

One Book, One Community 2017

Every year, One Book, One Community brings thousands of Kitsap County adults together to build community and spark conversation around a shared reading experience. This year, we celebrated *A Sudden Light* by Garth Stein.

2017 saw a refresh of this signature program. We developed clear new outcomes and goals for the program. We moved the celebration month from October to February. And for the first time, we connected Summer Learning to One Book by making *A Sudden Light* the adult 10-hour reader prize.



Goal 1- Connection. Impact the lives of diverse adult readers by increasing their sense of belonging to a single community.

Strategies: title selection criteria, book giveaways and circulation, Summer Learning tie-in, large author events, high visibility through promotion and displays

Highlights

- Copies of the One Book selection reached more people than ever before. Our 564 copies in various formats circulated 3,774 times. That's a significant increase over 2013, when 541 copies circulated 1,390 times. This may be because the tie-in to Summer Learning extended the time that the community knew about the selected title. In addition, we gave away 1,000 copies as adult Summer Learning prizes, bringing our total reach to 4,774.
- People also came together to share their experiences and ideas at programs. Event attendance was strong, with 511 people attending 20 programs in February. We hosted two author talks, 11 book groups, and a John Muir living history performer, among others. 202 people came to hear author Garth Stein speak. His presentation at BI was our highest-attended program, attracting 122 people. Average program attendance was 26 people, up from 19 in 2013. I "enjoyed the community feeling," reflected one program attendee. "'[It's] good to be in discussion as a community,'" agreed another.
- At these events, we asked program attendees if they had met someone new. Multiple people surprised us by saying that the person they met was – their librarian! One Book encouraged these respondents to talk with library staff for the first time.

Other people said they met by talking about the book or the author, or were introduced by mutual acquaintances at the program.

- Staff see opportunities for even more impact by increasing our virtual One Book engagement. One person suggested that we “ask a leading question on Facebook or on the website banner each week in February to stimulate informed conversations.” Another suggestion was an online book discussion.

Goal 2 – Engagement. Inspire participants to engage with the wider world, encouraging new perspectives and actions.

Strategies: title selection criteria, discussion programs, thematic programming, related book and resource displays, community partnerships

Highlights

- An evaluation form question asked program attendees if they had heard a new idea or perspective as a result of One Book or its programs. 84% of respondents said yes. “My perspective is often different from others and I enjoy that,” wrote one person. “Different perspectives are the best part of a book discussion,” agreed another. A third heard “stories I have not known about,” and a fourth said they were introduced to “new authors that I plan to read.” “The various people who came to the event offered a different perspective from me, which I found interesting,” said a patron.
- We also asked people if they were inspired to take any action as a result of the book or program. 70% of respondents said yes. The book’s strong environmental themes clearly resonated in our community, as people said they wanted to try tree climbing, “lobby for environmental resources,” “protect our environment,” “pay more attention to nature,” and “be more involved with the Sierra Club.” “[It] gave me insights on the different places and people in this area to explore,” said one patron. But many were inspired simply by the act of reading and meeting authors together, as the most common answers to this question were either to read more, or to try writing their own book.
- Staff observed that the John Muir program was especially impactful in this area, and felt that patrons would be interested in a few more strategically-chosen thematic programs in the future. Other suggestions on ways to impact this goal have included lists of read-alikes and related community resources.

By the Numbers

	2013	2017
Total circulating copies	541	564
Total circulation	1390	3774
Giveaway books	400	1000
Door count system total	91,571	79,462
Total # programs	33	20
Total program attendance	573	511
Average program attendance	19	26
Highest attended program	103	122
Donor support	10,000	10,000

Never Stop Learning

With the new timing and Summer Learning connection, staff identified both big successes and opportunities for us to continue to grow and improve. Overall, staff reported feeling well-prepared and well-supported. They were enthusiastic about the new developments and had some great ideas for next year. Key themes were:

The One Book as Adult Summer Learning prize was highly successful for both programs.

Staff said that patrons were enthusiastic about this connection between our two biggest annual programs, and that it both encouraged adults to participate in Summer Learning and increased their interest in One Book. The biggest challenge was running out of books due to the large increase in adult 10-hour finishers.

- "I think the book giveaway was a lot of fun. I think I would rate it as a high connection success: talking to patrons about it, having patrons not tracking their reading until they heard they were getting a book, pleasantly surprising patrons who were delighted with a free book, all created a sense of connection over the title."
- "We ran out of prize books far too soon."
- "I enjoyed having the books to hand out with Summer Learning, and having our two major efforts tie together this way. Having the books as the Summer Learning prize for adults helped to get the title into the hands of readers who are actually engaged library patrons, versus the roaming copies in the past – it seems more strategic to distribute the title this way."
- "It was great to do it with Summer Learning. Challenges were having enough books on hand... having to send them to other libraries."
- "We had time to wrap some of the books, since it was a surprise. People loved those ones the best! It would be great if all the prize books were wrapped. Library wrapping paper?"

The new timing provides both opportunities and challenges.

One Book One Community's celebration month was moved to February to avoid promotional overlap with Summer Learning and provide engagement opportunities throughout the year. The extended period presented advantages like increased time to discover and read the title, and also came with challenges in maintaining momentum. We should explore ways to sustain and increase engagement between September and February.

- "I absolutely loved having OBOC in February. Summer Learning is such an event that it seems a disservice to have OBOC follow so closely afterwards. There isn't such a hurry for patrons and staff to switch gears with OBOC in February. Plus, with OBOC events in February, it is post-holiday season yet still solidly in winter – I think this is a time that lends itself much more to reading and connection than [fall] which kind of feels like it is in the middle of everything. Love February."
- "Can we not get the books out so early?"
- "There is a long gap between summer and February."

- “Giving away the book all summer and then not having the programming till February made for a long wait, in which I feel we might have lost some of the momentum. On the bright side, it allowed patrons a long time to read the title.”

Diversity matters.

With the library industry at large recognizing the value of reading books from multiple perspectives, and with exposure to new perspectives as one of the major goals of One Book, our community could benefit from a more diverse reading experience.

- “There was diversity in this book in regard to sexual orientation, but as far as the authorship, characters, life experiences, this book fell a little short for being a ‘diverse read.’”
- “Since the goal is to impact ‘diverse adult readers’, then I think we have to talk about diversity and how important it is to be showcasing a wide range of authors. I heard from patrons (and had meaningful discussions with other staff members afterwards) that 6 out of the 8 OBOCs being written by “White Male” authors is something we should be looking at. I realize that finding a book that meets selection criteria and is written by someone who’s not a white, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual man is difficult, because of the institutional issues with the publishing industry. But we can’t claim to really serve ‘diverse’ readers or to be asking our patrons to ‘engage with a wider world’ if we are consistently choosing books written by those from the same background.”

Patrons love One Book, One Community!

“Thank you for putting this on! Love the “one community, one book” idea.”

“Great – I’ve lived across country and Europe and KRL is most dynamic and community oriented of all.”

“I enjoyed meeting the author and having him describe the process of how the book came about.”

“I read the book 2 times so the discussion shed more light on the book.”

“[One Book, One Community] promotes enthusiasm for books.”

“I live part time here and CA, going to share this whole idea there!”

“Thanks so much for providing this opportunity for our community.”

“Follow your inspiration is the message I’m taking away from this presentation. Thank you for One Book One Community efforts!”

Do you have ideas or questions about One Book, One Community? You can find the committee’s planning documents on [SharePoint](#), or contact Adult Services Manager Audrey Barbakoff.