

# Growing Book-Based Partnerships

NSU Alvin Sherman Library and PBS KidVision

MEAGAN ALBRIGHT

This is the story of how a small seed planted in 2019 with a single short video grew into a veritable garden of virtual video collaborations between KidVision and the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Alvin Sherman Library. For more than ten years, Penny Bernath, education director and host of South Florida PBS KidVision Pre-K, has partnered with the Alvin Sherman Library, a unique joint-use library serving the Broward County community as well as the students, faculty, and staff of NSU.

Affectionately known as Miss Penny by children in the South Florida community, she has been a special guest at storytimes for the library's special events, including Summer Reading, trick-or-treat storytime, Jumpstart Read for the Record, and the library's signature annual literacy festival StoryFest! These projects provided rich soil when it came time to plant the next crop of collaborations—online programming.

## 2019

Penny reached out to youth services librarians at the Sherman Library for I Spy 360°, a KidVision series visiting locations in South Florida with a special camera to film short (three- to five-minute) videos that encouraged children to play iSpy games in 360° environments to find and learn new words. Together they created KidVision iSpy 360° Library, where the audience joined



Miss Penny joins staff at the NSU Alvin Sherman Library for their annual Trick or Treat Storytime (2018).

KidVision Pre-K on an adventure to the NSU Alvin Sherman Library to explore the children's section and learn important library vocabulary. This partnership promoted awareness of the library and let children explore the children's section virtually and learn important book- and library-related vocabulary. As of January 2023, this video had 2,013 views.

## 2020

The library pivoted to virtual programming to support the recreational, cultural, and educational needs of children and families during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. KidVision Pre-K also expanded their online videos, adding programming via Facebook Live series including KidVision Storytime with Miss Penny and KidVision Fun Field Trip Friday. KidVision and the



**Meagan Albright** is Youth Services Librarian at the Alvin Sherman Library at Nova Southeastern University in Florida, where she leads a team of Youth Services/ Young Adult librarians in developing diverse, engaging programming to meet the cultural, recreational, and educational needs of children and families.

library partnered to simultaneously premiere the library's storytime and KidVision's across both organizations' Facebook pages.

## 2021

In 2021, KidVision added Full STEAM Ahead, a series exploring science, technology, engineering, arts, and math via thirty-minute videos, to the shared line-up. This added benefit to our partnership came at the perfect time as it allowed patrons to engage and interact with the library in an online format during a time of *exceptionally* high demand at the start of the pandemic and expanded the reach and audience of both KidVision and the library. Total views for KidVision/Library shared programming as of January 2023: 7,220.

Building upon the success I Spy 360° and pandemic programming, Penny once again reached out to the Alvin Sherman Library, partnering with me to film an episode of KidVision Mission. This new series has a mission to educate and inspire young children to be the best they can be by visiting many places in South Florida so children can learn about their communities and develop their vocabulary and a host of other skills through virtual experiences.

Penny and I collaborated via email, phone, and Zoom to develop a concept and script for a special episode entitled "KidVision Mission: A Day with a Children's Librarian," which was filmed on location at the library in September 2021. The total views for the two airdates of this episode are 5,895.

In this ten-minute episode, Penny visited the library to discover what a children's librarian does. While helping me prepare for and rehearse a storytime, Penny and the audience learned that a children's librarian needs to know a lot about all different kinds of books and really likes to help people. The episode invited children and families to experience how libraries are a magical place to learn and explore!

Promotional materials for this episode included shared posts on KidVision and the library's social media accounts, and the episode premiered simultaneously on the library's and South Florida PBS' YouTube channels in November 2021. As of January 2023, this video has 11,002 views.

*This added benefit to our partnership came at the perfect time as it allowed patrons to engage and interact with the library in an online format during a time of exceptionally high demand at the start of the pandemic and expanded the reach and audience of both KidVision and the library.*

## 2022

When the opportunity arose for KidVision to develop new episodes to appear not just online, but also on the South Florida PBS television channel, Penny once again reached out to her friends at the library to include "A Day with a Children's Librarian" as part of a thirty-minute KidVision Mission episode: "Learning About Books!" The audience joined Miss Penny and her mascot, Shiny the Star, on this KidVision Mission to learn all about their friends' unique careers: children's librarian, comic book-store employee. This episode premiered on YouTube in June 2022; as of January 2023 it has 1,450 views.

The KidVision crew consistently receives praise and positive feedback from local teachers, parents, and youth for their on-

demand videos supporting the needs of families and classrooms in the community. One viewer noted that KidVision offers an excellent opportunity to create dialogue between her and her son. They watch the various field trips, such as the visit to the library, and construct visuals based on the activities provided, and the academic support helps her son develop classroom readiness skills.

Another viewer commented, [*sic*] "Miss Penny I enjoy and love all of your kidvision prek videos so much. My favorite field trip the most is the children's librarian." With Miss Penny and her mascot, Shiny the Star, as friends of the library, the future for collaboration is bright! &

### Tips from Miss Penny on Partnering with Your Local PBS Station!

PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) stations are community-based media organizations. We are encouraged to form relationships and get out and meet people. We are tasked to discover the needs of our community and to try to fill those needs as best we can. One of the ways we can do this is to provide entertaining and educational content that will support connectivity and growth. The library was a genuine place for me, as the education director of South Florida PBS, to reach out to make a connection. Once there, I loved it! The staff was cooperative, supportive, and fun to work with. And, as PBS is a trusted place for early education content, I felt safe to use the library as a partner to help serve our community's young families and children. Libraries that have not connected to their local PBS station should invite them to participate in an event. PBS stations that have funding can provide familiar characters like Daniel Tiger that draw families in. Then brainstorm on other ways to work together. Libraries are free and so is PBS, so we can reach the most in need in our communities.