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Library Transformation through Collaborative Innovation

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Background: Three full-time Children's Mercy Librarians and one Library Technician serve the multi-site 350-bed stand-alone pediatric system of hospitals and clinics with large residency and fellowship programs. Patients, families, and community members interact with Library Services through the Kreamer Resource Center for Families (Kreamer), and services for hospital staff are provided through the Health Sciences Library (HSL).

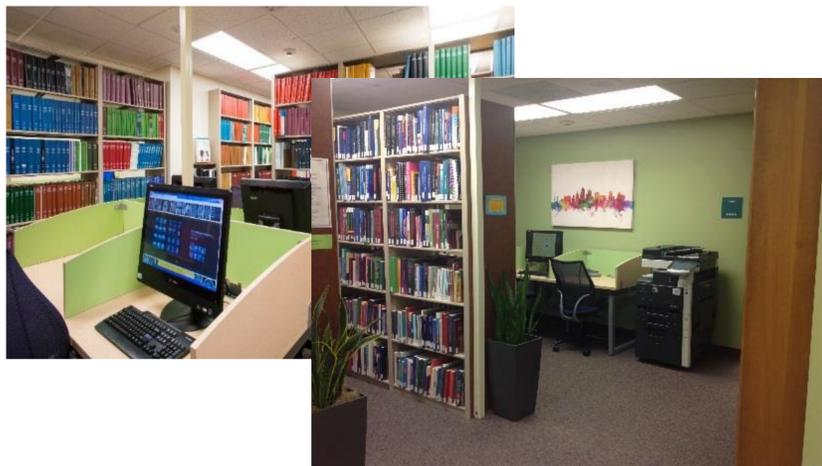
Process: Donations and dedicated hospital improvement funds provided Library Services the opportunity to reimagine its spaces and services in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary steering committee comprised of both hospital staff and patient families. This committee worked to meld patient, family and staff wishes with needs, budgets and allotted space.

The resulting changes to the Kreamer space included more modern and adult-friendly aesthetics, the addition of private consultation booths and meeting spaces, and a more inviting entryway. Responsibility for staffing, marketing and program planning was transferred to the Department of Family-Centered Care, and Librarians provided informal consumer health training to new staff and volunteers. Library Services maintains a re-organized consumer health collection in the space that more closely resembles intuitive bookstore browsing and developed a consumer health website (<http://www.childrensmercy.org/library>) with an updated Ask-A-Librarian form (<http://www.childrensmercy.org/askalibrarian>), both of which have been translated into Spanish.

New office space was also added to the HSL to accommodate all library staff, some of whom were previously housed in the Kreamer. The usability and aesthetics of the HSL were elevated by the addition of several more computer workstations along with modern and colorful furniture and décor.

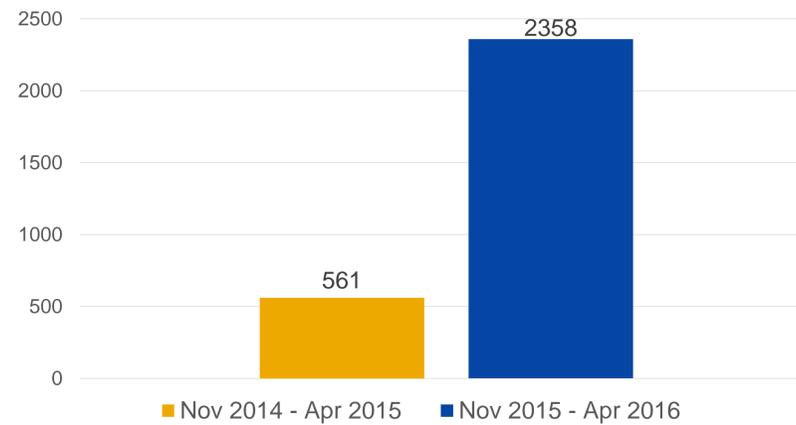


Flyers and booklets in English and Spanish advertised renovations and new services

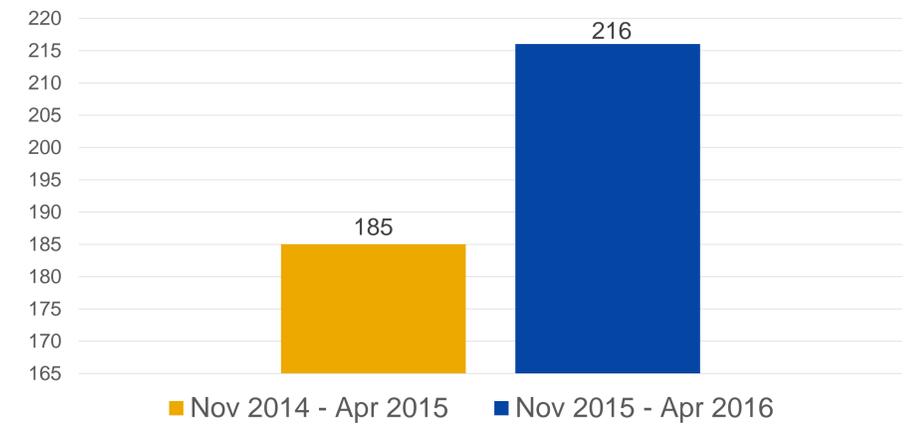


New workspaces were added to the Health Sciences Library

Kreamer Physical Space Usage (computer, printer, copier, fax, meeting)



Consumer Health Interactions (book checkout, librarian assistance)



Results: Foot traffic and requests for library resources have increased dramatically in both renovated spaces (see *Kreamer Physical Space* and *Consumer Health* charts), and visitor reactions have been overwhelmingly positive. Library staff developed new partnerships within the organization and collaborations have increased hospital-wide awareness of library services.

Future directions include offering the Ask-A-Librarian feature through the Patient Portal, more formalized consumer health training for Kreamer staff, and improvements to the consumer health website.

Conclusions: Space can be a precious commodity, but a willingness to collaborate in the pursuit of staffing efficiency and effective marketing can result in significant gains. Library Services experienced a net benefit as the loss in square footage was outweighed by the development of new partnerships and an increase in overall usage of services.