

Recycling in Libraries

Over the past couple of years, several librarians throughout Colorado have posted inquiries to the Libnet listserv regarding recycling policies for weeded books. The following is a compilation of the responses from three of these inquiries.

In 2006, media specialist Jennifer Maley from Windsor Middle School posted the following inquiry to Libnet:

I am in the process of weeding my collection, and I need some advice on what to do with the VERY old books that nobody else wants. I give most of them away, but I'm reluctant to throw the rest of them in a dumpster, which I've heard of folks doing. Does anyone know of a company/organization that recycles old books? I'd even be happy to give books to a bookstore that wants oldies (or any of you, for that matter!) We're talking books published anywhere from 1900-1979.

-----Responses-----

Here's some information I ran across recently from Cookie Wolfrom on the western slope. I think the books have to be in reasonable shape.

This is what Cookie Wolfrom wrote about the organization. "We are in the process of packing boxes to ship to Better World right now. They've sent everything we need and when we are done, will send us the shipping labels. Carrie Andrew from Norwood Public Schools has 40 boxes ready to send them so we will be able to get feedback soon.

I'm sending you the link to the Library Program FAQs and you should also check out the sample order history report.

<http://betterworldbooks.com/Programs/LibraryFAQs.aspx>

I've only heard good things about this organization and don't think that SirsiDynix would recommend them otherwise.

There are a couple of really sweet extras.

1) You can name your foundation (if it is 501(c)3 as the literacy group of choice (there's a document that has to be filled out)

2) NOTHING goes in the landfill. What isn't sellable or doesn't sell after a year goes to 3rd world organizations. You get nothing back!!! I feel like I've discovered GOLD!!! There are no costs to the library what-so-ever!"

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Shelley Walchak
Regional Consultant
Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC)

I know it may not be too 'convenient' for you, but eco-cycle (out of Boulder) does have a book recycling bin at their locations. I take mine to the eco-cycle in Broomfield (right off Hwy 36 at 120th & Nickel). I hate to just throw them out, too!!
Good luck!

Lori Buechner
Jefferson County Public Schools

There's a company called Better World Books that will sell your old books (they specialize in used library books) on-line all over the world. There is no cost to you. They send you the boxes and the packing tape, and also pay the postage.

Any books they don't sell after one year gets sent to third world countries so nothing goes into the landfill.

Here's the link to their site:

<http://betterworldbooks.com/> and click on 'programs' and then select 'library' - There are a couple of libraries in Colorado now using this service.

Cookie Wolfrom
System Administrator
Delta County Public Library District

Yes, I know a group that buys books I have had contact with recently. They have a business on the east coast and now have moved to Colorado somewhere in the Front Range area.

They are called "We Buy Books" and you can check out their website at:

www.we-buy-books.com

I have their contact information from the East - it may still work if you want to try it:

C. Bullitt Darlington
717-314-1197
bullitt@we-buy-books.com

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We Buy Books
Box 129
Hopeland, PA 17533

Good luck!

Linda A. Van Wert
Librarian/Information Specialist
Gambro

I read your e-mail on libnet about what to do with weeded books and since we are "neighbors," thought I'd reply off-line to offer one more suggestion. I'm assuming that a good many of the books you are discarding are children's books; if that is the case the Family Educational Network of Weld Co. (more commonly known as Head Start) might be interested in quite a few of them if you are willing to donate them.

The Head Start centers throughout the county have been doing book drives in order to gather books to send home with Head Start students for their March read-a-thons. Too often there are very few books in the home environments of Head Start students and staff has been trying to find means/resources for increasing that number, even if the books are older and "not as pretty." I believe Head Start has a warehouse where the books can be stored and with 14 sites throughout Weld Co., there are lots of children and families in need of books. If you are interested in this option, please check out this link for a little more information:
<http://www.literacyagencynetwork.blogspot.com/> and then give Sharon Benson a call at 353-3800 x 3345.

Happy weeding and happy reading!

Cindy Welsh
Outreach Librarian
Weld Library District

As bookstore manager for the Friends of the Aurora Public Library, I'll say that we're interested in receiving them.

I'd also like to stress (to everyone reading this) not to just start sending everything our direction. Please contact me regarding the amount of books you're looking to get rid of so everything can be handled smoothly.

Michael Sauers
Friends of the Aurora Public Library

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Kathleen Kase, Estes Park Public Library Acquisitions Librarian, posted to the Libnet listserv on 1/31/2008 the following inquiry through her library director, Claudine Perrault:

I am looking for information on how other libraries dispose of library materials after they have been de-accessioned. We are in the process of our annual "weeding" project and are looking for ways to responsibly dispose of materials, specifically large quantities of books. Our Friends group is not interested in them for the book sale since they often do not sell. I have looked into other options such as Better World Books. Has anyone used their program? Is there any place in the Denver Metro Area that recycles hardcover books? Thanks for any info you can offer.

-----Responses-----

I don't know if this will help you or not, but we are fortunate that Waste Management allows us to recycle books through them. Do you have Waste Management as your trash pickup company? If so, you can call them for special help with larger amounts as well...

Carol Foreman
Aurora Public Library

Well, since you bring it up, I brought my truck today to load up with the last load of leftovers from our last book sale. The cold days are best for visiting the landfill...

Correctional Industries in Canon City has a book recycling program, but unless I'm heading down there for something else, even trucking the books there doesn't pay over the dump. We find homes for a lot of leftovers, and sometimes for all of them, but sometimes no. So, of course, I haven't told you anything useful. Good luck. Maybe Habitat for Humanity could build a demo home with them?

Jeffrey Donlan
Salida Library

At Rangeview, we're doing *major* weeding and so far, are very happy working with bLogistics. It's a local company; they pick up our boxed materials; they sell as much as they can, giving us half [after the expense of picking up], along with monthly reports on which titles sold and for how much. And what doesn't sell after a certain

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time, they donate where applicable, then send any true rejects to recycling. None of our materials ends up in landfill. How great is that?

http://www.blogistics.com/rel/v2_home.php?storenr=339&deptnr=108

For more info, feel free to call our Marketing/Communication Coordinator, Ann Myers, at 303/288-2001.

Ronnie Storey
Rangeview Library District

Boulder has strong recycle services which includes the recycling of books. You might want to call ecocycle first to see if they have experienced a library weeding collection. Hope this helps.

<http://www.ecocycle.org/charm/index.cfm#materials>

Lynn Reed
Boulder Public Library

I think your Friends should try first and then with the leftovers you can recycle. In the Westminster Recycling Guide they say that Ecocycle in Boulder takes books. I don't know if that is still true. Their number is listed as 303-444-6634.

Elizabeth Sollie
Westminster Public Library

It looks like ecocycle in Broomfield accepts books for recycling, near U.S. 36 & Wadsworth Blvd. www.ecocycle.org

Chuck Huey
Westminster Public Library

If you have large print books that you are weeding, you might consider donating them to the Colorado Talking Book Library. In addition to circulation to our patrons, we resource share our large print collection with public libraries across the state and would be happy to have extra copies.

Debbi MacLeod
Colorado Talking Book Library

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I started my career in the late 60's working for Vern West (a legend in his own right), at the Ottumwa IA public library. One of my first tasks was to begin weeding the collection and over the course of my first few months, we weeded thousands of Depression-era scrapbooks, all fully accessioned, cataloged and described. City rules more or less prohibited disposal of such property, so after pulling many thousands of catalog and shelf list cards, the scrapbooks were re-sourced to the "Big Cedar Gulch Bibliographic Depository" and in the middle of many nights, Vern and I "deposited" the books in a friendly farmer's back-forty creek bank, covered with black plastic and old tires - I think for erosion control. They are probably there today.

Bill Knott
County Librarian
Jefferson County Public Library

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Maura McGrath, Administrative Assistant at the Colorado State Library, posted to the Libnet listserv on 4/10/2008 the following inquiry:

I'm working on a resource guide about the disposing of weeded books and wondered which recyclers libraries use and what services they provide. (Do they pick up? Or take deliveries? Is there a fee? How much is it? Do they have a web site?)

-----Responses-----

Here at the BOCES I haven't had any discards yet; this is such a small and specialized library. But in my previous 6 years as a K-5 librarian, I put all my discards in a bucket for teachers to take. And take they did!! They loved it! If the books were really gross, then they went into the trash. But using teachers as a recycling method is good because they are typically not wealthy, but the need books for their classrooms. It's a good plan.

Christina McGrath
Media Technician
South Central BOCES Instructional Media Center

Our district uses Rocky Mountain Textbooks, Inc.
"40 years of buying, selling & recycling books at schools."

They are great. They came last semester to cart away a whole bunch of textbooks.

Contact info:

800-634-3650
443-222-2653 (fax)
rmtextbook@aol.com (e-mail)

Reba Holmes

We use Rocky Mountain Textbook rmtextbook@aol.com
My contact is Gil Gardner 800-634-3650.

They are great! They buy more of them than you would think & recycle the rest. They come & evaluate them & then load up their truck.

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Hope this helps.

Lynn Magrath,
Library Information Specialist
Summit High School

Our DOC program, Juniper Valley, picks up our cardboard, office paper, newspapers, and books for recycling. They have dumpsters around Canon City. I'm not sure if they provide that service in other communities with prisons.

I'm sure your resource guide will be very useful for all of us.
Thanks!

Susan Ooton
Canon City Public Library

We send all of our weeded materials (with the exception of serials which they will not accept) to Blogistics (<http://www.blogistics.com/>). They in turn will try to resell the items for us. They can pick up (for a fee) or you can deliver materials to their warehouse. They keep 50% of the profits on anything they sell and you get the other 50%. Good luck.

Lori Micho
Director of Library Services
Denver Campus Library
Johnson & Wales University

Here's the URL of Waste Management's Recycle America in case that's of interest. <http://www.recycleamerica.com> We find the people there very pleasant and they don't blink an eye when we drop off hundreds of titles.

We used to take books to Eco-Cycle in Broomfield. (Same deal: you bring, no charge, though they liked to have a heads up on books arriving.) <http://www.ecocycle.org>.

Books not sold at our library's book sale that are in good condition we send to B-Logistics.

Ellen Metter
Humanities/Anthropology Bibliographer
Auraria Library
