



A ROUND TABLE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## Success Stories Sister Libraries

### **Mansfield, Ohio, U.S.A. / Burnside Libraries, Australia**

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Two Libraries, Two Continents and One Connection  
by Deborah L. Dubois and Sharon Downing

The Mansfield/Burnside Sister Libraries initiative began on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean in 2010. Sharon Downing, the Library Events Coordinator at the Burnside Library in South Australia and Deborah Dubois, the Outreach Librarian at the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library in Ohio met while on holiday.

They discovered that both were librarians, albeit on opposite sides of the world, and both had a passion for library programming. After much discussion, they decided it would be a great idea to become sister libraries and collaborate on joint programs, sharing the culture of each library and country with each other.

First ventures were sharing information about each library, resulting in displays in Ohio about Burnside Library and in South Australia about Mansfield/Richland County Public Library. In Mansfield, a list of books that were popular in Australia was

included, with many being checked out by Ohio readers. In Burnside, their display included poetry booklets written by teens in Ohio as part of Poetry Month programs to be given out to patrons.

The Burnside Library has a small group that helps with Sister Library programs, where the Sister Library program at the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library is handled mostly by the Outreach Librarian with help from other staff as needed.

Other examples of the partnership are:

- Promotion of cultural holidays- A display about ANZAC Day in the Children's Department in Mansfield.
- A custom made banner representing the Burnside Library and surrounding area sent to Ohio. (made by Burnside volunteers)
- Bi-monthly displays in Mansfield about the Burnside Library.
- Small gifts representing the library and the area sent between both libraries.
- A Mansfield/Burnside Sister Libraries Facebook page was created to foster communication between our communities.

The most exciting program planned is the One Book, Two Continents program that is currently being run. Burnside Library invited Mansfield/Richland County Public Library to participate in their annual One Book, One Burnside program. They sent their list of books to Mansfield. Voting is being done by patrons on both sides of the world. When the favorite book is chosen from the list, book discussions will be held in September at each library and via Facebook and possibly Skype.

This partnership has been a way to foster friendship and understanding between two communities on opposite sides of the world.

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