From Zero to Makerspace:

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Welcome to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Makerspace: Idea Box

- Introduction
- Timeline
- Planning Phase
- Building the Idea Box Team
- Program Planning
- Results. Challenges. Updates
Why does a Public Library need a Makerspace?
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library’s answers

- Provide a space where people can use tools and equipment to build ideas, share knowledge and generate community

- Generate new energy at the Library
  - Create a creative environment that draws new customers to the library

- Increase awareness of the Library in the community & showcase other services offered in the Library
(Extremely) Short History of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library in Uptown

→ 1903 Carnegie Library

→ 1956 Main Library
(Extremely) Short History of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library in Uptown

➔ 1989 Main Library

➔ 2001 Virtual Village

➔ 2005 ImaginOn Library
Timeline

7/2014:
Knight Foundation Grant awarded

8/2014 - 10/2014:
Information gathering / Research

11/2014 - 1/2015:
Finalize design, team, equipment and furniture

1/29/2015:
Soft Launch for primary stakeholders

2/17/2015:
Idea Box opens to public
Planning Phase

- **Information Gathering**
  - Literature
  - Tours of Makerspaces
  - Questionnaires
    - Via YALSA sent to existing makerspaces in Libraries and Museums
    - New adult planning team
  - Brainstorming Session
    - Invited local makers, members of art institutions, museums and makerspaces
Planning Phase

- Implementation
  - Choosing a space
  - Equipment
  - Space needs
  - Design
Video Tour of the space
Building the Idea Box Team
Building the Idea Box Team

- Both project managers became co-leads for the Idea Box Team. They utilized a system that CML already had in place to recruit and approve team members. Paired down 13 to 10 members from 6 locations.
  - 3 questions were asked:
    - Why do you want to be a member of this team
    - What assets do you feel you will bring to this team
    - What special qualifications do you have?
- Focus on skills, interest, and a little bit of their reputation within the organization. Wanted to build diversity within those skills.
- Members were added and confirmed with their direct supervisors
- First few meetings to discuss roles, responsibilities, discuss equipment, and provide a training schedule. Monthly meetings/trainings.
- Temporary member to order and provide logistical support.
Building the Idea Box Team

Team Building Results

- 12 (including co-leads) total members from the 6 different locations. No one works exclusively in the space and each are required to fulfill certain requirements on the team.
- Time commitment: 16 hours with 8 hours days, present one program a month, develop self-directed activities for walk-ins, participate in system wide staff trainings, and develop community partnerships.
- Focus Areas: Programs, Rules for space, rules for users. NOW Subject based: 2D and vector graphics, 3D modeling and printing, Technology with programming and digital services.
Soft Opening
Some members of the Idea Box team needed to be trained on program planning and execution. The program sub team lead held trainings with individuals to make them feel comfortable and encouraged members of the program sub team to train staff as well.
Program Planning and Implementation

Program Sub-team

Idea Box Program Catalog
Programs Focus

➔ Systemwide Program Areas:
   Educational Success, Workforce Development and Literacy

➔ Strategic Goals:
   Community Awareness and Engagement

➔ Digital Strategy:
   Innovate for 21st Century Access
Community Programs:

➔ Makerspace Charlotte, dedicated volunteers, and a vibrant arts culture in Charlotte.

New Community Programs:

➔ Building on system-wide processes already in place to supplement community partnerships.
Results

- Open 55 weeks / helped over 1400 people in the space
- Provided 91 instances of 37 unique programs (272 people attended)
- Provided trainings for staff
- Given introductory tours and guidance to educational institutions and libraries
- Community partnerships strengthened and forged
- Community use for prototyping, tool usage, basic design
Challenges and Solutions

- **Staffing Challenges**
  - No staff dedicated to just Idea Box
  - Team not department
  - Limited time in Idea Box

- **Staffing Solutions**
  - Increase time commitment in Idea Box
  - More team members
  - Increase number of team members from Uptown Library branches
Challenges and Solutions

- **Programming Challenges**
  - Attendance
  - Providing a wide range of Makerspace Programs utilizing all of our equipment
  - Capturing those too cautious to start making

- **Programming Solutions**
  - More consistent / series / themed / progression programs
  - Bigger push in Marketing programs
  - Utilizing “closed” hours to self train
  - Developing self directed activities to encourage discovery
Challenges and Solutions

Equipment and Space Challenges

- Shared meeting room
- Maintenance and support for equipment / computers
- Limited hours

Equipment and Space Solutions

- Use full space for larger programs
- Empower team to troubleshoot
- Utilize ‘closed’ hours to develop training manuals / FAQs
- Double hours (from 8 hours per week to 16 hours per week)
Resources

- Handout
- Encourage Idea Box staff to explore Lynda.com and Universal Class for continuing education
- Can’t think of a maker community partner? Check out meetup.com or Reddit to find makers that can jump start your community building! Also explore any area Maker Faires or Barnes and Noble (Nationwide maker partner). And of course connect with your local libraries! Academic and special libraries are embracing Makerspaces and you might be able to share resources.

Idea Box Team members:
Co-Leads - Kelly Czarnecki + Mike Wozniak
Angel Truesdale, Aubrey Hedrick, Darius Smalls, Eric Hartmann, Eric Williams, Harold Escalante, Jamey Rorie, Kim Arlia, Laura Cavette, Marie Harris

[link to website]