

Kansas City, Kansas Has New Library

by Robin Brooks Clark, Library Manager

Turner Community Library (TCL), the newest library in Kansas City, Kansas, celebrated 100 days of service on July 3, 2008. TCL is a brand new, 1700 square foot library with a staff of six. Although small, it packs a big punch because it has all of the Kansas City Kansas Public Library (KCKPL) services - including online databases and an online catalog - supporting it as well is an in-house twelve-station computer lab.



Clark and her staff say you "otter" visit Turner Community Library!

Robin Brooks Clark, library manager, says the opening of this library is a community collaboration success story.

Turner is a small unincorporated area that sits to the west of Kansas City, Kansas in Wyandotte County. The community had wanted a library for many years, but it took the signing of an inter-local agreement in November 2007 by the Turner Recreation Commission, the KCKPL Board, the Kansas City Kansas Unified School District 500, and Wyandotte County Library Board, to make the dream of a library in Turner become a reality. Turner is not a branch of the Kansas City Kansas Public Library, Clark states, but rather a public library location funded by a county tax levy, operated by KCKPL (which is governed by the Kansas Unified School District 500), housed in a facility owned by Kansas Unified School District 202 but operated by the Turner Recreation Commission as the Turner Recreation Center. All this collaboration was made possible with community support and an annual inter-local agreement.

The facility that houses Turner Community Library is a renovated high school which the Turner Recreation Commission operates as a Recreation Center. The library is located on the lower floor, across from the gym, which provides room for large programs. The first floor of the Recreation Center contains the Center's offices, library office, and several activity rooms, including exercise, arts and crafts, and a wellness room used for karate classes. The third floor of the Recreation Center houses the Kansas City, Kansas Golden Gloves Boxing organization. The Recreation Center is a beehive of activity for all ages and also hosts a large 50+ group that meets several times a month.

TCL is a browsing library with a different spin – using its acronym “TCL,” the aim is to “tickle” patrons with the best materials and services available. Books and materials in the TCL collection

are popular titles, with other titles available a courier day away from other KCKPL locations. TCL's NO HOLDS policy ensures that new books stay on the shelves for patrons to come in and check out. Area residents have already found that new books that are not available on the shelf elsewhere can be plucked off the shelf at TCL. Circulation is growing, with half the circulation books and the other half multimedia, including DVDs and music CDs.

Clark developed TCL's marketing motto – “Come home to Turner – big city library services in a small town setting” – which she hopes will entice patrons who may feel overwhelmed by large libraries to use TCL. Clark feels that both of her prior positions prepared her for opening TCL in March, 2008. Clark worked previously with Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, where bookmobiles functioned as branch libraries and typically carried the newest materials, including DVDs. The same is true for TCL. The Turner Community Library also provides a full line of programming including story times, summer reading programs, and adult computer classes, which Clark had great success with when she was the Assistant Library Director and Youth Services Librarian at Kilgore Memorial Library in York, Nebraska.

An important component to ongoing program growth and success at TCL is the ability to use the Turner Recreation Center for large groups and special events which offset any spatial issues that the library may have. Turner Community Library is collaboration at its best – small space but mighty service – with a little help from its friends!