

October 2019

The Library as Social Connector

This presentation has been adapted from an ALA Midwinter 2019 presentation
by Betha Gutsche & Jennifer Lee Peterson.

Stay connected! **#libsocialconnect**

What do you do when you walk into a room at a party and you do not know anyone there?

CONNECTION

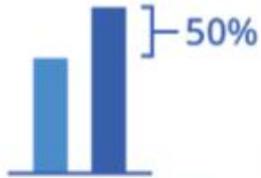


Volunteers by [rawpixel](#) on [Pixabay](#)

“Social connections are as important to our survival and flourishing as the need for food, safety, and shelter.”*

*Source: [Social Connection Makes a Better Brain](#); E. E. Smith; The Atlantic; Oct 29, 2013

THE BENEFITS OF HIGH SOCIAL CONNECTION:



50% increased chance of longevity



stronger gene expression for immunity (research by Steve Cole, UCLA)



lower rates of anxiety and depression



higher self-esteem and empathy



better emotion regulation skills

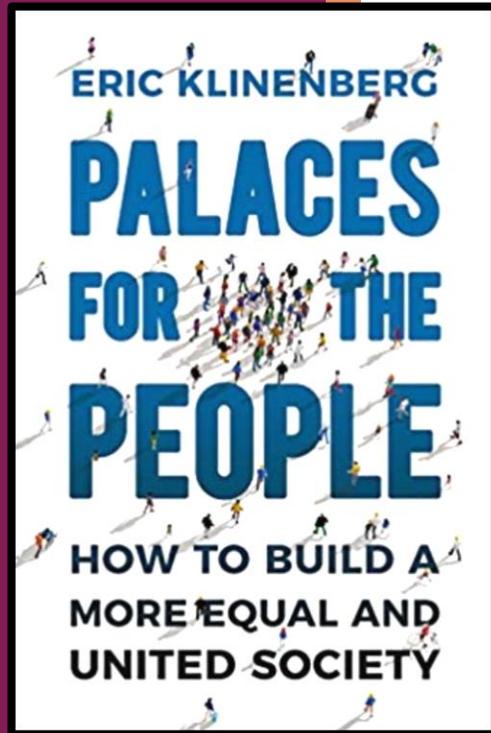


Social connection creates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical well being.

Social connectedness generates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional and physical well-being.”*

*Source: Connectedness & Health: The Science of Social Connection; Dr. Emma Seppala; Stanford Medicine; May 8, 2014

The Social Infrastructure Factor



“When people engage in sustained, recurrent interaction, particularly while doing things they enjoy, relationships inevitably grow.”

EROSION OF SOCIAL CONNECTION

Bowling alone

“If people bowl alone, they do not participate in social interaction and civic discussions that might occur in a league environment.”

↓ Wikipedia



HOW FACEBOOK MAKES US UNHAPPY

New
Yorker

6 Ways Social Media Affects Our
Mental Health

Forbes

Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

Atlantic

Feeling Lonely? Too Much Time On
Social Media May Be Why

NPR

A photograph of a man sitting on a wide set of grey stone stairs. He is wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers. He has a distressed expression, with his right hand covering his face and his left hand holding a smartphone. The stairs lead up to a building with a metal railing on the right. The overall mood is one of stress or anxiety.

We've lost that “we feeling”

Photo: Stressed by [aaayymm eeelectriik](#) on [Flickr CC BY 2.0](#)

REVIVAL OF THE “REAL”

MOLESKINE®

Legendary notebooks



“Analog gives us the joy of creating and possessing real, tangible things”

David Sax

Photo: Moleskin display by B. Gutsche; used with permission

Teens unplugged!

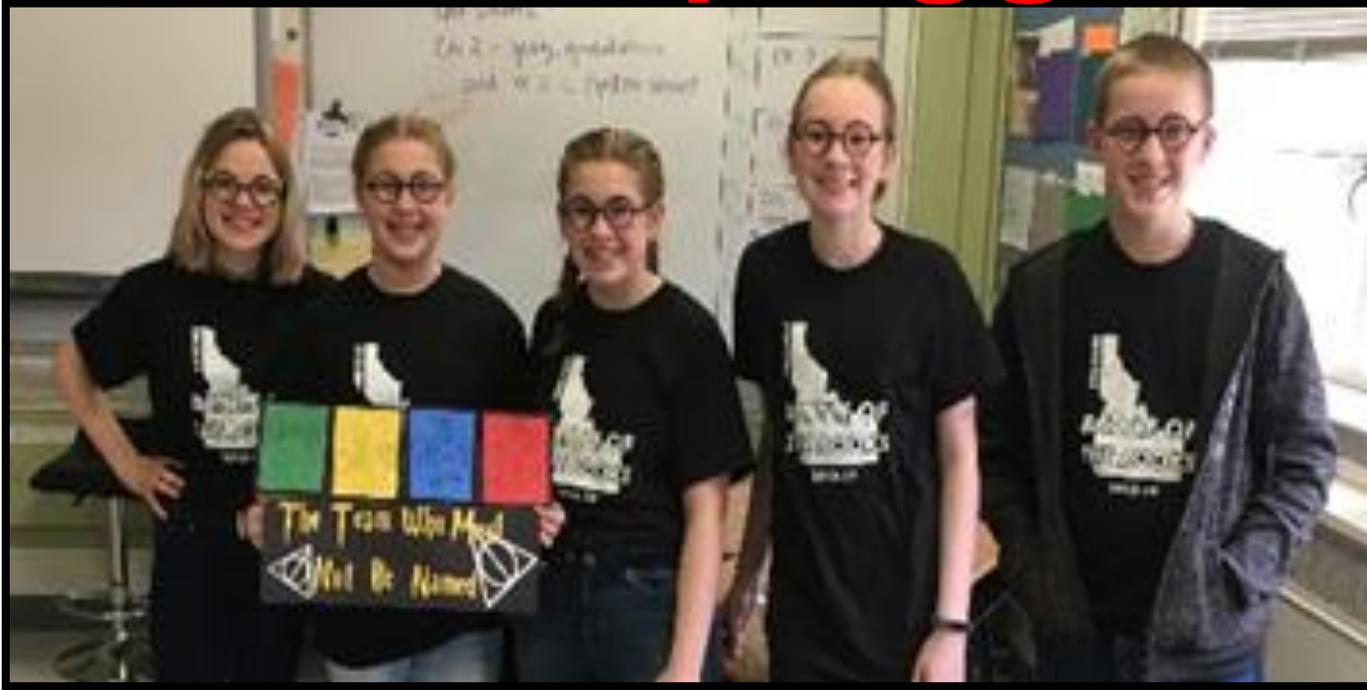


Photo: West Ada Schools Team Who Must Not Be Named from West Ada– Battle of the Books

“This desire for human interaction — and a sense of community and place — is one of the magnets that draw people to neighborhood ~~bookstores...~~”



libraries

LIBRARY AS CONNECTION CATALYST

Why libraries?

“Why build a library when we have an internet?
Put another way, ‘Why go to a party when I
have food and music at home?’

Internet surfing is largely a solo endeavor.

A library is a shared experience.”*

*Quote: [A Library for All Ages](#); Louie Castoria; Half Moon Bay Review, Aug 22, 2018

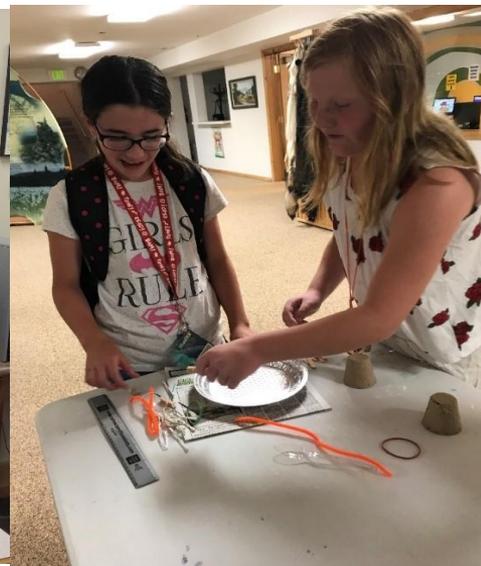
Libraries foster social cohesion

- People forge bonds in healthy infrastructure
- Open and inclusive
- Safe space
- Nurture civility
- Cultures of learning, improving self and society



McCall Public Library: Doing Democracy

Active, connected learning at the library



DIY becomes DIT (doing it together)

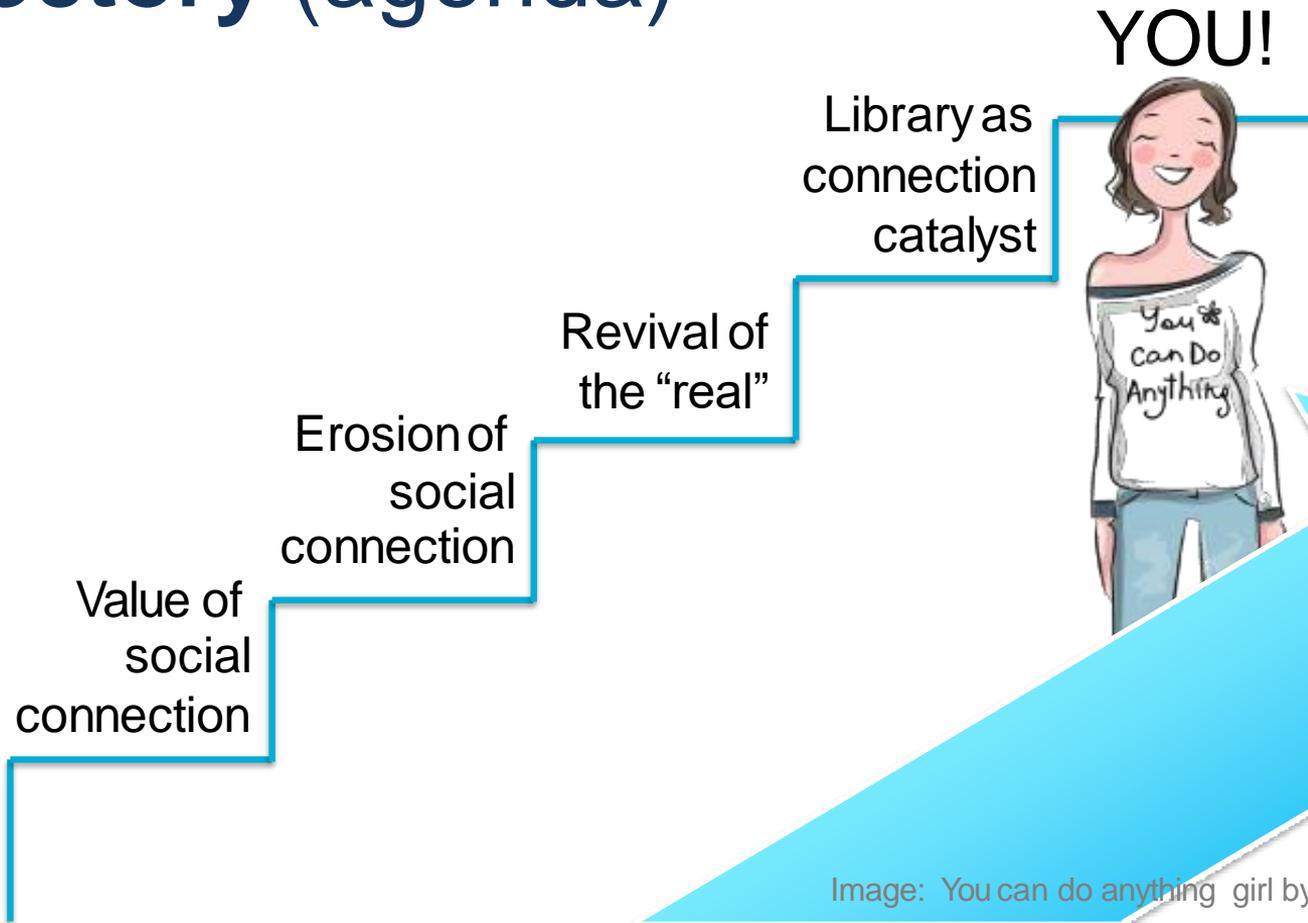
Academic Libraries increase retention



Social connectedness
has a direct
correlation to college
retention rates

Photos: courtesy [University of Idaho Library](#) and [Albertsons Library at Boise State University](#)

Trajectory (agenda)



Possibilities

CHALLENGE

Building on what your library is already doing to enhance social connections, what are some other more intentional ways your library could keep strengthening that role?