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*Article*

**CLP LYNCS: Bringing a Library to the Pittsburgh Public Market**

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**Abstract**

Libraries are evolving and always thinking of new and creative ways to reach customers. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh devised a new initiative called LYNCS (the Library in Your Neighborhood, Community and School), and its first product was a new library service point located in the indoor Pittsburgh Public Market. The library service point was planned and launched in approximately four months after a unique collaboration with the nearby MLIS students at the University of Pittsburgh. The CLP-LYNCS: PPM was the first of its kind in Southwestern Pennsylvania. With its unique hours, it serves weekend patrons in a bustling Pittsburgh neighborhood that attracts users from all over the county.

A library on a boat may sound a bit odd, but it is also an inspiring concept. Such a library appears in the novel *A Northern Light* by Jennifer Donnelly. While fictional, it is a perfect example of libraries going where they are needed, in whatever form works best. People can't always make it to the library, so libraries must bring the information to them. Take for example Pittsburgh's Strip District, a one-half square mile commercial neighborhood located just northeast of downtown Pittsburgh and known for its family-owned restaurants and small businesses that sell fresh produce, meat, fish, sports memorabilia and other local artisan products—but it lacked a library. In Pittsburgh, a new library came not by boat, but through an indoor market.

The Pittsburgh Public Market (PPM), open every Friday through Sunday, became the home of a small Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) location known as CLP LYNCS: PPM. The CLP currently has 19 library locations throughout the city of Pittsburgh. The Library in Your Neighborhood, Community and School (LYNCS) is a CLP initiative aimed at connecting library services to the public. The CLP LYNCS: PPM is the pilot project of the initiative and combined the expertise of CLP staff, particularly CLP LYNCS Coordinator Molly Krichten, with the creativity and drive of a group of University of Pittsburgh Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) students.

Dr. Susan Alman's Marketing and Public Relations in Libraries class collaborated with CLP, working closely with Ms. Krichten, over the course of their spring semester. The class worked on everything from environmental scanning to promotion, including facilities and project evaluation. The result was the transformation of an empty corner of the PPM into a full-service library outpost, which opened on April 15, 2011 during National Library Week. The majority of the work to bring this plan to fruition took place within a four-month period.

The PPM itself is a new entity in the area, a place where merchants offer a rich diversity of fresh and local products. Opening in September of 2010, the PPM is the first of its kind in the Pittsburgh area for decades. Operating only on weekends, the indoor market houses 45 seasonal vendors selling local goods and fresh foods from a variety of cultures.

A library in a public market is an idea that does not appear to exist anywhere else in the country. A literature review revealed that library branches do exist in locations like malls and museums (Blankinship, 2005, p. 44), and libraries bring their services to patrons through such means as mail-order (Howard, 2007, p. 15) and bookmobiles. A branch in a public market is an extension of this idea, an example of how libraries can provide services in creative ways, meeting needs that were previously unmet. Lawrenceville and Downtown, the two library branches closest to the Strip District where the PPM is located, are mostly closed on weekends. For people who live in that area, a new branch in the PPM provides the convenience of a library branch where they shop on the weekend.

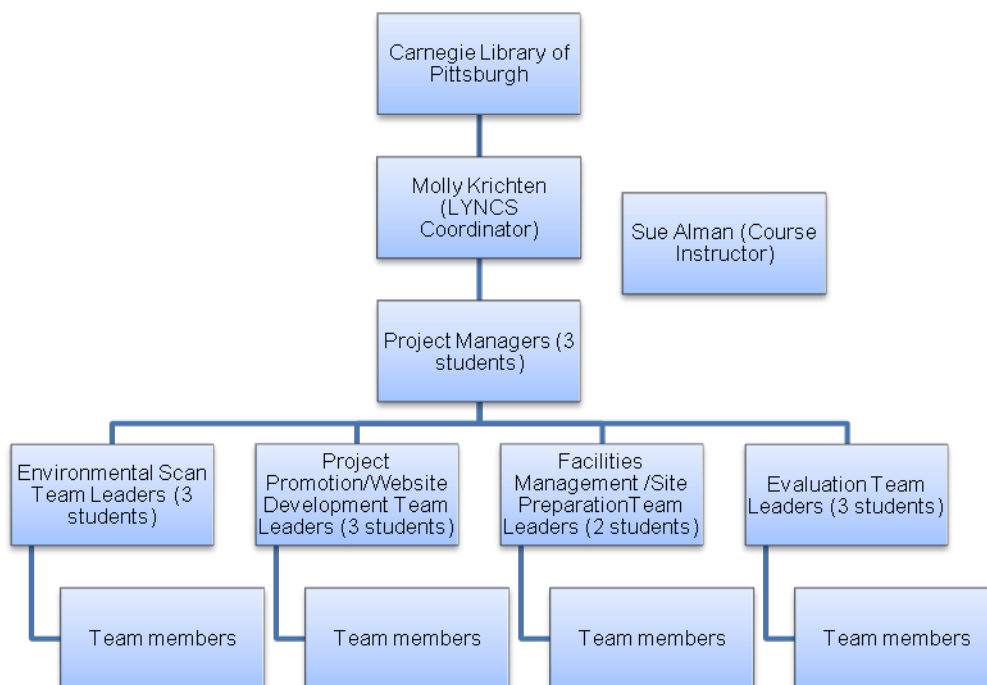
The new library in the PPM aims to deliver convenience, reliability, and ease of information access to the surrounding communities, fitting with the mission of CLP LYNCS. In order to make the idea of a library in the PPM a reality, many minds, talents, and work-

ing hours were combined from a variety of sources including those from the CLP and the University of Pittsburgh's School of Information Sciences.

### **Structure of the Project**

At the beginning of the 15-week 2011 spring semester, students were introduced to the idea of the project by Molly Krichen and Dr. Susan Alman. The students were given 40 elective points and the option of participating in the project or not. If they chose not to, they could work on an individual marketing project; or they could split up their points and work on both. Sixteen out of 17 on-campus students participated in the project in some capacity. The 27 online students were also given the option of working on the project and seven of them chose to do so. Even if they did not reside in Pittsburgh, they contributed by designing questions for a survey, coming up with project promotion ideas, working on website development, and a variety of other tasks. Online students visited CLP LYNCS at least once during the planning phase and several came for opening weekend as well.

The project was broken down into four categories for the students to work on in teams: environmental scan; project promotion and website development; facilities management; and evaluation (see Figure 1). Students had the option of choosing from three positions: project manager, team leader or team member. The project manager position was limited to three members of the class. They were in charge of overseeing the entire project and working with team leaders. They acted as class liaisons to Ms. Krichen, CLP and PPM. Students interested in this position were asked to sign-up and detail why they thought they would make a good project manager; this helped the instructor make a choice if more than three people signed up for this position. Project managers were involved in every aspect of the project.



**Figure 1.** Organization chart for the CLP LYNCS: PPM student project.

Team leaders chose to work on one of the four categories. The team leaders were in charge of their teams of four to 10 members and acted as liaisons to the project managers. Similar to the project manager positions, the number of team leaders for each category was limited to no more than four students, and those interested were to sign-up and state why they would be an effective team leader. Individuals working as team members reported to their team leaders.

**Table 1.** CLP LYNCS: PPM assignments, duties and points breakdowns from Dr. Alman's Marketing and Public Relations for Libraries course, Spring 2011. Courtesy Sue Alman, PhD.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
PROJECT MANAGERS (Limited Option for 2-3 Students) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAXIMUM ENTHUSIASM</li> <li>• Close working relationship with Molly Krichten and Team Leaders</li> <li>• Go-To Person for Questions from Ms. Krichten and Team Leaders</li> <li>• Working knowledge of timeline and changes</li> <li>• Monitor Progress of Teams and Keep Teams on Track</li> <li>• Opening Weekend Availability—April 15-16-17 (Desired)</li> <li>• Evaluative Report</li> </ul>	40
TEAM LEADERS: (Limited Option: 1-4 students for each team) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close working relationship with Project Managers</li> </ul>	20

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task analysis</li> <li>• Assignment of responsibilities</li> <li>• Weekly reports</li> <li>• Summary evaluative report.</li> </ul> <p>Teams</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Environmental Scan/Survey Development, Administration and Analysis</li> <li>2. Project Promotion and Website Development</li> <li>3. Project Evaluation</li> <li>4. Facility Management/Site Preparation/Collection Development/Staffing</li> </ol>	
<p>TEAM MEMBERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working cooperatively with team leader</li> <li>• Accepting responsibility for completing assigned tasks</li> <li>• * 3 of the possible 10 points will be based on a Peer Evaluation instrument that will be administered anonymously with each group member.</li> </ul>	10-20 points (10 points* per team membership up to membership on 2 teams)

Students had the option of signing up for positions in different areas for a total of 40 points (see Table 1). For example, someone could sign up to be a team leader of two different categories or a team leader in one category and a team member in two others. Students could also sign up for one or more of the positions in addition to an individual marketing project, as long as their total number of points added up to 40. This method of signing up for different areas allowed each student to work in the area where they could be the most effective based on their individual experiences and skill sets (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** CLP LYNCS: PPM breakdown of teams and members. Courtesy Sue Alman, PhD.

<b>TEAMS</b>	<b>Environmental Scan</b>	<b>Project Promotion and Website</b>	<b>Facility Management/ Site Preparation</b>	<b>Project Evaluation</b>
<b>DUE DATES</b>	January 31, 2011: Scan February 19-21, 2011: Survey Distribution in Strip District March 6, 2011: Survey Analysis	January 31, 2011: Promote Survey February 28, 2011: PR Materials, Website Recommendations, Social Media	March 4, 2011: Site Plan April 11-14, 2011: Site Preparation	March 14, 2011: Assessment Tools/Plan April 28, 2011: Project Assessment
<b>LEADERS NEEDED</b>	2-3	2-4	2-3	1-2
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Close working relationship with Project Managers</li> <li>2. Task analysis</li> <li>3. Assign tasks</li> <li>4. Monitor Bb Discussion/Pose Questions</li> <li>5. Weekly reports posted on Bb</li> <li>6. Summary evaluative report</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Close working relationship with Project Managers</li> <li>2. Task analysis</li> <li>3. Assign tasks</li> <li>4. Monitor Bb Discussion/Pose Questions</li> <li>5. Weekly reports posted on Bb</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Close working relationship with Project Managers</li> <li>2. Task analysis</li> <li>3. Assign tasks</li> <li>4. Monitor Bb Discussion/Pose Questions</li> <li>5. Weekly reports posted on Bb</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Close working relationship with Project Managers</li> <li>2. Task analysis</li> <li>3. Assign tasks</li> <li>4. Monitor Bb Discussion/Pose</li> </ol>

		6. Summary evaluative report	6. Summary evaluative report	Questions 5. Weekly reports posted on Bb 6. Summary evaluative report
<b>TEAM MEMBERS NEEDED</b>	10 or less	10 or less	10 or less	5 or less
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	1. Work cooperatively with team leader 2. Accept responsibility for completing assigned tasks	1. Work cooperatively with team leader 2. Accept responsibility for completing assigned tasks	1. Work cooperatively with team leader 2. Accept responsibility for completing assigned tasks	1. Work cooperatively with team leader 2. Accept responsibility for completing assigned tasks

## Communication

Initial communications were posted through the class Blackboard/CourseWeb discussion board. This was the forum where students signed up for their positions and allotted 40 points. Ms. Krichten was also given access to CourseWeb. Once the instructor made the positions official, each team was assigned a discussion board only visible to those associated with that team. A discussion board designated as “CLP Project NEWS” was also added to the class. This was visible to everyone and allowed all students in the class to keep up with the progress of the project. Each group gave weekly updates to the entire class on this thread, and Ms. Krichten posted information from both CLP and PPM here.

The class met with Ms. Krichten every Monday, spending anywhere between 20 and 45 minutes of each class discussing and debriefing the progress of the teams, and learning of new decisions being made by PPM and CLP. Team leaders and their respective members coordinated their own means of communicating and working on their assigned sections. Project managers met with CLP librarians a few times to discuss the project and then passed that information on to team leaders.

## Environmental Scan

No marketing plan can be concise and effective unless it is developed around the intended audience. In order to “know the audience,” and therefore build the best possible marketing plan, the students completed an environmental scan in conjunction with Ms. Krichten, CLP, and PPM. The method of gathering information was to survey customers of the PPM and other people in the Strip District.

To begin the planning of the environmental scan, Kelly Shaffer, the School of Information Sciences External Relations Director, came to class and offered ideas and help in building a survey that would return useful information. Shaffer and CLP took care of the legal documents for survey distribution, especially in regards to the consent forms for photographs, since the environmental scan team wanted to visually document the experience. One student also attended a meeting of Neighbors in the Strip (NITS), an organization whose mission as stated on their website is to “promote economic development opportunities while preserving the personality, integrity and character of the Strip” (Neighbors in the Strip, 2011). NITS happily worked with Ms. Krichten and the group throughout the process in supporting the CLP LYNCS: PPM project.

Working collaboratively through a Google document, students on the environmental scan team developed a survey to be given face to face and online to provide feedback from the population this new library would serve. Questions fell into three categories: personal information, library services, and materials. The personal information questions asked if the individual was a customer of a local business, a business owner, an employee, or visitor from out of town. It also asked if they had a CLP library card and, in the cases where they did not, if they would like one. Library services information on the survey included questions on what type of services respondents might use at a library in the market, e.g., browse for materials; pick up or return materials; ask reference questions; use the internet; or attend any story times, lecture series, book clubs or small classes. There was also room for survey-takers to suggest topics for programs, information sessions, or small classes that could be held at the location in the future. The third section of the environmental scan survey targeted the types of materials the respondents thought they might utilize at the new location. They were asked to check off any and all materials they might like to see, including children’s, young adult, fiction, non-fiction, magazines, periodicals, CDs, DVDs, e-books, and a few specific topics tied into the spirit of the PPM such as cooking, crafts and gardening.

Once the survey was developed, a sign-up sheet was made available to class members to obtain volunteers for the face-to-face surveys held at the Strip District on February 18th, 19th, and 20th. The goal was to survey at least 100 people on each of the three days to obtain environmental data, and the group exceeded that goal, collecting about 500 surveys in all. Besides gathering pertinent information on this new library location, the environmental scan team played a large role in marketing the new library early on in the project—their presence and enthusiasm at the site of the market when distributing surveys got the local businesses, residents and Strip District shoppers excited about the new service point.

The electronic version of the survey was created on Survey Monkey and distributed to online CLP customers, PPM online subscribers, and the Neighbors in the Strip online subscribers. The vast majority of data supported locating a library service point in the Strip District. Additionally, the data from both surveys was used by CLP to decide what types of materials to include in the collection and what services to offer.

## Promotion

A project like this relies on publicity, so people know the service is available. With this in mind, the student team dedicated to promotion put together an extensive list of suggestions for marketing the CLP LYNCs: PPM project. At a meeting attended by both Ms. Krichten and the student project managers, the CLP Communication and Creative Services staff was able to draw several ideas from the list, for both pre-launch and post-launch promotion. The primary goals were, essentially, to make people aware of the CLP LYNCs location and the available services, and to encourage usage of those services.

The slogan “Going to the Strip District? Don’t forget your Library Card!” was selected and used on assorted promotional materials. In addition, the following benefits of the library service point were outlined on fliers and posters: free library services, easy access, reliable service from trained library staff, and convenient location.



**Figure 2.** Promotional display of the CLP LYNCs: PPM. Photo courtesy of Sarah Loudenslager.



A Facebook page, maintained by a student volunteer, was created to market the CLP LYNCS: PPM project. Prior to the launch date, the service received mention in CLP blogs and e-newsletters that already had a dedicated following. LYNCS: PPM was also added to the CLP locations page. In addition to the press release issued by CLP, the student team wrote a press release for the School of Information Sciences and University of Pittsburgh community. Leading up to the April 15th launch, posters were displayed in Strip District businesses and in CLP branches. Bookmark-size fliers were distributed, featuring the slogan and information about CLP LYNCS: PPM, with a shopping list on the back that could be written on and used by PPM shoppers (see Figure 2).

A number of events and promotions were planned for opening weekend, which coincided with National Library Week. These included sidewalk chalk stencils pointing to the CLP LYNCS: PPM location, a ribbon cutting, live music, storytelling, a speed book talk and a gadget workshop to teach people how to find and use downloadable content through the library. A CLP scavenger hunt-style contest for National Library Week also included a visit to the CLP LYNCS: PPM location on its list of activities. Some of the ideas presented by the Pitt student team continue to be used to promote CLP LYNCS: PPM, including business card size promotional fliers and the Facebook page.

## **Facilities**

The student facilities team worked closely with Ms. Krichten on several important projects. They helped to select furniture for the CLP LYNCS booth at PPM, considering the needs and limitations of the 235 square foot space. Since the booth is too small to accommodate seating, standing desks were selected. In order to meet ADA compliance standards, these desks adjust so that users with wheelchairs can access the laptops. Other items the facilities team helped to plan were signs, display units, supplies and carpeting. CLP's Collection Development department handled the actual materials acquisition, and the initial collection consisted mostly of bestsellers and cookbooks. The collection now stands at about 600 items, including both print and audio-visual.

The facilities team divided itself into three groups: Site Prep, which handled setting up the booth and assembling furniture with help from volunteers in the class; Inventory, which handled the planning of office supplies, cleaning supplies, etc.; and Personnel, which helped to plan opening and closing procedures, evacuation plans, and other daily library operations. With dedicated help from Ms. Krichten and classmates, the facilities team spent several hours the week prior successfully preparing the CLP LYNCS: PPM space for opening day.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation is an important part of the process because it is key in measuring the success of the project and directs change in the future, focusing on what the most important areas to update or improve are. The team believed that no success is complete until it can be placed into measurable terms. The evaluation team worked via Google documents to build a report about how the PPM library site's successes could be measured and utilized to improve future services.

The theory behind the evaluation strategy is centered on outcomes-based evaluation, which measures the quality and not simply the quantity of the service provided. The desired outcomes of implementing an evaluation plan include affecting the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of Strip District residents and visitors and providing library services that these customers consider useful.

The evaluation plan suggested a variety of methods to measure both quantitative and qualitative data regarding the new services provided at the CLP service point in the PPM. Quantitatively, the evaluation team analyzed circulation (see Table 3) and social media statistics (see Table 4). The evaluation team determined that the circulation statistics showed the CLP LYNCS: PPM as a valuable service point; they determined that the social media statistics showed an actively engaged community and that Facebook was a great way to gain momentum for the opening. Qualitatively, they evaluated feedback from their classmates and from the general public. Classmates noted that the other vendors at the Pittsburgh Public Market were very enthusiastic about the new library service point and even mentioned that their sales were up due to the grand opening. The evaluation team also noted that 98 people signed the virtual guest book and that the responses were mostly positive. To encourage people to sign the guestbook, CLP raffled off a gift bag filled with items donated by PPM vendors, such as a bottle of olive oil and hand-made soaps. Lastly, the team evaluated the responses from notable figures and media coverage. Dr. Barbara K. Mistick, President and Director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh at the time, gave a speech at the opening ribbon-cutting ceremony and Pittsburgh City Councilman Patrick Dowd was also present. News coverage included stories in both of the city's major newspapers, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, and on two local television stations, KDKA (CBS Pittsburgh) and WPXI (NBC Pittsburgh), as well as at the Examiner (<http://www.examiner.com/pittsburg>) and community blogs.

**Table 3.** Opening Weekend Circulation Statistics

	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Actual figure</b>
<b>Library card registrations/renewal</b>	25	17
<b>Circulation</b>	100 items	500 (daily average of 166)

**Table 4.** Facebook Statistics

<b>Statistic/Time span</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
New "likes" over opening weekend (April 15th to 17th)	43	The number of people who "liked" the page over that span.
Lifetime "likes" from March 25th to April 23rd	64	The total number of people who "liked" the page during this time period
Monthly Active Users from March 25th to April 23rd	522	The number of people who interacted with or viewed the page or its posts.

Post Views from March 25th to April 23rd	7,427 (includes 74 “likes” or comments)	The number of people who viewed a News Feed story during that time period.
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The evaluation team made the following recommendations for future evaluation methods to be carried out by CLP. Statistics will continue to be an important part of data collection—from circulation numbers to surveying library users on their preferences, expectations, and future needs. Focus groups are suggested to determine how the library changes with regards to marketing, collection materials, and customer service. Observations by staff members and volunteers will gauge information such as what people are looking at, how long they spend in the library, and what materials they use. A suggestion box and comment cards are also suggested as a way to gather important evaluative information. As an incentive for filling out the comment cards, the evaluation report suggests creating a raffle from the cards of customers who have participated.

### What Worked

- Allotting class time to discuss the project allowed for greater collaboration and coordination. It was key for good communication to have a set weekly meeting time to discuss each team’s progress on the project.
- Input from classmates not involved in the project was taken into consideration. Though some people chose to only do an individual marketing project, they still provided helpful input in class and on the discussion boards. In addition, each team provided a weekly update of their project on the class discussion board. This enabled people from other teams, or those not directly involved, to leave comments or suggestions, making for a truly collaborative project.
- Documenting everything, not throwing anything away and checking things closely proved to be especially helpful when survey data had to be recalculated at one point.
- Administering the survey in the Strip District at the site of the market got the community really excited about the prospect of the new service point.
- Teams created their own timeline within the larger, overall project timeline.
- At first, the number of participants in the project seemed unwieldy, but as the process went along we appreciated the many and varied viewpoints that everyone brought to the table.

### Lessons Learned

- Don’t have too many means of communication. Some teams decided to communicate on Google Docs; while others decided to use their designated class discussion board. E-mail was also popular. However, there were some issues about having too many means of communication, e.g., more than one Google Docs account per team or having information on both the Google Docs account and discussion board.
- Be familiar with any new software or technology you will use. Our environmental scan team had some issues with Survey Monkey.

- Think everything through. For example, some questions on the environmental scan team's survey didn't provide useful data.
- Intergroup communication is essential to efficiency and success. Have a clear division of labor so teams don't duplicate efforts. The sooner it is defined what belongs to whom, the better.
- Set goals so you have something to measure yourself against.

## **Opening Day**

Amazingly, a library fit into 235 square feet of space. The space is open, welcoming, and refreshingly uncluttered for such a small area (see Figure 3). Customers have the ability to browse everything from ultra-popular books to nonfiction books to children's books. Some of the collection is in keeping with the atmosphere of the PPM, including many cookbooks and books on green living. Two public access computers are available for customer perusal of the catalog or Internet.

The opening of the new library location occurred at the end of National Library Week and was filled to the brim with fun, exciting activities for all ages. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at 10:00 am on Friday, April 15, 2011 and was attended by CLP President and Director Dr. Barbara K. Mistick along with City Councilman and CLP Board of Trustees member Patrick Dowd. Later that day, four librarians, including Ms. Krichten, held "30 Books in 30 Minutes," where they book-talked thirty books available at the new library in 30 minutes. This event was held in the shared-presentation space of the PPM and was well attended. It was a fun activity where many reading tastes were acknowledged in addition to sharing volumes that related to the vendors and products in the rest of the public market. The first day of the new library at the PPM closed with a performance by the Brazilian percussion ensemble Timbeleza from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

In addition to the first day opening activities, the library hosted drop-in storytelling from 9:00 am - 11:30 am on Saturday morning and a Gadget Lab on Sunday from noon until 2:00 pm. During the Gadget Lab, customers were able to use different types of electronics provided on-site or to ask questions about using gadgets they might already own.

In all, the opening weekend was a flurry of events created to catch the attention of the many different types of customers expected to visit the library in the PPM. On opening weekend, 17 new library cards were registered, and over 500 items were circulated.



**Figure 3:** The CLP LYNCs: PPM space, ready for opening day. Photographs courtesy of Jamie Flynn.

## Conclusion

At the outset, no one was sure how full library services could operate out of such a small, unconventional space. Yet the need was real because the Strip District did not have a branch library, and the closest libraries do not have full weekend hours. The Pittsburgh Public Market provided a perfect location because people, including locals and tourists, pass through it all weekend. CLP LYNCs: PPM is open on weekends: 10:00 am - 6:00 pm on Friday; 9:00 am - 5:00 pm on Saturday; and 10:00 am - 4:00 pm on Sunday. And as it turns out, it was possible to squeeze all the ingredients for a library into 235 square feet.

## Epilogue

The efforts of students collaborating on the CLP LYNCs: PPM project caught the attention of City Councilman and CLP board member Patrick Dowd, who approached Dr. Alman about the possibility of working with her students again in the future. He attended the final class session to discuss ideas for possible future projects, including the recent ballot initiative that was passed in November of 2011, which increased property taxes for city of Pittsburgh residents to help support the CLP. Several students who worked

on the CLP LYNCS: PPM project worked on making the campaign successful. Students also did field placements for credit at the CLP LYNCS: PPM.

Thanks to Molly Krichen and other dedicated CLP library staff, along with Dr. Alman and her enthusiastic MLIS students, Pittsburgh residents can pick up or drop off library materials while they shop, tourists can use the computers while they explore the neighborhood, and everyone has access to a wonderful library outpost right inside a bustling public market. Following the success of CLP LYNCS: PPM, Ms. Krichen became the CLP's Coordinator of LYNCS. She is planning more ventures to reach patrons where they work, live and shop in this role. In the months following the grand opening of CLP LYNCS: PPM, Ms. Krichen increased the library's presence at local community festivals and, with help from the passing of the property tax initiative in Pittsburgh to fund the CLP, hopes to build more outpost library locations that cater to the community. She expects to expand the reach of LYNCS based on what has been heard during community conversations. Ms. Krichen and CLP LYNCS will continue to look at engagement in library services across the city with the hope to touch each of Pittsburgh's 99 neighborhoods in a profound way.

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