

# Counting on Results: Outcomes Interim Report

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## I. Introduction

The Counting on Results (COR) study is a nationwide examination of the impact of public library services on individual patrons.

The study is broken down by six different service responses (impact areas):

- Basic Literacy
- Business and Career Information
- Library as Place
- Information Literacy
- Local History and Genealogy
- General Information

In addition, the study is being administered in two parts:

- Patrons are being surveyed about outcomes for specific service responses. The survey questionnaire is being delivered in both paper and electronic format.
- Library staff are entering reported output measures and observed activities into specially programmed Palm Pilots. The manual for the Palm Pilots includes optional paper forms for collecting recorded output measures.

This part of the COR Interim Report will be covering the reported service responses, i.e., the survey information obtained from the patron questionnaires. The final COR reports will be available in late 2001. Note there are four sections to this report: I. Introduction, II. Interim Results, III. Tables and Figures, and IV. Quotable Quotes. All four sections appear in this pdf file.

## II. Interim Results

The COR interim data is in and there are already some interesting trends to watch. Overall what is most striking is the variety of ways patrons are using their local public libraries. From reading for pleasure to becoming a citizen, Americans are using public library resources to enrich their lives in a myriad of ways.

### Basic Literacy

Perhaps somewhat unexpectedly the Basic Literacy outcome chosen most often was “became a citizen” with 42.9 percent of the total responses. Coming in second was “learned something I need to know about using bus, buying car, education, health care, jobs, handling money, insurance, or child care” at 35.7 percent, ahead of “improved my reading, writing, and math skills” and “participated in a community activity” both at 32.1 percent. The job related outcome, “got a job, a better job, or a raise in pay” was least often indicated outcome with only 3.5 percent.

### Business and Career Information

With 1 in 2 respondents indicating it, “made better investments or retirement decision” (50.0 %) was the most frequently chosen outcome in Business and Career Information. Business development was

also popular with “explored new business options, started or developed a business” indicated by 34.6 percent of respondents. Only 3.8 percent of respondents said they “closed a business” or “made career changes or relocated.”

### Library as Place

Predictably “learned about new books, videos, music, etc.” was the outcome patrons chose most often with 57.6 percent and “had a quiet comfortable place to think, read, write, or study” was second with 50.0 percent. A close third was “met a friend or co-worker” with 43.9 percent. With no one reporting it as an outcome, “visited a library-sponsored chat room on the web” was the least popular.

### Information Literacy

Probably coming as no surprise to library professionals, three out of five Information Literacy respondents indicated, “found what I was looking for because librarian helped me” (62.5%). In addition, two in five “learned how to ask a library staff member for help” (39.6%). Over half of respondent indicated that they, “found what I was looking for searching the World Wide Web” (56.3%) The least frequently chosen outcome was “learned how to create a web site” (10%).

### Local History and Genealogy

Over half of respondents indicated that they “identified new source of information to search” (55.4%) and/or “made progress researching family history” (52.2%). Approximately 2 in 5 respondents “obtained a document or record” (42.4%), “learned about community/local history” (41.3%) and/or “shared date with others in person, in print, or online” (39.1%). Only 4.3 percent “learned about family medical history.”

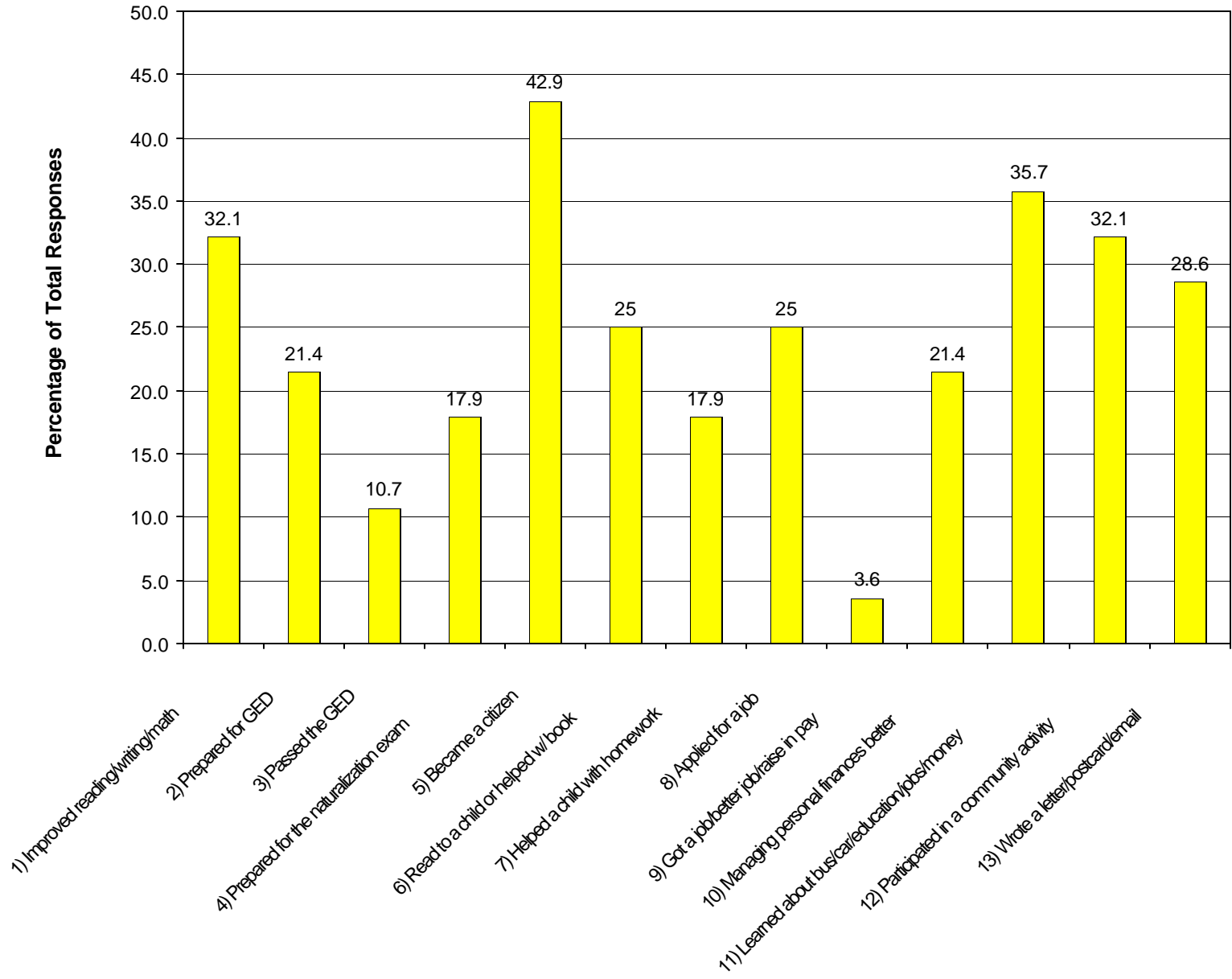
### General Information

An overwhelming four out of five of respondent filling out the General Information survey indicated that they used the public library to “read for pleasure” (80.6%). This is the largest percentage and number of respondents indicating any single service response in any of the six outcome categories. Other strong outcomes in the General Information category include “learned more about a skill, hobby, or other personal interest” (59.2%), “found information needed for school, work, or a community group” (43.8%), and “obtained a specific fact or document I was interested in” (42.2%). With a respectable 16.1 percent, “identified or contacted any organization” was the least frequently reported outcome.

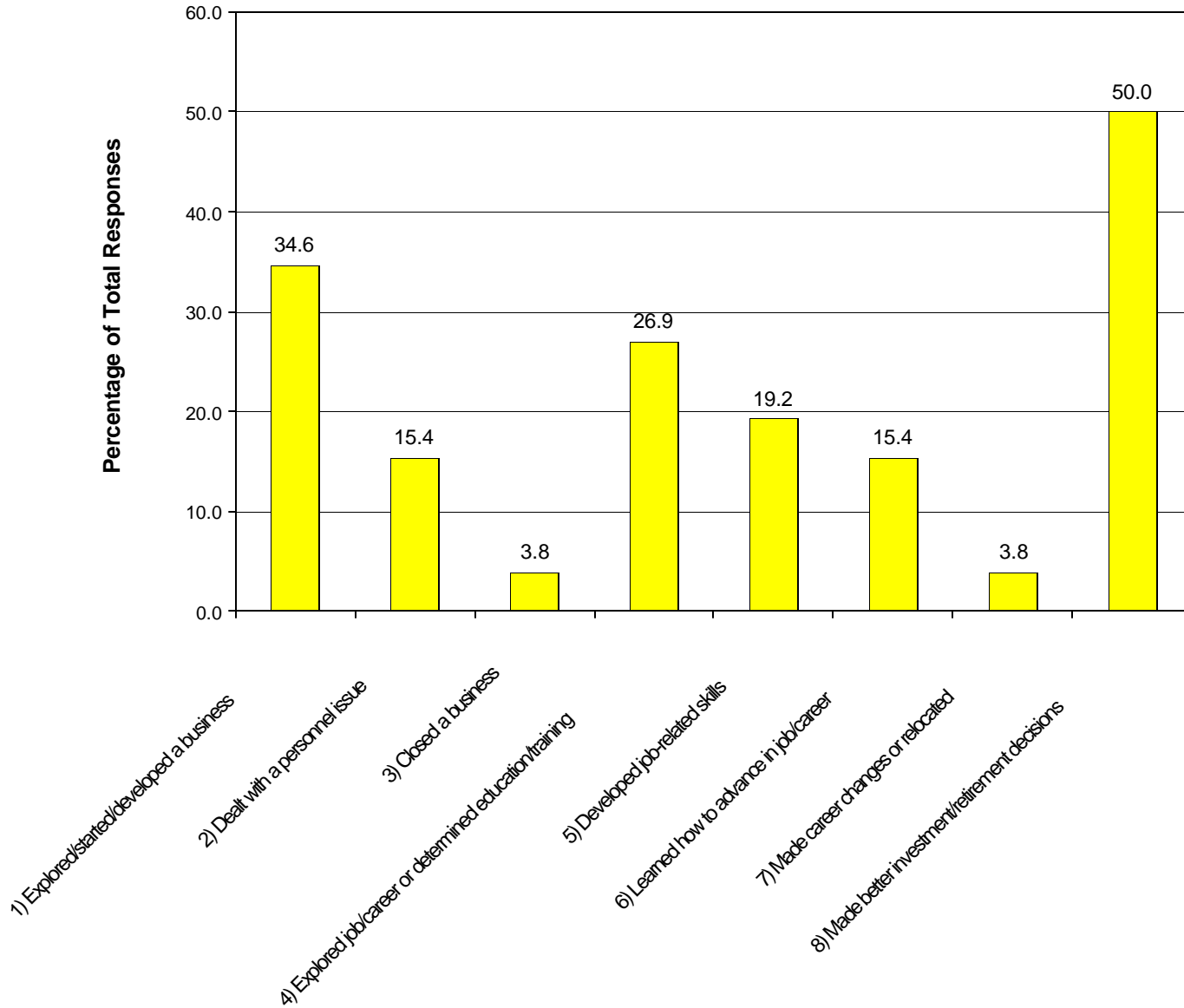
## **III. Tables and Figures**

Please find the tables and figures for COR Outcomes on the following pages.

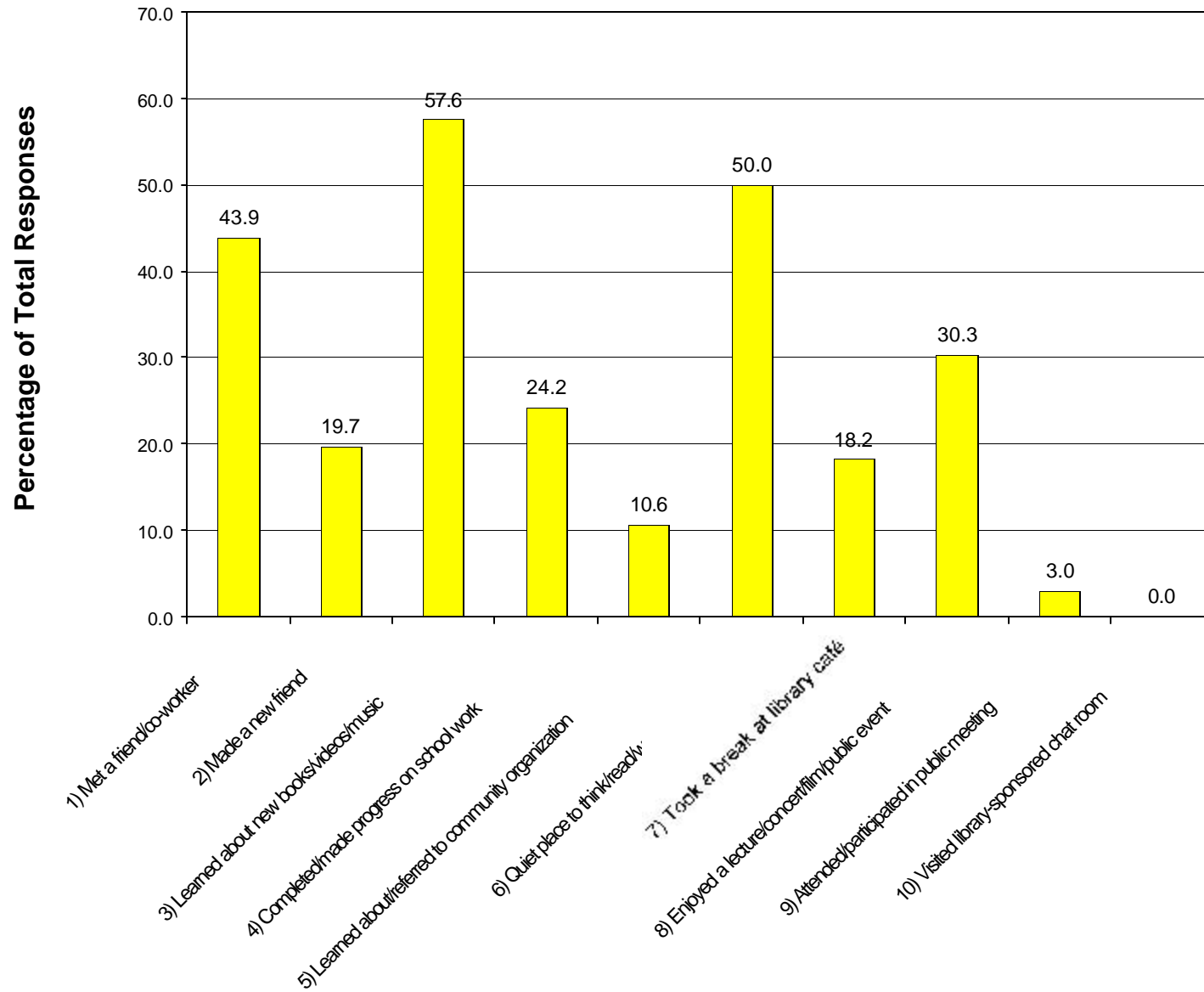
**Figure 1**  
**Service Response: Basic Literacy**



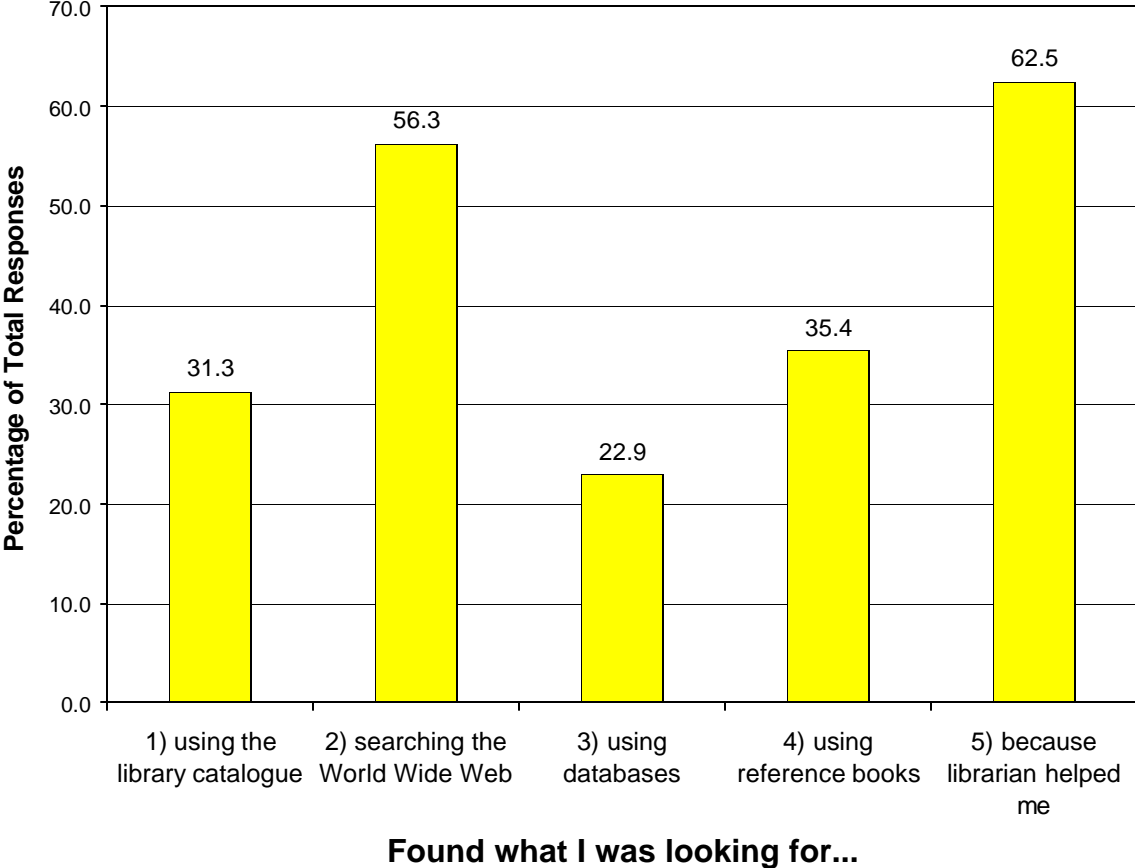
**Figure 2**  
**Service Response: Business & Career Information**



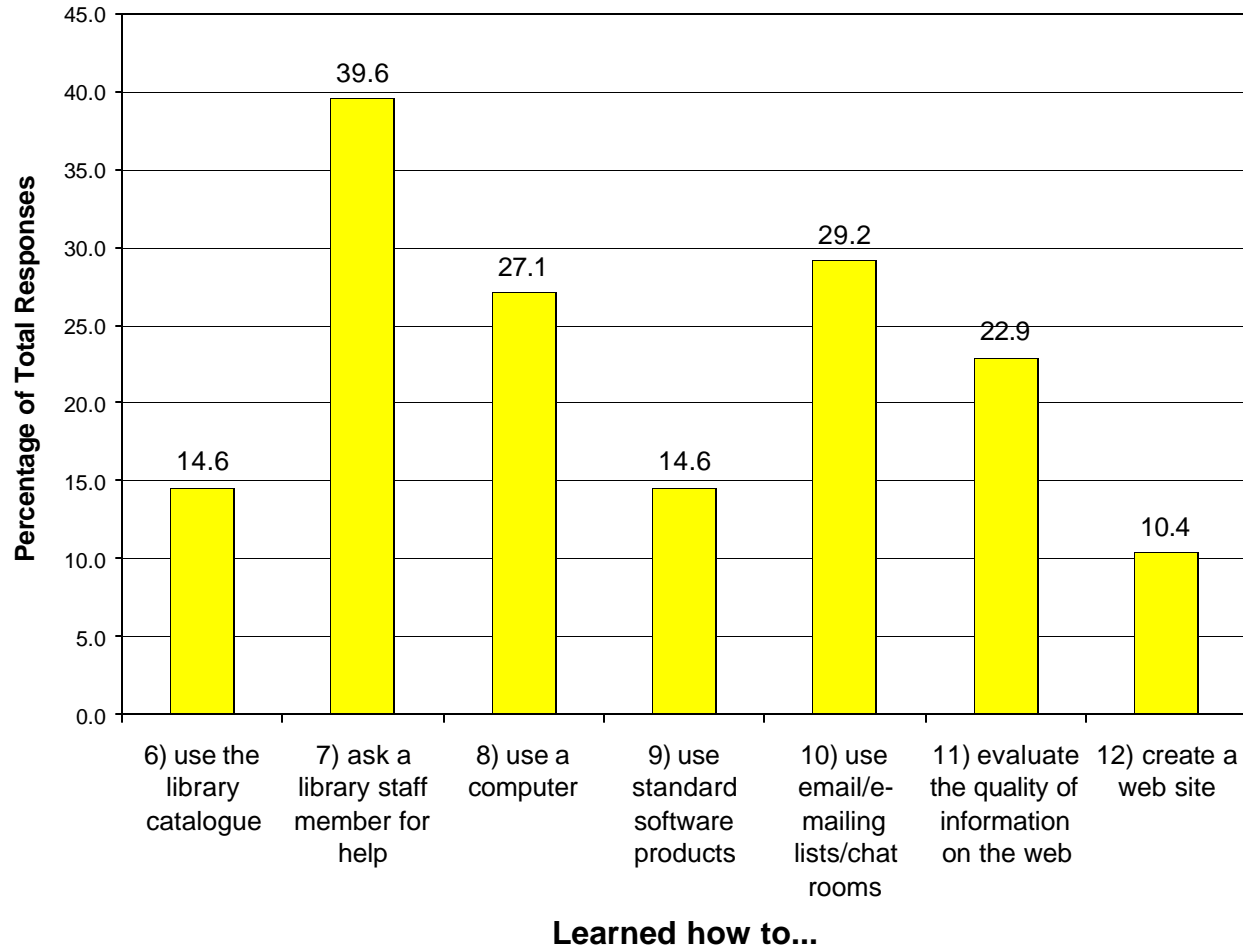
**Figure 3**  
**Service Response: Library as Place**



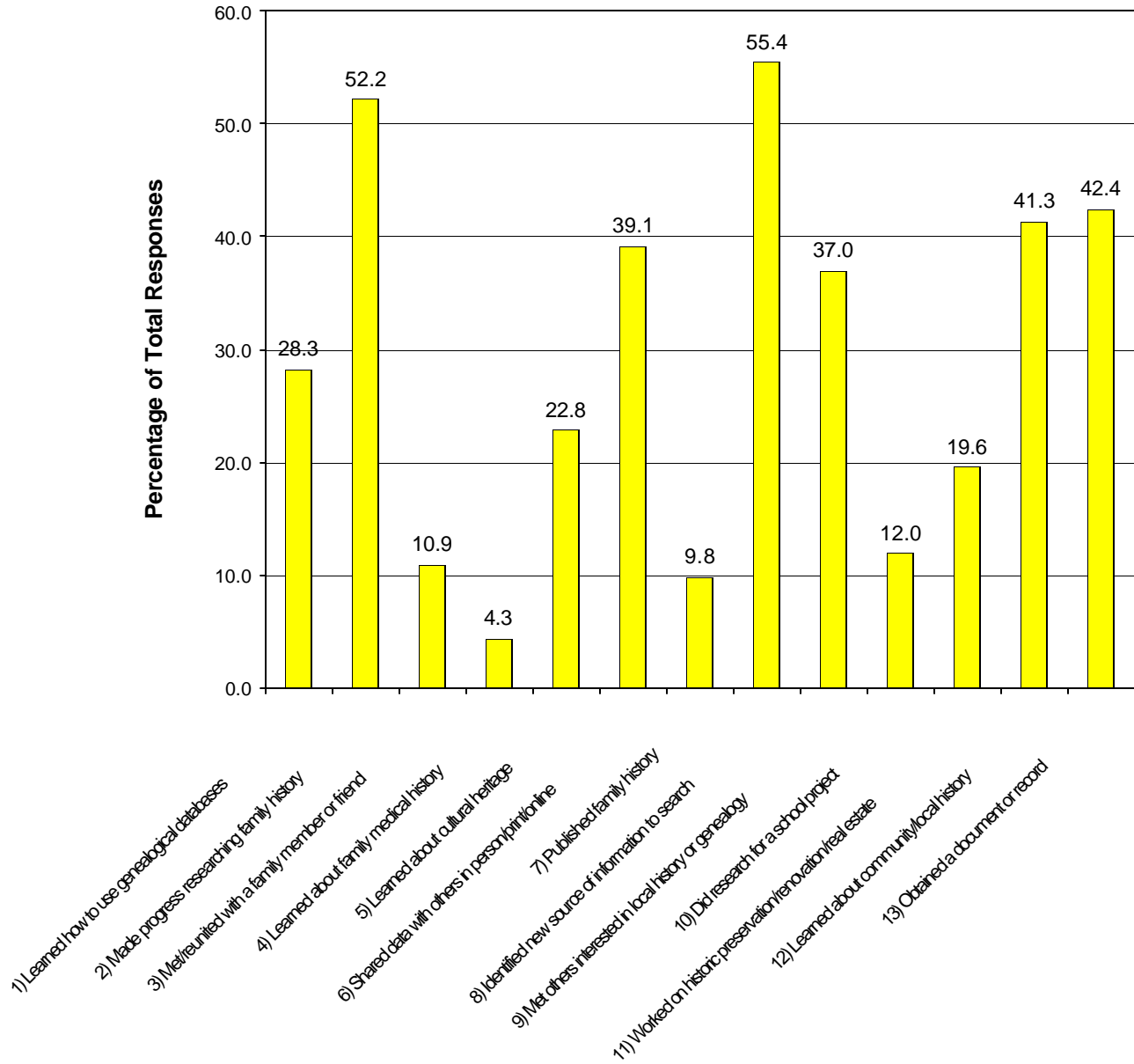
**Figure 4**  
**Service Response: Information Literacy 1**



**Figure 5**  
**Service Response: Information Literacy 2**

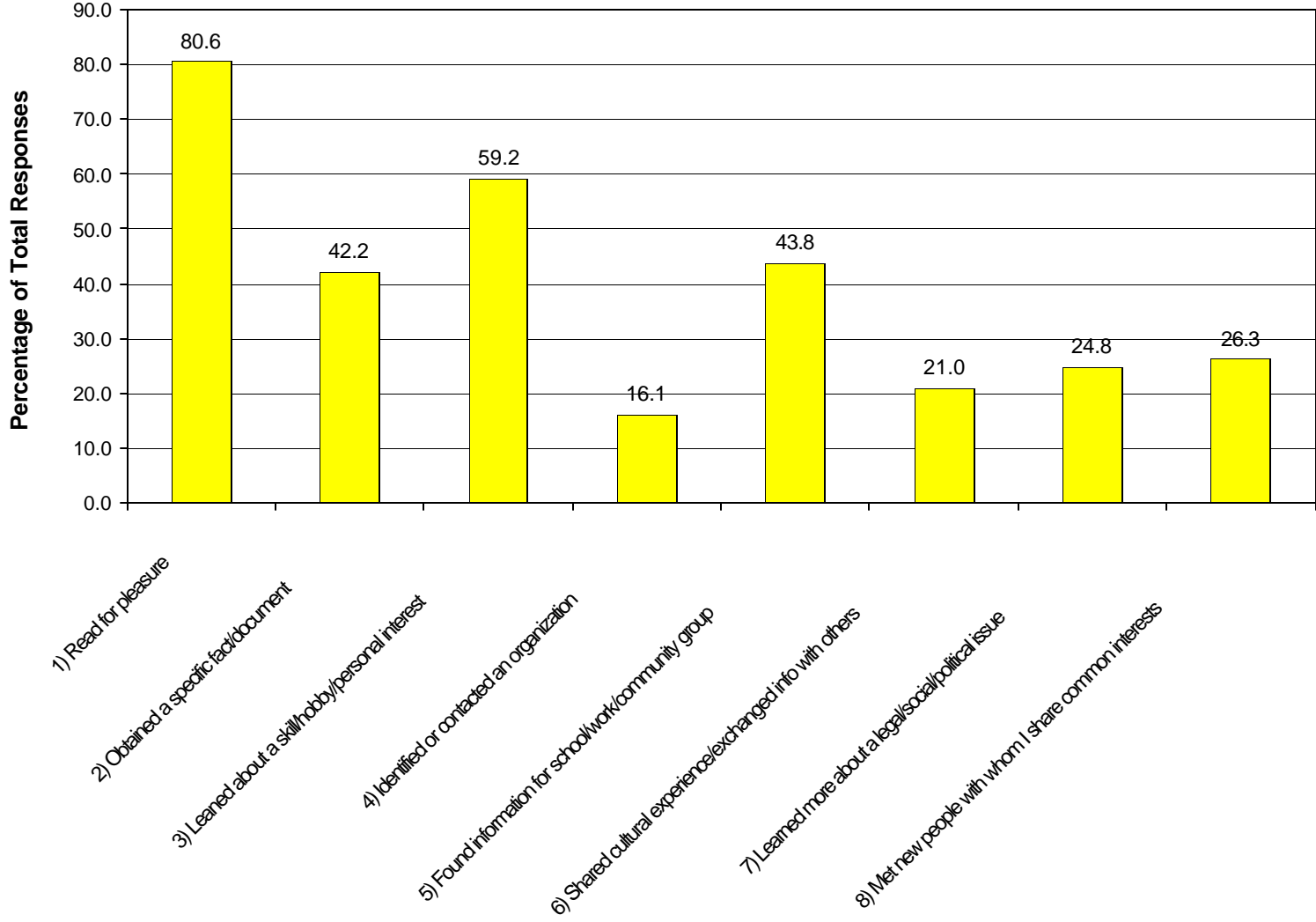


**Figure 6**  
**Service Response: Local History & Genealogy**





**Figure 7**  
**Service Response: General Information**



**COUNTING ON RESULTS: OUTCOMES  
INTERIM REPORT**

**Service Response:  
Basic Literacy**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Library</b>	<b>Total</b>
		Columbia County	(n=1)
1) Improved reading/writing/math	Number Reporting	9	9
	As Percentage of Total Responses	32.1	32.1
2) Prepared for GED	Number Reporting	6	6
	As Percentage of Total Responses	21.4	21.4
3) Passed the GED	Number Reporting	3	3
	As Percentage of Total Responses	10.7	10.7
4) Prepared for the naturalization exam	Number Reporting	5	5
	As Percentage of Total Responses	17.9	17.9
5) Became a citizen	Number Reporting	12	12
	As Percentage of Total Responses	42.9	42.9
6) Read to a child or helped a child choose a book	Number Reporting	7	7
	As Percentage of Total Responses	25	25
7) Helped a child with homework or improve grades	Number Reporting	5	5
	As Percentage of Total Responses	17.9	17.9
8) Applied for a job	Number Reporting	7	7
	As Percentage of Total Responses	25	25
9) Got a job/better job/raise in pay	Number Reporting	1	1
	As Percentage of Total Responses	3.6	3.6
10) Managing personal finances better	Number Reporting	6	6
	As Percentage of Total Responses	21.4	21.4
11) Info about bus, car, education, jobs, money health care, insurance, or child care	Number Reporting	10	10
	As Percentage of Total Responses	35.7	35.7
12) Participated in a community activity	Number Reporting	9	9
	As Percentage of Total Responses	32.1	32.1
13) Wrote a letter/postcard/email	Number Reporting	8	8
	As Percentage of Total Responses	28.6	28.6
	Total Responses	28	28
	Percentage	100	100

**COUNTING ON RESULTS: OUTCOMES  
INTERIM REPORT**

**Service Response:  
Business & Career Information**

<u>Outcomes</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Library</u>	<u>Total</u>
		Mesa	(n=1)
1) Explored/started/developed a business	Number Reporting	9	9
	As Percentage of Total Responses	34.6	34.6
2) Dealt with a personnel issue	Number Reporting	4	4
	As Percentage of Total Responses	15.4	15.4
3) Closed a business	Number Reporting	1	1
	As Percentage of Total Responses	3.8	3.8
4) Explored job/career or determined necessary education/training	Number Reporting	7	7
	As Percentage of Total Responses	26.9	26.9
5) Developed job-related skills	Number Reporting	5	5
	As Percentage of Total Responses	19.2	19.2
6) Learned how to advance in job/career	Number Reporting	4	4
	As Percentage of Total Responses	15.4	15.4
7) Made career changes or relocated	Number Reporting	1	1
	As Percentage of Total Responses	3.8	3.8
8) Made better investment or retirement decisions	Number Reporting	13	13
	As Percentage of Total Responses	50.0	50.0
	Total Responses	26	26
	Percentage	100	100

**COUNTING ON RESULTS: OUTCOMES  
INTERIM REPORT**

**Service Response:  
Library as Place**

Outcomes	Responses	Library			Total (n=3)
		Council Bluffs	Erie	Big Lake	
1) Met a friend/co-worker	Number Reporting	6	11	12	29
	As Percentage of Total Responses	26.1	44.0	66.7	43.9
2) Made a new friend	Number Reporting	7	4	2	13
	As Percentage of Total Responses	30.4	16.0	11.1	19.7
3) Learned about new books, videos, or music	Number Reporting	16	10	12	38
	As Percentage of Total Responses	69.6	40.0	66.7	57.6
4) Completed or made progress on school work	Number Reporting	6	3	7	16
	As Percentage of Total Responses	26.1	12.0	38.9	24.2
5) Learned about or was referred to another community organization	Number Reporting	2	2	3	7
	As Percentage of Total Responses	8.7	8.0	16.7	10.6
6) Quiet place to think, read, write, or study	Number Reporting	20	6	7	33
	As Percentage of Total Responses	87.0	24.0	38.9	50.0
7) Took a break at library café or coffee shop	Number Reporting	2	9	1	12
	As Percentage of Total Responses	8.7	36.0	5.6	18.2
8) Enjoyed a lecture, concert, film, or other public event	Number Reporting	2	18	0	20
	As Percentage of Total Responses	8.7	72.0	0.0	30.3
9) Attended or participated in a public meeting	Number Reporting	1	1	0	2
	As Percentage of Total Responses	4.3	4.0	0.0	3.0
10) Visited library-sponsored chat room on the web	Number Reporting	0	0	0	0
	As Percentage of Total Responses	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total Responses	23	25	18	66
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

**COUNTING ON RESULTS: OUTCOMES  
INTERIM REPORT**

**Service Response:  
Information Literacy**

<u>Outcomes</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Library</u>		<u>Total</u>
		Orange County	Nazareth	(n=2)
Found what I was looking for...				
1) using the library catalogue	Number Reporting	11	4	15
	As Percentage of Total Responses	37.9	21.1	31.3
2) searching the World Wide Web	Number Reporting	18	9	27
	As Percentage of Total Responses	62.1	47.4	56.3
3) using databases	Number Reporting	11	0	11
	As Percentage of Total Responses	37.9	0.0	22.9
4) using reference books	Number Reporting	11	6	17
	As Percentage of Total Responses	37.9	31.6	35.4
5) because librarian helped me	Number Reporting	17	13	30
	As Percentage of Total Responses	58.6	68.4	62.5
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Learned how to...				
6) use the library catalogue	Number Reporting	4	3	7
	As Percentage of Total Responses	13.8	15.8	14.6
7) ask a library staff member for help	Number Reporting	9	10	19
	As Percentage of Total Responses	31.0	52.6	39.6
8) use a computer	Number Reporting	10	3	13
	As Percentage of Total Responses	34.5	15.8	27.1
9) use standard software products	Number Reporting	7	0	7
	As Percentage of Total Responses	24.1	0.0	14.6
10) use email, electronic mailing lists, or chat rooms	Number Reporting	14	0	14
	As Percentage of Total Responses	48.3	0.0	29.2
11) evaluate the quality of information on the web	Number Reporting	7	4	11
	As Percentage of Total Responses	24.1	21.1	22.9
12) create a web site	Number Reporting	4	1	5
	As Percentage of Total Responses	13.8	5.3	10.4
	Total Responses	29	19	48
	Percentage	100	100	100

**COUNTING ON RESULTS: OUTCOMES  
INTERIM REPORT**

**Service Response:  
Local History and Genealogy**

Outcomes	Responses	Library			Total (n=3)
		Boulder	Orange County	Laf- Cherokee	
1) Learned how to use genealogical databases	Number Reporting	11	10	5	26
	As Percentage of Total Responses	23.4	31.3	38.5	28.3
2) Made progress researching family history	Number Reporting	14	21	13	48
	As Percentage of Total Responses	29.8	65.6	100.0	52.2
3) Met or was reunited with a family member or friend	Number Reporting	5	2	3	10
	As Percentage of Total Responses	10.6	6.3	23.1	10.9
4) Learned about family medical history	Number Reporting	2	1	1	4
	As Percentage of Total Responses	4.3	3.1	7.7	4.3
5) Learned about cultural heritage	Number Reporting	10	8	3	21
	As Percentage of Total Responses	21.3	25.0	23.1	22.8
6) Shared data with others in person, in print, or online	Number Reporting	18	11	7	36
	As Percentage of Total Responses	38.3	34.4	53.8	39.1
7) Published family history	Number Reporting	5	3	1	9
	As Percentage of Total Responses	10.6	9.4	7.7	9.8
8) Identified new source of information to search	Number Reporting	26	16	9	51
	As Percentage of Total Responses	55.3	50.0	69.2	55.4
9) Met others interested in local history or genealogy	Number Reporting	16	8	10	34
	As Percentage of Total Responses	34.0	25.0	76.9	37.0
10) Did research for a school project	Number Reporting	8	2	1	11
	As Percentage of Total Responses	17.0	6.3	7.7	12.0
11) Worked on historic preservation, renovation, or real estate	Number Reporting	15	1	2	18
	As Percentage of Total Responses	31.9	3.1	15.4	19.6
12) Learned about my community/ local history	Number Reporting	27	5	6	38
	As Percentage of Total Responses	57.4	15.6	46.2	41.3
13) Obtained a document or record	Number Reporting	25	11	3	39
	As Percentage of Total Responses	53.2	34.4	23.1	42.4
	Total Responses	47	32	13	92
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

**COUNTING ON RESULTS: OUTCOMES  
INTERIM REPORT**

**Service Response:  
General Information**

Outcomes	Responses	Library								Total (n=8)
		Bruton	Columbia County	Sioux City	Council Bluffs	Eccles - Lesher	Norwin	Altoona	Menomonee Falls	
1) Read for pleasure	Number Reporting	18	85	65	132	26	13	97	9	445
	As Percentage of Total Responses	62.1	77.3	80.2	77.6	74.3	100.0	93.3	90.0	80.6
2) Obtained a specific fact or document	Number Reporting	13	57	32	71	15	3	39	3	233
	As Percentage of Total Responses	44.8	51.8	39.5	41.8	42.9	23.1	37.5	30.0	42.2
3) Leaned more about a skill, hobby, or other personal interest	Number Reporting	14	58	44	109	19	5	73	5	327
	As Percentage of Total Responses	48.3	52.7	54.3	64.1	54.3	38.5	70.2	50.0	59.2
4) Identified or contacted an organization	Number Reporting	5	25	19	18	8	2	11	1	89
	As Percentage of Total Responses	17.2	22.7	23.5	10.6	22.9	15.4	10.6	10.0	16.1
5) Found information for school, work, or a community group	Number Reporting	13	56	35	76	19	2	37	4	242
	As Percentage of Total Responses	44.8	50.9	43.2	44.7	54.3	15.4	35.6	40.0	43.8
6) Shared a cultural experience and/or exchanged information with others	Number Reporting	6	30	17	31	4	9	19	0	116
	As Percentage of Total Responses	20.7	27.3	21.0	18.2	11.4	69.2	18.3	0.0	21.0
7) Learned more about a legal, social, or political issue	Number Reporting	6	38	21	35	10	3	23	1	137
	As Percentage of Total Responses	20.7	34.5	25.9	20.6	28.6	23.1	22.1	10.0	24.8
8) Met new people with whom I share common interests	Number Reporting	6	46	16	32	10	11	23	1	145
	As Percentage of Total Responses	20.7	41.8	19.8	18.8	28.6	84.6	22.1	10.0	26.3
	Total Responses	29	110	81	170	35	13	104	10	552
	Percentage	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

## IV. Quotable Quotes

The following are excerpts from the “success stories” part of the questionnaire.

### Basic Literacy

“The *Born to Read* program has been a blessing and both my children love to participate.”

“We have had wonderful success with home education because of Grande Prairie Library. They have co-operated with us. We have held classes here. The library has always purchased books for circulation that we need in our curriculum.”

### Business and Career Information

“I am currently pursuing a MBA and the library is an excellent resource for both my classes and my thesis.”

“I was able to meet with representatives from SBA and SCORE. I was given access to several SCORE people in my field via e-mail and given a wealth of information by the reference librarian. From this information we were able to expand our customer base.”

### Library as Place

“Being able to attend a concert by Edinboro U at the library brings beauty and calm into any life.”

“Held our garden club meeting. Very successful.”

### Information Literacy

“I use the reference section to locate data, information or sources that are not available in my office.”

“As a senior citizen, I am thankful for the privilege of using the local library and appreciate the staff sharing their knowledge regarding the use of a computer. I believe this is the way of the future and I'm anxious to learn so I will become a part of it.”

“I'm a nursery school teacher. I brought our class of 12 three year olds. We very much enjoyed the story hour.”

### Local History and Genealogy

“Using the genealogy dept.'s newspaper collection and indexes, I helped a friend locate an obituary for her uncle's long-lost mother, from whom he was separated at an early age. He had not known anything of her whereabouts, her last married name, or her other children.”

“Our house was a homestead in 1895. I found several old photos and received a lot of help from the two women at the Carnegie Library in Boulder. My children witnessed the photos and promptly told their friends. Great Resource!”

“We were happy to discover the home we just purchased had a historical photo so we are able to see the home's history. It is also helping us to restore the home to its original state.”



“Was able to identify an ancestor that was only know by her nickname. This allowed me to confirm her husband and marriage record. Was also able to identify the name of person in an unmarked grave (2nd wife) in family cemetery.”

### General Information

“I continually find all sides of issues pertaining to my interests that the average person who only reads a newspaper and watches commercial television does not know.”

“When I was buying my new car, I used the library for information which helped me make my decision.”

“Ever since the terrorist crash of Pam Am Flight 103, I had the uneasy feeling that a soldier with whom I'd served had died in that Lockerbie crash. Finally, I asked a reference librarian if she could produce a passenger list - and she did.”

“Learned a ton! As an insurance broker, I often have long drives. The audio books are wonderful.”

“The medical, self-help and psychology books have been a great help to me. I have rare medical conditions, and this library is a wealth of information.”

“I was able to easily find monologues that helped me prepare for my audition for theatre school.”

“By using the Internet, I have found a source to find cheaper motel prices when traveling.”

“I have always loved the library and so do my children – 2 of 3 read more than 4 grade levels above their peers with 75-90% comprehension.”