but percentage of workload = percentage of benefits
- Increased visibility; broadens public view of library or organization and refers people back to them
- Libraries can provide technology tools for small organizations
- Promotes the library or the organization
- Extended budgets
- Professional development, learning new things
- Working with new people
- Find new areas of expertise within your own organization
- More energy
- Decreased duplication – no reinventing the wheel
- Greater political voice
- Success invites more power brokers, success breeds success
- Partners may have ideas about funding or partnering with other organizations you hadn’t thought of
- Shared resources
- You never know who the organization might know
- Access to different and new client group
- Ideas/inspiration/motivation for new projects
- A reminder of what your organization is all about
- Learn from others mistakes – collective knowledge
- Good PR – this is a noteworthy partnership
- Credibility and trust
- Go further together than alone
- Increased insight – understand your strengths and weaknesses, then improve

2. How do you establish a partnership?
   a. How do you identify institutions to work with?
   b. How do you connect with those institutions once identified?
   c. What services will be provided by each partner?

- Cruise your community for: common values, vision
- Needs assessment, demographics
Similar goals – who have you worked with before; certain groups can be eliminated
Relationships take time – you don’t have to do everything at the first meeting
Make many different types of contacts – invite yourself to meetings of groups you see as potential partners; don’t think of librarians only as potential partners; show yourself to the community
Say what you can each provide, set ground rules before you go too far, everyone participates
Use something like a blog as a resource and idea generator
Sometimes funding sources shape the partnership
Networking/contacts open doors, add to potential pool of partners. You don’t have to do everything yourself/ Follow through on networking
Know someone who knows someone, always be thinking of possible partners and have the partnership mechanism in place – be ready!
Be flexible but consistent
Schedule meetings with all stakeholders
Track workflow on pocket PC
Provide service to partners in Access database
Sell the benefits of partnership
Do soft things that lead to partnerships
Approach partners at their interest level
Sometimes support is wanted but not true partnership
Speak plainly, do not use jargon
Shared sense of faith that goals can be accomplished together
Sell idea of what libraries are now
Consider the time you have when creating partnership to avoid being inundated
Find organizations with “hot stuff” that you want
Offer the library/organizational space as a community meeting space
Find partners through the newspaper
Know the community infrastructure and use it
Define the “public”
Rural areas – look wide – banks, farm bureaus, police,
Social groups like churches, rotary clubs
Look for city directory, ask city manager
Offer something
All staff and faculty promote outreach and gain partners
Meet with current partners and ask for input on new partners
Know what you have to give up when you enter a partnership
Beware of “predatory” or shark partnerships
Meet others at conferences and professional societies
Possible services include: writing grants, creating websites, mutual promotion, health information for providers without time, deal with literacy issues
3. How do you sustain and grow the partnership?
   a. How do you keep parties interested and involved?
   b. How do you make use of resources you have at hand?

- Sustained funding
- Vision
- Work at it
- Partners stable but also new and changing
- Mentoring and training
- Value each other
- Build on strengths
- Commitment
- Flexible – changing times, politics, staff, funding
- Creative
- Add new people on purpose
- Use resources better and smarter
- Keep people interested and involved
- Revisit Memorandum of Understandings on regular basis; expand the basics to include new players who are interested and bring new skills and energy
- Do an assessment and inventory of resources
- Everyone has to benefit
- There has to be lots of reasons to invest time (but that does not have to be equal for all partners)
- Cooperation and collaboration opens door to grant money
- Assessment and evaluation – do indicators show you have been successful?
- Spend additional time with new members to bring them up to speed
- Invest resources carefully
- Accountability is outcome based
- Change format of meeting when enthusiasm wanes
- Has to meet everyone’s local goals
- Be honest, play the game fairly; no hidden agendas, keep cards on the table
- A shared vision of what the partnership will accomplish
- Different organizational perspective is okay, but you may need to change partners or fine tune the relationship
- The partners themselves may change, not a bad thing, but will new people still want the partnership?
- Collaborative relationship/partnership
- Test and develop relationship
- Must trust partners
- Controlled growth
- Keep projects and relationship to win-win
- Loose ego
Keep communicating, some of it must be personal
Stay open to change
Keep up your part of the partnership
Plan – based on grant requirements
Use data to demonstrate success of partnership and original goals – both sides must feel benefits
Publicize partnership and successes to partners, administrators, board, community
Find an umbrella organization as a home
Big budget will help!
Continue to network to build tighter relationships
Is this a partnership or a funding source?
Develop better planning skills instead of dealing with weak applications
Overlapping passion
Personal to personal relationships, not organization to organization
Look at the big picture, not just smaller shared projects
Larger group is poised to support not take over existing initiatives in the community, to help broaden outreach
Long term is great, but must have meaningful shared time to add value and momentum
Venerable partnerships have history
Reallocate services
27-9-3 (27 sentences, 9 ideas, 3 minutes?)
Everyone is heard
Partnership is a priority
Physical commitment through attendance and responses to communications

Recipe for a sustainable partnership = Enlightened self interest, overlapping passion yields personal connection and a big budget!

Allegory of a tree – leaves grow, change, color, fall, renew