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Interviewee: Head of Youth Services (Small City) ('Toni' and 'Connie' are pseudonyms)

Interviewer: So, the first question when we're talking about screen media we're talking about anything with the screen. Phones, tables, full-scale desktops, any kind of video game device anything with a screen. So, we're thinking pretty broadly. So, just tell me about the different spaces on this floor. The devices that are here and any observations that you have about them.

Toni: So, we have the iPads what we consider the early childhood iPads along the wall back here. They get used quite well. They all have the same games on them just there the same games as every other library. We all have the same apps. They are on there for quite a long time by the way. We were just talking this morning I think it's at least a year before we change them out. I don't know why. I think because we have to call in all the iPads to the IT people to have them put on any new apps and it's very time consuming and whatever and we have to be without them while that happens. So, then I guess we just do it sparingly. We have to pay for all of it.

Interviewer: Right.

Toni: Down here we also have ... Were you gonna say something?

Interviewer: No. You have that bank for the younger ones.

Toni: Then we have the school age iPads kind of what's supposed to be over here and there are four of those. Mostly get used for things like Minecraft. There are some other apps on there. So, that's that. Then we have computers available but they don't get used very often. Sometimes parents will ask to check out a movie and have their kids sit and watch a movie but not very often. It's usually when they're trying to print something or do something on the other computer then they'll set up a thing there. I think that's all we have down here.

Interviewer: So, you said you change the apps every year and then how is that decision-making process?

Toni: That decision-making process is Connie. She makes all the decisions of all the whole system. She doesn't really have a partner on that I think it's just her. I mean, I was just thinking this morning that we don't really even have discussions about it. It's not something that's on the YS agenda unless there's ever a question about signage. Connie maybe having conversations about some librarian may contact here and say, "A parent came in and is looking for this app or whatever." Those are not team conversations. I don't know why. She's our little expert and we trust what she does.

Interviewer: You trust her.

Toni: Down in this space to be honest what we kind of encounter the most I think is either parents who are trying to do something on the computer or sitting back here just kind of trying to relax and then the kids being on the iPads the whole time. Or, the parents will come down and say, "Nope, no iPads today. We're here to check out books. We're here to look or you can go play with the legos but we're not going to that." So, I would say that is even the majority of the experience that we have down here with that. The majority of parents will even complain I wish you didn't have iPads in the library. We just want-

Interviewer: What is your response to that complaint?

Toni: I mean, we talk about equity, we talk about the importance of making it available to people and that you're the parent you get to choose exactly. Under my breath, I'm like, just say no. Tell them no. They would like us to just not have them often. I mean, people will not be looking for information they'll just say it and we'll just say, "It's your choice you don't have to let your kids use that." Really not a lot of people push us on that. As a team we talk about it so then my library assistants are like, maybe we shouldn't and then we talk about equity and we talk about that. I mean, for the most part, I don't know what else to say. Parents get to choose.

Interviewer: What about the placement of those tablets over there? Have you had discussions about that?

Toni: As far as my time here we haven't talked about it. I haven't considered putting them in a different spot. We don't really have another great spot but I guess we haven't talked about that.

Interviewer: Parents haven't raised that with you? I did have a parent raise that. You come down the stairs and the kids are.

Toni: The steps it's the first thing. Totally. I didn't think about that.

Interviewer: She was like, I understand they need to be near the reference desk.

Toni: I do want to say that there are also families who come and sit with their child and engage with their children. Those iPads we will see that. It's been better now that we've taken the headphones off of them. So now we before I think before I was here I think they had headphones attached all the time but it was only one pair I think and so the kid could listen but then the parent couldn't engage. We decided if the point is for parent and children to engage and use awesome apps then we should probably take those off. It's been fine. The volume gets turned

up and it drives us crazy sometimes but mostly its been good. That does happen sometimes not all the time.

Interviewer: Your kind of curating the apps for them through your tablets here. What other things are you doing to model or share ideas about screen media use?

Toni: Anytime that anyone asks about the apps or would like more information we kind of refer them to our in-house media expert's [Connie] page on the apps on our website and that gets used a lot or we'll give them a card with that information on. Then the rest is sort of I mean, Connie doing her programming where she does the story time and then models how to use different apps. So no one else on the team has really been interested in doing that. Connie tried to do that herself at three different locations and I know for here maybe one person showed up. It just wasn't received well here for whatever reason. So, I don't know that she'll continue to do that. I'm not sure. I guess I haven't asked her again about that.

Toni: We're just not ... I know we used to have a collection of DVDs that we would include and maybe we still do include them in our preschool story time kits but I know at the last YS meeting they were doing them on just speaking Spanish now. They were going to redo them for the fall and they asked if anyone was using those DVDs and for the most part people aren't even using them. So, just I don't think we're really. Trying to think of other ways that we might use stuff.

Interviewer: In story times any kind of screen media apps in story time or anything just not necessary?

Toni: Not really. They're not necessary. I'm trying to think. I think we've done a program with Yoga there's some cool story times in Yoga that we've used a video before or if we have a big school group visit we may do something but for the most part, in my opinion, I think that we don't do much that I can think of.

Interviewer: I think some libraries have a no phone policy for their parents.

Toni: Or like a dream. I don't think policy.

Interviewer: Or they ask parents during story time this is the time for you and your child so put your phone. That's kind of modeling screen media use non-use.

Toni: It's more I think intended to be modeling parent-child engagement.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Toni: I guess that's true. Again it's not a policy it's just a recommendation.

Interviewer: Yes. Fair point. So you have Connie's page on the website, you have the program that she does, you have her cards, is there anything else I'm missing about how you disseminate information?

Toni: I think there's some signage that goes by the apps, and I think most locations have those signage. Connie developed that. Trying to think. Oh, thinking about Connie's Bedtime Reads videos that might be another way where she reads stories. I don't know how much that is used again at all. That's the other thing is I don't think we collect a lot of data about this stuff. I'm excited to hear what you guys are talking about. Literally, I was asking library assistant this morning how do we know how many people use Connie's resources online? I don't know that we've ever asked that question or looked at that.

Interviewer: Do you feel like librarians are helping children with decisions about screen media here?

Toni: I don't think so.

Interviewer: They kind of let kids do ... Especially here with young children, parents are accompanying. So, it's really like you said it's the parent's decision. What devices do you think parents are mostly concerned about? Which do they frequently ask or what's the most frequent asked in the library?

Toni: That they want to use?

Interviewer: That they have questions about.

Toni: About.

Interviewer: You said they sometimes ask about the apps.

Toni: I mean, they may ... I'm trying to think ... I think that it's more like where can I get more like this or how did you choose these kinds of questions. I can't think of any other to answer that questions.

Interviewer: So, it's really they are trying to figure out how to be critical of consumers of apps?

Toni: I don't know. I don't think it's the majority.

Interviewer: No.

Toni: The few people that do maybe even ask that and then go to receive those resources. I mean, I'm not sure what their motivation is but that sounds like a big

jump actually. I don't know. I'm not sure. I wonder if those parents are more likely just to go to the website and find it themselves or whatever. It's hard to make a statement like that. The majority of the parents I don't think are thinking of it that way.

Interviewer: No. That's certainly the case with our interviews. They want a simple solution. They like having things done for them because you just have so many tasks to do during the day. If you trust someone to take care of that curating then great done. Let's get on with more important-

Toni: It seems like from my limited experience down here with this I feel like for the most part parents are more looking for a thing for their kid to do so that they can have a minute. They're not looking for a great way for me to engage with my kid using an app. I don't know that they are thinking of it that way.

Interviewer: Or, come to the library to get advice about.

Toni: Right. That's a good point. I wonder if people think of the library as a place to get advice about apps. I don't think so. I don't know.

Interviewer: I think that what we're finding in the interviews is that there's just so many other priorities in home life and they have easy ways of dealing with the screen media. So Netflix they just use the kid's controls on Netflix. Done. So then because there were so many other priorities.

Toni: Right.

Interviewer: Which totally makes sense. So, coming to the library like you say it might be to have a break. It might be to get books.

Toni: Are you thinking of that section of parents who are looking for advice and then asking them, so now you're the parent that's looking for advice where are you looking for advice? Or, are you more interested in just like parents are you looking for advice or are you just using it as a break?

Interviewer: We have over 50 parents that we've talked to. Some in a major East Coast city, and some in rural Midwest. We started with just tell us about your home practices so really broad. Then if they do have solid advice then we ask them where or if they've heard of anything. So, it's starting with really broad what devices do you have and what are the routines around those devices?

Toni: When you are finally able to put all your research together will you come and share that with us.

Interviewer: Yes.

Toni: I do feel like it is an area where I just don't even know. I don't think about this. I don't care that much about it.

Interviewer 2: That's why we're looking at it.

Toni: Right.

Interviewer: It changes all the time. So, YouTube is constantly ... It was the number one fear of parents is YouTube.

Toni: Really.

Interviewer 2: It's under siege.

Interviewer: YouTube is responding to that. It's constantly evolving and technologies constantly changing. Parents feel that. Well, you must feel it with your two daughters. They're having totally different experiences of screen media. So, how do you make decisions about that?

Toni: It's so hard.

Interviewer: So we do in the kind of proposal is to come and bring the community ... So, we talked to various community professionals who give advice about screen media so pediatricians, police, who else did I talk to?

Interviewer 2: DDI.

Interviewer: DDI. So, the idea was to kind of get organizations together with the people who are being asked to come to parent groups like the PTO groups and kind of do it kind of coordinated. So, we'll present kind of our findings, and my PA is a brilliant workshopper so we'll have a kind of interactive-

Toni: I look forward to that.

Interviewer: Workshop bringing together like ?? said community members who are in this space.

Toni: I look forward to that because it really makes me panic that maybe I should be caring about this. Maybe I should be talking to the team about it.

Interviewer: Well, we also did a survey of 500 libraries across the U.S. and looked just at their websites to see what was on there and yours is way above.

Toni: Oh my gosh.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. Hardly anyone has anything on their sites. If it is it's almost always safety.

Toni: Of course.

Interviewer: I don't know if I found ... Some had links to common sense media which is more kind of evaluative an arranger media so closer to what Connie's doing. Connie's head and shoulders ... So, I don't think you need to worry.

Toni: Nice. So we're okay.

Interviewer: So, do you have any feelings about kind of what parents might be struggling with the most?

Toni: I don't. I mean, other than things I've already mentioned they don't really have much information.

Interviewer: So, I'm skipping down to number 11 now. So, thinking about the training of the library staff, and the services staff has Connie done kind of sharing with the staff?

Toni: She has just at the last one. All YS staff meeting she did a couple presentations and it was awesome. I wasn't sure how ... I think the librarians were thinking how will I use that? The app is awesome but when would this ever come into my work. So, an additional training outside of that we haven't really had maybe we should but right now we haven't. I've seen a couple around the community. I feel there's even one recently I was thinking to share with you and I forget now. I saw it on Facebook.

Interviewer: I think I know it. You did share it with me.

Toni: I did share it?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Toni: So, but I don't think any of my staff responded saying that they were interested in going to it.

Interviewer: That's partly what this project is about is to find out what are the needs and then think about how to move forward with that.

Toni: Perfect.

Interviewer: So, don't feel like you should be doing anything because you don't know what the needs are. So, that's what we're trying to do. So, anything else about kind of decision-making around screen media or I mean even the DVDs that are here.

Toni: I mean, I just-

Interviewer: Or the games that are-

Toni: We don't have-

Interviewer: The games are upstairs.

Toni: There's a few upstairs but not much and there's none down here. As we're building the new library branch and play lab we're thinking I guess outside of the ... Well, thinking about screens within the play lab is a really important question it's reminding me to think about that but also the part that's not the play lab is gonna be more the school-aged not teen area but the school-aged space. They're talking a lot already about lots of gaming programming happening there and some screens there. At one of the other library branches] remodel in the teen space they're talking about creating screens there for gaming. So, this is definitely for school-aged kids we're talking about it and it's important. I feel we're just going kids love gaming so let's do that but I don't have any. I myself don't have any data about that or if we should do that. I don't know. Kids like it and so we're like let's do it.

Interviewer: What's the need? Being more deliberate about that. Is it by equity? Do we have data that shows that kids don't have games at home?

Toni: Right. I totally agree with that. I don't know. That's a good question. So, this is important to me and I guess thinking ... I mean, your research is more about younger children it's not as much?

Interviewer: Age five to 11.

Toni: Oh, five to 11. That's important.

Interviewer: So it does include.

Toni: As we're thinking about rebuilding those space I mean, we're making decisions about it already and we're going on zero. So, what does that mean for me? I don't know. Maybe I need to hurry up and ask some more questions and get more information.

Interviewer: We should brainstorm kind of questions that we want answers to in order to inform decision-making.

Toni: Then as they talk about the new Reindahl library I'm sure this is gonna be important and that's coming right down the pike so this is a pretty important time to be thinking about that.

Interviewer: This is interesting because gaming brings people to the library. That is a pretty safe assumption. What is it providing? Is it providing equity? I'm not so sure that we have data to support the idea that low-income kids don't have games. So, then what is it providing? Is it providing more social interaction around games that kids might not? These are really interesting questions.

Toni: We've been struggling with Minecraft since I think four years ago when Connie got a grant to do Minecraft at libraries, and we got all these laptops but things that we're struggling with is it still a good use of librarians time to be sitting there while kids are playing or should we just have a volunteer there? How can we be more intentional? How can we incorporate literacy into that? So, then in the second or third year we included in the grant a big collections piece and beefed up our Minecraft collection, which is great but already kids are not wanting to do Minecraft anymore. Now they want to do the other thing and now we have all these books.

Interviewer: Fortnite.

Toni: So, I don't know. So, I don't want to do it again. I don't want to do any more grants around gaming because it's gonna change in a minute. My librarians don't like it because they're not all technology people so the minute the equipment goes down the librarians are like God and the kids are like this sucks and the parents are like I'm mad. We're all just like this is stupid let's not do it again.

Interviewer: I totally empathize.

Toni: So, just lots of frustrating pieces of it.

Interviewer: I'd be really fascinated to talk to you about just kind of peeling it back going to that middle level. What is it? If the libraries all about equity and social justice then let's break that down.

Toni: That's the important question. I'm glad you mentioned that. I'd like to talk to the team about that actually.

Interviewer: It's not about ... It's pretty easy to throw something and bring lots of people to the library.

Toni: As a team saying that we're not doing that.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Toni: Yet we kind of are with this.

Interviewer 2: Does the library have a mission statement?

Toni: We absolutely have a mission statement. In fact, YS has a mission statement that we just did a couple years ago. It's very clear ... We're working on ... We have a scoping tool that's suppose to help us say no to things and it doesn't but because we can fit anything through the scoping tool if we want to. It is supposed to kind of help us weed out things that aren't intentional that aren't literacy-based and that aren't responding to any of the community or equity issues.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Toni: In our minds, we're very clear about that we're not gonna bring Bob the juggler anymore. We've said we're not doing those foofooy programming as much. We're not giving away prizes at summer reading because we know that's not important and we're trying not to spend a lot of time on summer reading in-house program because we know that's not the group that needs it the most. So, we're being very intentional but around gaming and technology, I don't think that we are having that conversation. It's brilliant.

Interviewer: So, I will look at-

Toni: I would love to talk to you about that.

Interviewer: Send you some data about gaming and who has access to games. What are the issues around accessing gaming? It's a little more complicated because it's partly about platforms. What age is your platform? So, PS something PS3 can't speak to PS4. There's all those things. So, I know some of the parents I've interviewed have said they really value the library because they have newer games or they have older games that match their system at home. There are all these ... It's a little more complex than to game or not to game.

Toni: Yes.

Interviewer: Kind of getting some hard data to you to help inform those decision-making about who needs access to. In what ways is this an equity issue? Then kind of target that instead of going we're gonna do the most popular thing.

Toni: Would you ever be willing to come and just guide a conversation with the team about that?

Interviewer: Yeah. I'd love to.

Toni: That'd be amazing.

Interviewer: I'd love to.

Toni: I didn't even know that I needed that or wanted that but as I think about it I'm yeah.

Interviewer: The thing that our library is really strong in is apps because you have Connie. That's the way it is. It's so hard to be an expert in everything. So, you've got an expert in apps. So, feel good about that but there's lots of other things to be thinking about.

Toni: This gaming for 10-year-olds is really important.

Interviewer: It's a deal.

Toni: Let's do that. Done.

Interviewer: Great. I think that's it.

Toni: I don't think I gave you anything helpful but it was really helpful to me to chew on these ideas.