



**Two Worlds... One Librarian... My Experiences as a Children's Librarian at a Public and School Library**

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**Abstract:**

*This presentation will give librarians, administrators, and others the opportunity to learn about the importance of collaborations between public and school libraries based on my experiences as a children's librarian at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) library and at the Saint Benedict the Moor School library at the same time.*

*In this current era of decreased funding and school and library closings at an ever increasing exponential rate, it is imperative that public libraries and school libraries build partnerships with each other to share resources, programs, staff, and other initiatives!*

*From my experiences having feet in both worlds, I have found that both types of libraries benefit from the expertise of each other and it is a win/win situation for everyone... students, parents, teachers, librarians, and administrators too!*

*In this paper, I will discuss some of the successful collaborations between the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Saint Benedict the Moor School through school projects utilizing the Carnegie Library electronic and print resources including eCLP, My StoryMaker, EBSCO, Naxos, Net Library and others; story times for children at both CLP and Saint Benedict the Moor; collection development of resources; book donations from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to Saint Benedict the Moor school; programs such as children's and teen's clubs, reading groups, activities, and the award winning:*

***“Black, and White and Read All Over series; and my blog: A Children’s Book a Day, Keeps the Scary Monster Away.***

*I will end this presentation with a discussion on lessons learned and future collaborations between the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Saint Benedict the Moor School Library.*

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The Carnegie Library is a large urban public library located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with branches throughout the Pittsburgh area. Saint Benedict the Moor is a small urban Catholic school located in Pittsburgh comprised of approximately 300 kindergarten through eighth grade students.

As a children’s librarian at both Saint Benedict the Moor school and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, I have been involved in and witnessed that collaborations between schools and public libraries are a win/win situation for both institutions and everyone involved especially the students, parents, teachers, librarians, and administrators.

There are countless ways that collaborations between schools and libraries are successful. Students can be given an assignment from their teachers and visit their local library to complete their assignment utilizing the research databases, books, online catalogs and other resources that their public library provides.

Students learning a foreign language can use the public library resources to supplement their in-class instruction. They can use Mango, Rosetta Stone, and other free online foreign language resources. They can borrow DVDs, CDs, books and other foreign language resources. Students can also attend free foreign language club meetings, foreign language films, musical and art performances, and other events that can help develop their foreign language skills.

Other collaborations between school and public libraries can include story times where the children’s librarian visits local schools to perform story times, or schools can bring their students to the library for story time. Public librarians can visit local schools and present new programs that are being offered at the library, new resources/materials that the library has purchased such as books, research databases, and programs. Librarians can visit local schools and present Internet safety and other programs to students, parents, and teachers. Public libraries often host tours for schools so that students and teachers can learn about the services and resources that their library provides. Often the public librarian will organize specific resources for the students based on their grade level, interests, and projects that the students will be assigned. The librarian might discuss information literacy, copyright, plagiarism, Internet resources, and other relevant topics. The librarian quite often will have print, online and other resources available for the students. The goal is to sell the library to the students at a young age so that they will return with their families, friends, and classmates and become regular library patrons.

As a librarian for the Carnegie Library system and Saint Benedict the Moor School, I have participated in and hosted several library tours for students of all ages and grade levels at the Carnegie Library. I have taken my own Saint Benedict the Moor students for library tours as well.

Being a children's librarian for both the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Saint Benedict the Moor School, I have been involved in many successful collaborations between both.

Some of these collaborations include utilizing the SmartBoard and other technology in my library and computer lab to introduce students to the library OPAC, online resources, electronic databases, the Internet Safety for children web site that I developed for the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, CyberAcademy, My StoryMaker, and the Carnegie Library eCLP resources.

Some of the resources include downloadable audio books and video from OverDrive and NetLibrary; e-books from Follett and NetLibrary; and streaming music from several vendors.

Downloadable Audio Books (eAudio) that are electronic audio books that include some of the latest bestsellers, book club favorites, award winning authors, language instruction, and other eAudio content provided by OverDrive and NetLibrary/Recorded books.

Downloadable Videos (eVideos) that are more than 400 digital videos on topics such as cooking, travel, health, languages, classic films, documentaries, literature, and others that patrons can download and watch on their PC, laptop, and, in some cases, a compatible portable device.

Electronic Books (eBooks) that are digital full-text versions of books that include thousands of full-text non-fiction, reference, and classic eBooks that are available online through NetLibrary.

Streaming Music is an online resource that includes African American Song (Historical recordings of African American Music); American Song (over 12,000 tracks that illustrate US history through song including American Indians, miners, immigrants, slaves, etc.); Classical Music Online; Contemporary World Music (over 8,000 tracks of music from around the world); and DRAM (Digital Recordings of American Music (includes liner notes and essays also); Naxos Music Library (classical, jazz, and world music online); Naxos Music Library Jazz (patrons can listen streaming audio of jazz music); and Smithsonian Global Sound where patrons can listen to world, folk, and traditional music online.

Streaming Spoken Word Library from Naxos allows patrons to listen to streaming audio of adult and children's classic fiction, non-fiction plays, and poetry.

Super Heroes in books on CDs is another resource that is quite popular with older children, teens, and young adults. They are marketed as: *Tired of turning pages and getting paper cuts? Try a book on CD instead! Each of these GraphicAudio adventures is designed to be "a movie in your mind," complete with theatrical music and sound effects. Check one out and give your poor fingers a break.* Some of the titles include: "52" by Greg Cox. In this audio adventure: "Earth's heroes, led by Booster Gold, Supernova, and new crimefighters the Question and Batwoman, fight super-villains who have descended upon Metropolis and Gotham City in the year-long absence of Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman, and witness the creation of a "multiverse" featuring 52 parallel universes."

Another title: The "*Justice League of America, Batman: The Stone King*" by Alan Grant where, "An ancient pyramid has been unearthed in Gotham City, and the citizens are quickly learning that it should have been left alone. As the monument unleashes supernatural energies around the globe, the Justice League of America races to stop the impending destruction. The superheroes prove no match for the pyramid's powers, however, and Batman is the only one who stands a chance of saving the world."

In Roger Stern's "*The Justice League of America, Superman: The Never-Ending Battle*," "Each of the heroes' cities is besieged by tornadoes, blizzards, gigantic hail and lighting storms, Superman must rally and lead the Justice League to victory by determining who or what is manipulating the weather."

My StoryMaker is a joint collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh where children can create their own stories, save them online, or print them at the library. Through My StoryMaker, children can meet new characters, go on great adventures, and create their own story along the way.

Book Flix is an online literacy resource for children and teens that pairs classic video storybooks from Western Woods with related nonfiction eBooks from Scholastic to build a love of reading and learning and to promote literacy and lifelong learning for children.

Carnegie Library provides several online databases for children to improve their literacy skills and to build lifelong e-learning. Some of these databases include: Live Homework Help; Access Pennsylvania Database (Online Library Catalog); AP Multimedia Archives (contains current and historic photos and graphics from the Associated press); and Books Source: Non Fiction (full text and summaries of nonfiction books covering social studies, science, and other research topics for children Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

Book Flix is an online literacy resource for children and teens that pairs classic video storybooks from Western Woods with related nonfiction eBooks from Scholastic to build a love of reading and learning and to promote literacy and lifelong learning for children.

Live Homework Help is an online service where students receive online help from real tutors. Live Homework Help offers online tutoring for 4<sup>th</sup> grade to college level questions in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Carnegie Library provides several online databases for children to improve their literacy skills that I have integrated into both my library and computer classes at Saint Benedict the Moor School.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh provides all of these e-resources free of charge to patrons in Pittsburgh and/or Allegheny County who possess a valid library card. They can utilize these resources from anywhere and at any time.

Some examples of collaborations where the students of Saint Benedict the Moor utilized these various research databases and eCLP resources included when younger students were given the assignment to utilize various resources and media types to locate information on President Barack Obama and write a short paper based on their findings and to cite their sources. We spent one library period reviewing materials from our Saint Benedict the Moor Library as well as the materials that I borrowed from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh including books, books on CD, and DVDs. We viewed the Book Flix online resource and several web sites and articles dedicated to President Barack Obama also. Later that same day, I was the children's librarian at one of the Carnegie Library branches where several of my students came to the library and I assisted them with several additional resources for their Barack Obama school project.

My eighth graders were given the assignment to create a presentation on graphic novels that have been made into films. The students were able to select their favorite graphic novel. We spent some time locating and discussing some of the most popular graphic novels that had been made into films and they were given the opportunity to select two graphic novels that had been made into films. Some selected "Watchmen," "V for Vendetta" and "Sin City" (eVideo). They could listen to the books on audio (eAudio), and search for electronic books (eBooks) on graphic novels (eBooks), and watch the films (eVideo). They utilized databases Novelist and/or Novelist K-8 to read about the authors Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons who wrote the graphic novel "Watchmen," and Frank Miller who wrote "Sin City" and Alan Moore and David Lloyd who wrote "V for Vendetta." They incorporated the text, video, audio, streaming audio, and graphics (still images) into the presentation that made the presentation exciting, engaging, and overall fun.

I taught my middle school students web design and encouraged them to start their own web design businesses. Not only did I teach them HTML, but showed them several HTML and web design books from both the Carnegie Library and my own collection. I even shared articles, books, and links on starting their own businesses during library class as well.

The Science teacher at Saint Benedict the Moor School asked for my assistance in gathering and preparing resources for the students for their upcoming lesson on

mammals. I borrowed several items from the various Carnegie Libraries and brought them to show the students at Saint Benedict the Moor School. A couple of the books were: "About Mammals: A Guide for Children" by Cathryn Sill and John Sill and "The Princeton Encyclopedia of Mammals" by David W. Macdonald. I later purchased them for the Saint Benedict the Moor Library. I organized several print resources from the Carnegie Library and my own Saint Benedict the Moor Library, and showed the students the EBSCO database Searchasaurus and other databases where I showed the students about mammals and how to incorporate all of the resources into their science presentation on mammals.

I had several opportunities for collaborations with foreign language teachers. One example, is the language instruction collaborations where the Spanish teacher is invited to attend to my class where I introduce students to Spanish resources such as Mango, Spanish films throughout the entire CLP collection, eVideos, and Spanish film series available at designated CLP locations, Spanish speaking events, Spanish music events, Spanish-related events, Spanish speaking and reading clubs.

Additional on-going collaborations involved my children's book blog: *A Children's Book a Day, Keeps the Scary Monster Away* where parents, students, teachers, and other librarians would recommend and/or return children's books to the Carnegie Library many locations where I am the children's librarian. Based on their recommendations, I shared the children's books with my students for story time and with their parents, teachers, and others. I then incorporate these books into my children's book blog. I often shared children's book titles that I had purchased for my Saint Benedict the Moor Library with the students, parents, librarians, teachers, and other children's book lovers at the various Carnegie Library locations.

One of my most memorable collaborations occurred one day when a mother returned author/illustrator John Butler's gorgeous book, "Can You Growl Like a Bear" to the Carnegie Library branch where I was the children's librarian on that day. She returned the book and asked if I could recommend additional books that were written by John Butler because her children loved this book. She said that he had become her favorite children's book author. I quickly researched several titles that John Butler had written and/or illustrated. I found Butler's "Whose Baby Am I" for the library patron. She was very happy when she left the library.

I borrowed John Butler's "Can You Growl Like a Bear" and shared it with my kindergarten, first grade, and second graders during story time the next day. They loved the book. I fell in love with the book as well. I was so impressed with "Can You Growl Like a Bear" that I emailed the author John Butler in England and shared with him how much my students, parents, and myself all loved his book. I shared my review for his book and my student's reactions with him on my blog. He was so kind that he wrote a quite favorable comment on my blog. I shared John's comments with my students, parents, teachers, and librarians at both Saint Benedict the Moor and at various branches at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

I recommended John Butler for the award winning *Black, White, and Read All Over* children's book series in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where famous children's book authors from all over the world come to the Pittsburgh area and share their love for children's books with students, families, teachers, librarians, and others from the Pittsburgh and surrounding areas. I am hoping that he will be invited at a later date. Many of my students and their parents attend this award winning series.

Other successful collaborations include book donations and collection development for the Saint Benedict the Moor Library. Being in both the school and public library world, I will contact the department heads at the Carnegie Library and request donations for the Saint Benedict the Moor library. For example, the students at the Saint Benedict the Moor Library both male and female love cook books and children's books. I will contact the librarians/department heads who are in charge of the cookbooks and children's books for the entire Carnegie Library system and request that they donate cookbooks and children's books that they have weeded out of their collection to the Saint Benedict the Moor Library. The students are so very excited to have additional books in the Saint Benedict the Moor Library and the Carnegie Library is happy to have provided a much needed service to a local school.

Collection development is another one of my successful collaborations. I review books for Capstone Publishers for my children's book blog: *A Children's Book a Day, Keeps the Scary Monster Away*. I share these books with my students at story time and with the students and parents who visit the public library. Often times, based on my recommendations, the Carnegie Library will purchase and add the reviewed books to their children's collection. After reading the books during story time at Saint Benedict the Moor school and reviewing the books on my children's book blog, I will donate some of the books to the Saint Benedict the Moor school library where students and teachers have access to these new books.

I enjoy being a librarian at both the Carnegie Library public library and the Saint Benedict the Moor school library because I have the unique opportunity to share the latest and greatest news, resources, and programs that are offered at the Carnegie Library with my students and their parents, and other teachers on a regular basis not only online and print-based resources but on such programs as children's and teen's clubs, reading groups, activities, technology playgrounds, and other fun educational events that are held throughout the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) branch locations.

Collaborations between public and school libraries are a must! The students are so excited when I bring them bookmarks, books, and other free items from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The children and their parents at the public library are eager to hear stories of how my students at Saint Benedict the Moor School library enjoyed a particular book and they decide to read the book also.

My students at Saint Benedict the Moor school love "show and tell" when I bring them books, DVDs, videos, CDs, audio books, and other materials that I have borrowed from the Carnegie Library branch and in some cases, I am able to purchase them.

There have been times when I have been given donations from private donors to purchase books for the Saint Benedict the Moor Library and I recommended some of the titles that I purchased for the Saint Benedict the Moor Library to the Carnegie Library and they purchased some of the titles.

Vendors are excited about public and school library collaborations and are willing to donate materials when they know that you are a librarian in both a school and a public library also. They see it as a potential financially lucrative opportunity.

Some of the student successes and lessons learned that I have witnessed because of collaborations between school and public libraries include:

- Students incorporate as many of the new resources that are available to them into their class projects as their time and skill levels permit.
- Students are more focused, engaging, motivated, and interactive and ask well thought out questions during their library periods rather than seeing it as a time to get away from their regular classes and play with their friends.
- Students experience more “aha” moments and “light bulbs” going on in their heads during library class as we engage in research-oriented dialogues.
- Students and their parents visit and obtain materials from their local libraries more often.
- Student projects are more creative and incorporate higher level cognitive thinking.
- Students are more competitive with each other to see who has the best project in the class.
- Students ask specific questions about adding new books, resources, and programs into the Saint Benedict the Moor library some of which are currently available in their local public library.

Based on these and other observations and discussions with students, I have found that when students have access to school and public library partnerships, their minds become like sponges soaking up all of the knowledge in the universe and they come to realize all of the infinite possibilities that are available to them.

I see librarians as conductors of a major symphony orchestra pushing each orchestra member beyond their limits to bring forth the most melodious outpouring of music that his humanly possible! We are maestros of knowledge leading students through the research and knowledge acquisition and synthesis process to open their minds and go beyond their limitations to create glorious masterpieces!

What does the future hold for public and school library partnerships and for Saint Benedict the Moor school and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, in particular? The sky

is the limit! When the mind can perceive it, the possibilities are endless! Some future partnerships between the two can include but are not limited to:

- Integration of new and/or additional programs from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh into the Saint Benedict the Moor library such as Technology Playgrounds where students, families, and the entire community are invited to test the “latest and greatest” technology that the Carnegie Library offers. Some of the Saint Benedict the Moor students have attended these events in the past. However, there might be field trips where the entire class attends these events together. There can be other events as well as language club meetings, Manga/Anime and other graphic novel discussion groups, movie clubs, chess clubs, international film festivals, wii and other activities, and other fun entertaining programs.
- There can be author visits where some of the authors from the award winning *Black and White and Read All Over* series and other author-related events can visit and hold story times and other reading activities at the Saint Benedict the Moor school.
- There can be joint children’s and teen’s blogs between the Saint Benedict the Moor children and teens and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.
- There might be additional collaborations with vendors to obtain free books, bookmarks, CDs, DVDs, and other materials for the Saint Benedict the Moor School library.
- There can be joint children and teen programs and activities between the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Saint Benedict the Moor school.
- Entire classes of students from the Saint Benedict the Moor school can attend the *Black and White and Read All Over* author series as a group.
- There can be additional story times at both the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Saint Benedict the Moor School library.
- Children and teens at Saint Benedict the Moor School can review children’s books and graphics books and placing reviews on blogs at both Saint Benedict the Moor School and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

In conclusion, as long as there are collaborations between school libraries and public libraries, students will have the best of both worlds at their fingertips. They will have access to the latest and greatest research databases, online resources, printed materials, and technology that is available in both their public and school libraries.

We, librarians, will continue leading the charge motivating students to think outside of the box with their research, information gathering, and technology so that they will be successful in their school and personal lives and become the future leaders that we need and deserve in this ever changing global economy!

Two worlds - school and public libraries - one librarian... Yes, that is me!

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**Short biographical statement regarding the presenter:**

Ms. Ida A. Joiner is a graduate of Chatham University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Administration and Management and a Masters degree in Library and Information Sciences from the University of Pittsburgh.

She reviews children's books and graphic books for Capstone Publishers on her blog: *A Children's Book a Day, Keeps the Scary Monster Away*.

She is a Librarian, Computer Teacher, and Consultant. She is the Librarian and Computer Teacher for St. Benedict the Moor Catholic School and a Substitute Librarian for the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh where she is often the children's librarian. She is a Consultant for Texas Breast Care and Las Colinas Cancer Center. As a Substitute Librarian for the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Ida travels to various locations (Children's Services, Reference Services, Job Career Education Center, Foundation Center, Computer Center, and Library for Blind and Handicapped) providing reference and research services for clients, and diverse populations in particular, utilizing multiple database systems, online and print resources, and technology.

Ms. Joiner collaborates with librarians, teachers, administrators, and vendors on collection development (selection of materials for diverse populations), library automation, curriculum, research, electronic resources, grants, budgets, etc.

She consults with Texas Breast Care, Las Colinas Cancer Center, Visa International, AT&T, PNC Bank, Federated Investors, Optiron Corporation, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and others on competitive intelligence, e-Learning and training solutions, web design, web content, marketing, and performance improvement.

Ida presented "If we 'e' it, will they come: life-long e-learning in a large urban public library at the 75<sup>th</sup> IFLA Conference in Milan, Italy on August 27, 2009. Ms. Joiner was invited and sponsored by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Brazilian government to present on e-Learning November 12-14, 2009 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

She created the Internet Safety for Children web site including the content and slogan: "*Be Safe... Be Smart... Have Fun Online!*" for the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to teach children and parents Internet safety.

Ida has published on e-Learning, social networking (RSS) and Selecting Application Service Provider (ASP) articles in leading print and online magazines (i.e., ComputerWorld, MacWorld, MacWeek, Darwin, and Web Grrls).

Ms. Joiner teaches “Multicultural History and Music Comes Alive” through book discussion groups, weblibliographies, sing-a-longs, poster creations, presentations and multimedia activities for young children through adult.

Ida is a member of the American Library Association (ALA). She is a member of the International Relations Round Table. She attended the ALA Midwinter Conference in Boston, Massachusetts from January 15-19, 2010.