

"Access to Electronic Health Information for Denver"

The Denver Public Library

Elaine Connell, Reference Librarian

The most effective bridge between providers of quality health information and the individuals who need that information inevitably involves public libraries. These libraries need the collaboration of public health agencies, and the community, as well as the support of the National Library of Medicine.

Resources!

The Denver Public Library	Denver Healthy People 2010	National Library of Medicine
<p>The mission of the Denver Public Library is to help the people of our community to achieve their full potential.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Central Library, 22 Branches & 1 Bookmobile 466 Public Access Computers*</p> <p>Great Staff and Volunteers, with Diverse Skills and Interests! Free Reference and Other Services to the Public Daily Online Virtual Reference - 24/7 Beginning Internet Instruction Health Information Searching Classes Denver Residents With a Library Card - 439,561* Visitors (Door Counts) System-wide - 5,295,457* Subscription Databases Available from Home - 73 Online Transactions - 19,101,589* (* Data as of 2003.)</p>	<p>Denver Healthy People 2010 is a part of the Denver Department of Environmental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Strategy • Expertise and Guidance • Importance of Public Health and Prevention of Disease • Community Action Networks for Promoting Wellness and Creating Healthy Communities • Connections with Public Health Professionals and Organizations Serving the Community • "coconut wireless" - Word of Mouth Connections 	<p style="text-align: center;">National Library of Medicine Sponsorship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP Inspiration • Liaison Support • Funding • Awesome Online Resources!
<p>This project would have been inconceivable without any one of these three agencies.</p>		

Relationships!

Grant funding allowed the Library to hire an energetic and highly professional, bilingual Health Educator Consultant. Lee was invaluable!!! She communicated effectively in many "languages," (including Spanish) and won the attention, trust and respect of many leaders in the professional health care community, as well as a diversity of other community leaders.

Initially our process was relatively orderly. We had specific target audiences, goals, and a timeline. We rarely adhered to that timeline, but the clarity of this vision kept us on track. As outreach and training unfolded, relationships that had been developed during the initial community assessment began to drive the process. Instead of orderly, the process became much more organic, rooted in the needs of those organizations and individuals. We could devise classes and schedules and invite people to attend, and we did so with some success. But the most lively spans of the outreach bridge into this targeted community have been defined by those already engaged with people there in a vital way. They are "gente de confianza" (trusted people). If they say that we are, too, and that our message and resources can be trusted, then we have achieved a major goal in providing access to this community. Without their participation, validation, and cooperation, our services are severely limited.

Results!

- 3 Vastly Improved Web sites
 - much more user friendly
 - based on expressed needs of Denver's Whittier residents and workers in community health
 - emphasis on staying healthy and preventing disease
 - parallel English & Spanish sites
 - many local resources
- 20 Presentations to the community, including 8 exhibits
 - 388 Total Attendees
- 10 Trainings at various levels
 - 76 Total Attendees
- 1 simple plan for assisting new users to begin on the Internet
 - 25 Trained at a very introductory level
- 3 Strategic Partnerships with organizations working in the Whittier community
- Emphasis on MedlinePlus in Web site development and in all training and outreach efforts


Recommendations!

- Target public libraries!
- The contribution of the Health Educator Consultant cannot be overstated!
- Partnerships are vital, but can also be traumatic! Discord between the very separate world-views that exist in different agencies is probably unavoidable in the development of an effective partnership. Find a way to help partners anticipate and deal with this.
- Fund a limited number of projects similar to this nationwide, and fund them for \$80,000 to \$100,000 each. Developing web resources takes **time!** Once our Health Educator's time was gone, the project proceeded much more slowly. In this case, the Library and project staff invested many more hours than were originally estimated. Not every library would be able to do that.
- Weigh development of strategic partnerships and sustainable training and outreach activity more heavily than web site usage in the initial project.
- Fund many more different projects, perhaps including web site development, but heavily emphasizing outreach and training at all levels.

For further information, please contact:

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<u>Following this Project</u>	
	
<u>Prior to this Project</u>	
<u>Partnership</u> - Didn't Exist !	<u>Partnership</u> - Ongoing with DHP2010 Collaborations with <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congregational Health Partnership• Sister Mary Lucy Computer Center• Metro Denver Black Church Initiative• More!
<u>Web Sites</u> - 1 Long Page at DPL English Only DHP2010 Staffing Cuts	<u>Web Sites</u> - English & Spanish at DPL Comprehensive, Authoritative, Easy To Use Advisory Committee / On-going Development DHP2010 Staffing Commitments!
<u>Training</u> - Staff & Public 3-4 Classes Per Year	<u>Training</u> - Staff and Other Librarians with MLA CEU's Public in Various Group Settings Professionals & Community Leaders Train-the-Trainers Classes 12 or More Classes Per Year (Est.)
<u>Outreach</u> - Minimally Effective	<u>Outreach</u> - Self-Generating Through Referrals!

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