

COVID Goat Therapy

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, libraries provided a place of refuge for many of our patrons. While many reading rooms were closed, libraries responded by innovative service delivery options. Many libraries immediately took steps to help users bridge the digital divide. Libraries provided mobile hot spots and kept library wi-fi system on during closures. Providing staff with equipment and hot spots to work from home became essential over the last two years. Some libraries even provided wireless systems for the homeless or others without wi-fi at home. Providing essential sources of information on COVID-19 and other health issue quickly became a key component of library service to the public. Book delivery quickly became a remote service issue. Most libraries provided some form of remote pickup of library books and materials. Various mail and package delivery services were used to get books to home bound users. Libraries also provided face shields, masks, and COVID-19 test kits for patrons. Several libraries dedicated their 3-D printers to making face shields. Some urban libraries provided portable restrooms outside for the homeless to use. Some libraries became local operation centers for local government, providing services such as payment centers for property taxes, dog and cat licenses, unemployment forms, help with income tax forms. Libraries also provided parking lots at night for people to camp in their cars overnight. During the pandemic libraries provide special services to children, senior citizens, and small business owners, people searching for employment. Libraries held forums on COVID-19 and mobile pop-up vaccination clinics. Many libraries considered waving fines and web sign-ups for library cards (and e-resources regardless of library card status). Libraries held online book club sessions with patrons. Libraries encouraged journaling, and encourage patrons to write about their experience during the pandemic. Libraries then asked for copies of these materials for their archives. Libraries served as food distribution centers for the homeless, anyone needing a meal, and first responders. Some libraries used bikes and tri-cycles to distribute books to patrons. Bikes are seen by some as less impos-

ing than a large bookmobile. Of course storytelling, podcasts, blogs, and reading lists delivered electronically were very common during the COVID-19 shutdowns. Several libraries have tried various forms of music and animal therapy to help with patron mental health issues. One of my favorites is pigmy goat therapy, provided by one university library during exams.



Libraries provided these and many other services during COVID-19 lockdowns, and they will continue to do so in future times of need. It will be interesting to see what future challenges libraries will face, and how they will deal with them.

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor and mailed to:
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