

Library Advisory Board Minutes July 9, 2013

For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB)

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, July 9, 2013 at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Meeting Room. Chair Sola Whitehead called the meeting to order at 7:33 am.

Board members present were: Erin Cooper, George Feldman, Bernadette Janét, John Potter, Adam Starr, Mardy Stevens, Danika Stochosky, Maegan Vidal, and Sola Whitehead. Board members Etsegenet Ayele, Jose Padin, Henise Telles-Ferreira and Carlene Weldon were excused. Board members David Blount, Megan Irwin and Katie Lane were absent.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries; Becky Cobb, Deputy Director; Rita Jimenez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Cindy Gibbon, Access & IT Services Manager; Terrilyn Chun, Public Programming & Community Outreach Manager; Shawn Cunningham, Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives; Javier Gutierrez, Director of Collections & Technical Services; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing & Online Engagement Director; Shelly Kent, Human Resources Manager; Don Allgeier, Neighborhood Libraries Assistant Director; Kylie Park, Rockwood Library Administrator; and Jamie Owens, Administrative Specialist, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Althea Gregory, Budget Office, Multnomah County; Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4; Eric Zimmerman, Chief of Staff, Commissioner McKeel's Office; Kirsten Leonard, Friends of the Library; and Rachel Brunette, The Library Foundation.

The June 11, 2013 minutes were approved.

Commissioner McKeel introduced Eric Zimmerman, her new Chief of Staff. Eric worked with her office on the Veterans Task Force and he started the Veterans Employee Resource Group.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Sola reminded everyone that there will not be an August meeting. The next meeting will be September 10, 2013.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Vailey announced some changes to management at MCLD. Jeremy Graybill's title has changed to Marketing and Online Engagement Director. Shawn Cunningham is now responsible for communications for the library. These changes will allow each of them to focus on those specific areas. Javier Gutierrez, who was the interim Collections & Technical Services Manager, has just been hired permanently in that position.

The library continues to sign up school children for the Summer Reading Program (SRP). 82,000 signed up before school let out for the summer. Last year 110,000 children were enrolled.

On July 1, 2013 there was a fabulous celebration for the new Monday openings. Vailey distributed cards with the new library hours listed; when opened it shows the poem Kim Stafford penned and read aloud for the festivities. It was a wonderful event at Central and across the system. Cookies were provided with help from The Library Foundation (TLF) and Grand Central Bakery.

The library received an award for the My Life My Library campaign. Vailey shared that these are the fabulous images everyone sees on the library trucks and the self-check pads. There are also videos on MY MCL highlighting patrons' use of the library and how it has changed their lives. Jeremy Graybill explained that the recognition comes from The American Marketing Association Oregon Chapter, for the best marketing campaign in the non-profit/government category. Vailey thanked Jeremy for his leadership.

Vailey reported about her time in Chicago attending the Urban Libraries Council's (ULC) annual forum and the American Libraries Association's (ALA) annual conference. The ULC's focus is on how libraries can impact communities through a variety of programs each year. There has been a huge emphasis the last few years on the role that libraries can play in creating learning opportunities for children outside of conventional K-12 education. The large funding organizations are looking at ways to impact students outside of formal instruction and they have specifically identified public libraries as a resource for expanding and enriching kids' learning. Libraries have a huge opportunity to make this impact. MCLD has already done much work around early literacy with the summer reading programs, tutors and after-school trainings and in-school reading programs like Books 2 U. Libraries need to be more intentional and strategic and play a bigger role to make sure kids are successful in this increasingly complex world. The "summer slide" results in a loss in student reading levels, and schools spend the first 30 days of the new school year playing catch-up. Programs need to be about summer learning instead of just summer reading. It is not an achievement gap that children have; it is an experience and opportunity gap during the summer and libraries can make the difference. Vailey distributed the ULC report entitled: Libraries Igniting Learning.

Sola commented that the model of lifelong learning happening outside the classroom fits with the role of libraries. Vailey added that she likes the concept of shared ownership of children's successes, noting that teaching is not just the job of schools.

Mardy commented that children are better learners if they can apply what they have understood and libraries provide the means for them to follow their passions.

Vailey shared that she is a member of the ALA's Digital Content Working Group. The LAB has discussed the challenges that public libraries face in providing digital content to patrons. The Digital Content Working Group is exploring ways in which it might be possible for libraries to think differently in this area, and how collective action might work in this area.

Staff Day is October 3, 2013 and MCLD has invited Garry Golden to speak. He is known as a futurist, not specific to libraries. There has not been a staff day for five years.

ROCKWOOD FEEDING PROGRAM

Rita Jimenez introduced Kylie Park, the Rockwood Library Administrator to present the Rockwood Summer Feeding program.

Kylie explained that this is the first summer of a free lunch program available at the library. The Rockwood Library is located in the east part of Multnomah County, a diverse area that has many low-income apartments, a high level of poverty, and is part of the Reynolds School District. The district has 23 percent English language learners (ELL). The closest elementary schools are Alder and Davis, both of which have a 94 percent rate of qualifying students for free and reduced lunch.

Rockwood staff noticed that many children would spend the entire day at the library without leaving for lunch and some children would ask staff for food. With the help of Katie O'Dell, staff connected with Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon and Catering for a Cause, which is part of Volunteers of America.

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) funds and manages the free lunch programs and reimburses the agencies that prepare and deliver the food. Many of the free lunch programs are sack lunches, but the Rockwood library program is able to have hot lunches. The meals are prepared in northeast Portland, by people who are in the process of leaving a residential program; they are gaining culinary skills they can use in the future in the workforce. The food arrives ready to be served, along with plates and utensils. The program is environmentally responsible; the plates, utensils, napkins and any left over food are composted. If there is food left over, a parent with a child can have that food. The program is Monday through Friday from 12-1pm and is staffed by three volunteers and one library staff member. The program is cost effective by using volunteers and engaging the community. On the first day, there was enough food for 40, but 50 children came. Currently 60 meals are served each day. The program is first come, first served.

Kylie shared two stories. One mother brings her three children every day, walking about one mile to reach Rockwood. The parent explained that there was a free lunch program closer to them, but she prefers the longer walk to the library because the children will check out books and read there. A Russian grandmother brings her granddaughter and thanks everyone by shaking the hands of every volunteer in gratitude.

This program fulfills a real need in the community. Hungry children are fed, the Summer Reading Program participation is much higher this year and there is an increase in library activity. This program ensures the library is a positive environment for hungry children.

John Potter praised library staff for recognizing the issue and taking steps to address it. John asked if there are plans to expand it to all sites. Rita answered that Midland library would be a good choice for this program. However at some locations, such as the Holgate library, there is already a similar feeding program nearby.

Mardy Stevens asked if outreach is done in connection with schools' free lunch programs. Rita answered that outreach is everywhere, not just in schools. George Feldman asked if there are book discussions that happen during the lunches. Kylie answered yes, and staff includes details about library programs during this time. Sola asked if space was a factor. Kylie answered that sometimes people do have to wait for a seat. Jeremy added that initially he contacted The Oregonian who wrote about it and MCLD youth programs also got the word out through outreach. Rockwood Library is listed as a feeding site on the ODE website. John Potter asked if the children are coming to the program by themselves or are they accompanied by an adult and what is the age range. Kylie answered that approximately half of the participants are with adults and the ages most served are from three to 11 years.

Vailey added that MCLD has an obligation to continue to reevaluate and look at how projects will positively impact the community. This program is an example of how the library has a unique role. When there is a really great need, the library can address the issue, and will continue to look for other areas where this can happen. The LAB has been a part of the discussions of the roles that the library plays, and how the library plays a critical part in the community's health and success.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Rachel Brunette reported the news of a second award from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation in the amount of \$196,000. The focus of this grant will be to examine the role of public libraries with children learning to read, specifically from kindergarten to third grade

For the first Allen grant, the recent readers' advisory focus groups were a success and TLF is looking at what actions to take from the analysis of the information.

Vailey expressed her gratitude for the second Allen grant.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Kirsten Leonard stated that the Friends role of advocacy has become more subdued with the success of the library district; the focus now is on how FOL can add to library programming. There is a lot of renewed interest and effort with the addition of seven new board members.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Mardy Stevens asked about changes in GED requirements; it's been in the news about new program parameters and deadlines. How will this affect the library's efforts?

Terrilyn Chun answered that students are being prepared and made aware of the new program and deadlines well ahead of the changes.

Sola shared that it was reported that adults in the U.S. purchase very few books after they leave high school, which indicates that reading is dropping nationwide. That may be true, but buying books is not the same as reading books. Sola said she only bought two books last year but read 150, so these statements are not always a balanced view. Maegan reminded everyone that statistics can always be skewed. Bernadette added that those statistics may only be referencing new books purchased at large established books stores and may not account for smaller stores, used books sales, and people sharing books.

Meagan shared that she was very excited to sign up her seven-month-old child for the Summer Reading Program.

The next LAB meeting is on Tuesday, September 10, 2013.

Sola Whitehead, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 8:31 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jamie Owens

Administrative Specialist, Library Director's Office

Multnomah County Library, Oregon