

Simsbury Public Library and Innovation

Libraries are not the same today as they were even 3 years ago. Technology has broadened opportunities and changed the way we think and learn. No longer do we rely on books for information, instead information transfer and learning is a conversation, a collaboration. This has given rise to the Maker Movement which is based on hands-on, Do-it-Together, multigenerational, collaborative opportunities for learning, creating, problem solving and innovating. The current Common Core and STEAM curricula are offshoots of this new Movement. Public Libraries seem natural places for these MakerSpaces to evolve as libraries have always been institutions of learning where many generations gather. They also offer a wide range of access, many being open 7 days a week.

Simsbury Public Library is no exception. In fact, the Library's mission statement clearly supports the establishment of a MakerSpace, an endeavor we have begun through a series of community forums which led to volunteers coming forward to plan and facilitate programs. The Innovators' Workshop at Simsbury Public Library is in its earliest development phase, however, we are diligently working to generate even greater interest and leveraging private funding through grants to help make a small amount of public dollars we've requested go further.

Serendipitously, other community organizations were also embarking on forays into the Maker Movement and innovation as the Library was kicking off Innovators' Workshop. Therefore, the town wide Innovation Initiative was formed, building possibilities for comprehensive levels of collaboration between both public, corporate, business, non-profits, entrepreneurs and artists rarely seen.