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## Teen Led Community Dialogues

Elena Rosenfeld – High Plains Library District  
Anne Holland – Space Science Institute  
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### What is a Community Dialogue?

- A Community Dialogue is a loosely facilitated discussion that provides the opportunity for staff and community members to discuss a common, community-based challenge or aspiration.
- Think of it like a focus group, but instead of testing a product, you're gauging your community's opinions on your venue, and the services your community needs.

*"There is no doubt that the Community Dialogues are beneficial to all parties. I think this method should be employed more often when we are considering all kinds of services, initiatives and programs for our community."*

Lisa Jackson - Youth Services Librarian,  
African-American Research Library and Cultural Center, Fort Lauderdale, FL

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- You know how your "frequent flyer" patrons use your venue, but what about the people who don't come through the door? Are there services they would use that they don't know about? Is there some reason they don't feel welcome?
- But it's more than just getting people in the door, it's an opportunity to make new partners, and further cement your venues as a community hub.

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### What do they look like?

- 1-4 hours
- Participation that represents the community you live in
- People you already know AND people you don't
- Change makers
- But most importantly, they should look relevant for the groups you're working with

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### Ground Rules

1. **Have a "kitchen table" conversation**  
Everyone participates; no one dominates.
2. **There are no "right answers"**  
Draw on your own experiences, views and beliefs. You do not need to be an expert.
3. **Keep an open mind**  
Listen carefully and try hard to understand the views of those who disagree with you.
4. **Help keep the discussion on track**  
Stick to the questions; try not to ramble.
5. **It is okay to disagree, but don't be disagreeable**  
Respond to others how you want to be responded to.
6. **Have fun!**

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*"Public libraries are a pillar of education for all. We have an opportunity and a responsibility to offer educational experiences for our communities. STEM learning is part of this and highly important for the continued development and health of our society, both intellectually and economically."*  
Discover NASA Host Library Staff Member


### Community Dialogue Goals

1. Strengthen informal education venues roles in establishing a STEM Learning Environment
2. Identify underrepresented community groups
3. Identify possible collaborations and partnerships within the community
4. Contribute to developing a flexible Community Dialogue model that all ISE venues can use

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### How We Got Started with this Model

- It actually started to help ME develop an exhibit and programming (Discover Health)
- Initially invited only library staff and Area Health Education Center Partners
- Some libraries started inviting other groups and community leaders and it became clear that these informal discussions could have a much broader impact



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### Key Outcomes from Discover Health Dialogues

- New partnerships with organizations like immigration services, heritage and cultural centers, tribal libraries, Area Health Education Centers, and Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- 2 Libraries added more welcoming signage to their front doors
- 1 library completely changed a display that was sending the wrong message to their target population

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### Community Dialogues Can Help Your Venue

- Expand your understanding of patrons' and visitors feelings about their local library and its programs, including programming related to STEM or programming targeted at underserved groups
- Obtain meaningful feedback from the community on who visits the venue and why
- Have a conversation about how the venue can better serve ethnically, economically, and geographically underserved and underrepresented audiences
- Better connect with local organizations and potential future partners that have shared interests with your organization and community

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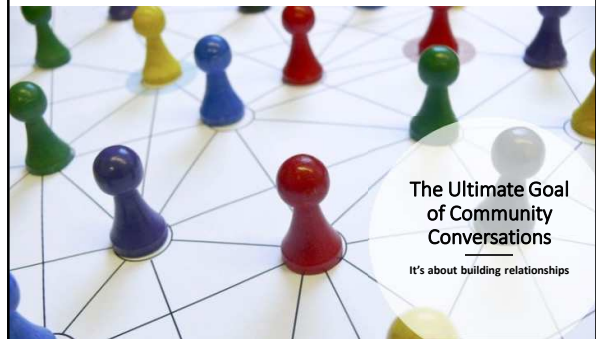
### Who to invite?

Science

- Area Education
- STEM Council
- Community College
- State Library
- Principals
- Elementary Teachers
- Innovative School Leader
- City Council Members
- Library Association
- Engineering Department at local university
- If possible former or current employees at NASA
- Home School
- Library Director
- Library Board
- Public Television

**Really, anyone who is a "leader" in the community**

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**The Ultimate Goal of Community Conversations**

It's about building relationships



**No one who ever bought a drill wanted a drill. They wanted a hole.**

© Perry Marshall

**It's the task that matters.**


Don't measure a Community Conversation's success by whether you learned what you wanted to know.

It's even better when you have learned something new.

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Best Lesson Learned at a Community Conversation:

Reschedule due to other events being held!



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## How Big, How Far, How Hot?

How can you sort these images?

**Use the images on your tables to discuss in groups how you can arrange items in the Universe.**

- Start by arranging the cards in whatever way makes sense to your group
- Next, arrange the cards by temperature, distance away, or size

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## How Big, How Far, How Hot? Answers

### How Big?

Lions, International Space Station, Moon, Mars, Earth, Jupiter, Sun, Solar System, Andromeda Galaxy

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## How Big, How Far, How Hot? Answers

### How Far?

Eagle, Jet, Aurora, Hubble Space Telescope, Moon, Sun, Saturn, Orion Nebula, Andromeda Galaxy

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## How Big, How Far, How Hot? Answers

### How Hot?

Comet's surface (171 °F; 77 °C)  
 Lava (1,832 °F; 1,000 °C)  
 Meteor (3,100 °F; 1,700 °C)  
 Sunspot (6,332 °F; 3,500 °C)  
 Sun's Surface (9,932 °F; 5,500 °C)  
 Earth's Core (10,832 °F; 6,000 °C)  
 Lightning Bolt (52,232 °F; 29,000 °C)  
 Sun's Corona (3.6 million °F; 2 million °C)  
 Sun's Core (27 million °F; 15 million °C).

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## Brainstorming

What aspects of your Dialogue do you think your teens could help with?

What do you think you would need to do to support them?

How much autonomy will you give them?

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## NASA@ My Library Dialogue Feedback



"On May 7, 2018 a group of educators, STEM professionals and community leaders gathered for a roundtable discussion at the Macron County Public Library in an effort to get a better picture of what MCPL's NASA program could bring to the county and what sorts of needs exist in STEM education here. One of the primary focuses of the discussion was improving access and engagement for STEM, by offering programs that are relevant to the people living in Western North Carolina." The Franklin Press.

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"Community Dialogue attendees have shown strong support for library STEM programs and would like to meet again. We have plans to meet again next year, which allows for enough time to implement new strategies and reflect upon impacts." – Dianna Leighton, Fort Fairfield Public Library




"This dialogue was very useful in setting up collaborations. The attendees weren't as keen on discussing issues as they were on talking and working together!" Mary Jenkins, Clarksdale Carnegie Public Library

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"Participants took off running-I was barely able to get questions in, but it was all good because by themselves they covered most of the questions" – Charles Diede, Fontana Library



"When the facilitator set the tone for a fluid conversation among attendees, they seemed to be more willing to jump in to provide insight and opinions. Participants were encouraged to gather close together (even though the room we were in was quite large) so that it was easier to hear one another and to participate in the discussion" Atlas Logan, Gwinnett County Public Library

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### Suggestions from libraries who have already conducted these dialogues

- **Plan ahead.** Some libraries weren't able to promote the dialogue far in advance so some key players who would have otherwise attended (State librarian, state level representatives) were unable to make it
- **Invite the people you're wanting to serve.** Be concerned with the idea of programming AT target audiences, rather than involving them in the process.
- **Consider a neutral location.** If the groups who aren't visiting your library are more comfortable elsewhere, go there to meet with them. If they don't want to join a big meeting, have a small one. Be flexible.
- **Remember your role in these dialogues.** You're a convener, and if needed, a facilitator. Don't feel like you need to "run" the meeting. Let the tough questions play out. Let things get heated.
- **Make it FUN!** Make it a party, have snacks, do some activities.

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## How can YOU Conduct a Dialogue?



**Quick Links:**

- STAR.net Summary
- Sample Invitation
- Sample Rules
- Online Resources

**What Library Staff Say:**


There is no other star than Community Dialogues...  
 I have conducted this dialogue several times...  
 I have conducted this dialogue several times...  
 I have conducted this dialogue several times...

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## How can YOU Conduct a Dialogue?

### Planning Your Community Dialogue



**Section Menu**

- Why to Invite
- How to Invite
- Suggested Timeline
- Who to Invite the Dialogue
- What and How Long
- What to Ask

**Library Quote**

"It made sense to us to hold our Community Dialogue...  
 It made sense to us to hold our Community Dialogue...  
 It made sense to us to hold our Community Dialogue..."

**Who to Invite**

The focus should be on bringing in new partners and more voices to the conversation and connecting with groups not normally represented at the library in order to build the audience for dialogues, not because the groups for each dialogue. You can schedule more Community Dialogues in the future to gain additional insights.

Invites could include:
 

- Education (e.g., universities, colleges, community colleges, local school districts, teachers, PTA/PTO, homeschoolers, homeschooling, after-school programs, etc.)
- Local government agencies and government sites
- The Chamber of Commerce and business organizations (e.g., local companies, engineering firms, advertising agencies)

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The screenshot shows the NASA@My Library website. At the top, it features the NASA@My Library logo and the tagline "A National Earth and Space Science Initiative that Connects NASA, Public Libraries and their Communities." Below this is the NCIL logo. The main heading is "How can YOU Conduct a Dialogue?". The page content includes a "Resources" section with a list of links, a "Popular Quote" section with a quote by William Butler Yeats, and a footer with logos for NASA, ALA, Cornerstones of Science, EDC, and COSA.

The screenshot shows the NASA@My Library website. At the top, it features the NASA@My Library logo and the tagline "A National Earth and Space Science Initiative that Connects NASA, Public Libraries and their Communities." Below this is the NCIL logo. The main heading is "To Learn More". The page content includes three lines of text with hyperlinks: "Visit: [www.starnetlibraries.org/resources/community-dialogues](http://www.starnetlibraries.org/resources/community-dialogues)", "Download our Community Dialogue Guide here: [www.nc4il.org/images/papers/Community-Dialogue-Guide052318.pdf](http://www.nc4il.org/images/papers/Community-Dialogue-Guide052318.pdf)", and "Contact Anne Holland: [aholland@spacescience.org](mailto:aholland@spacescience.org)". The footer contains logos for NASA, ALA, Cornerstones of Science, EDC, and COSA.