

Library Advisory Board Minutes: April 14, 2015
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, April 14, 2015, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Sola Whitehead called the meeting to order at 7:33 am.

Board members present were: Marc Alifanz, Erin Cooper, George Feldman, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Katie Lane, Ya-Li Lizik, Jack MacNichol, Mardy Stevens, Danika Stochosky, Maegan Vidal, Sola Whitehead and Brian Wilson.

Board members excused were: José Padin and Carlene Weldon.

Board members absent were: John Potter.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries; Becky Cobb, Deputy Director; Terrilyn Chun, Public Programming and Community Outreach Manager; Shawn Cunningham, Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing + Online Engagement Director; Rita Jiménez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Shelly Kent, Human Resources Manager; Katie O'Dell, Youth Services Director; Dave Ratliff, Central Library Director; Sara Ryan, Teen Services Specialist; and Paige Hatcher, Administrative Analyst, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Sean Files, Policy Advisor, District 4, Multnomah County; Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4, Multnomah County; and Merris Sumrall, The Library Foundation.

The Board approved minutes for the March 10, 2015 meeting with an amendment to wording in the nominating committee update.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Sola Whitehead bid a happy National Library Week (April 12-18, 2015) to all Multnomah County Library District (MCLD) employees.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Vailey Oehlke expressed appreciation to the Friends of the Library (FOL) for their support of library employees. Each year, FOL provides the library with funds for internal staff celebrations of National Library Workers Day, which, this year, falls on April 14, 2015.

Ms. Oehlke highlighted two items in the Director's Report:

- Gresham Library's Russian Book Club
- Comment from patron thanking the library for computer classes that have provided valuable support during a career transition

Ms. Oehlke noted that the patron's comment demonstrates the library's impact on the professional development and career success of individuals. This scenario exemplifies how the library serves the community beyond providing a place where patrons can check out books.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Ms. Oehlke shared that, every three years, the library refreshes its strategic priorities. The priorities inform services development and resource allocation, and they will be included in the library's budget presentation to the Board of County Commissioners on May 12, 2015.

Ms. Oehlke reviewed the priorities for 2016-18 (Fiscal Years 2016, 2017 and 2018) and highlighted notable changes from the 2012-15 priorities, including how the library will prioritize digital literacy and re-imagine library services and spaces. Ms. Oehlke noted that the Think Yes initiative from the 2012-15 priorities has become such an inherent component of MCL employee culture that it is no longer necessary to call it out as a priority.

Ms. Oehlke invited board members to provide feedback by Friday, April 17.

George Feldman noted that the library's demonstrated credibility lends credence to justifiably high expectations for the future.

In response to an inquiry from Elizabeth Hawthorne, Ms. Oehlke shared that staff will develop outcome measures for the new priorities.

In response to an inquiry from Danika Stochosky, Ms. Oehlke related that resource allocation will be shared with the LAB, reported in the library's budget and included in an annual report, which is currently in development.

Chair Whitehead noted that the library is already demonstrating many of these priorities, as evidenced by the aforementioned items from the Director's Report. Chair Whitehead gave kudos to library staff for already providing services that support these priorities.

Ms. Oehlke asserted that one of the of the library's priorities is to shift the public narrative and perception of what the library offers to the community. This can prove difficult given the iconic nature of the image of public libraries. These strategic priorities are intended to reflect that endeavor.

In terms of next steps, the strategic priorities will be posted on the website and included in ongoing conversations about the library.

TEEN SERVICES STRATEGIES

Katie O'Dell introduced Sara Ryan, Teen Services Specialist, and shared information about Ms. Ryan's professional background, expertise and tenure with the library.

Ms. Ryan provided board members with a document describing three focused strategies the library uses to highlight the programs, services and resources available to teens, and to communicate the impact of that work. Ms. Ryan noted that teen services is not about finding out what teens want and providing it to them, but rather, working with teens to discover what's important to them. Ms. Ryan

reviewed the document and shared additional information about the activities described therein. The three strategies are:

- Opportunities for teens to build skills, including series programs, volunteering for the library and teen-led programming
 - Series programming occurs over a period of four, five or six sessions and focuses on skillbuilding. Examples include digital design, beat making and animation.
 - Teens contributed nearly 21,000 hours of volunteer time in FY 2014.
- Opportunities for teens to connect around interests
 - Examples of interest-driven learning include cooking programs and clubs. At least two teen councils are planning fandom celebrations.
- Support for teens' school and life success, including apps and other electronic resources, outreach visits and teen councils
 - Over 70% of teens have smartphones, a fact that informs how the library connects teens with library services
 - Fourteen neighborhood library teen councils meet regularly to plan programs and advise the library

Ms. Ryan reported that all public services staff participate in training to develop skills to work effectively with teens. This training is required in part due to the perception that the relevance of libraries has diminished due to the internet. Not only are teens the next generations of library users, they are also the next generation of library staff.

Ms. Ryan shared the theoretical background for teen strategies and priorities. The strategies are informed by the Young Adult Library Services Association's (YALSA) national guidelines for teen services in libraries, the Search Institute's work on the importance of developmental relationships in adolescence, and the educational approach of connected learning.

In response to an inquiry from Chair Whitehead, Ms. Ryan discussed reasons for variances in teen services at different neighborhood library locations.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Feldman, Ms. Ryan shared that the library is developing new and stronger partnerships with organizations that work with youth who are having challenges. This will help ensure the library has a deliberate approach when connecting with teens from a variety of backgrounds. Ms. Oehlke highlighted the library services that are offered at Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Center as well as the visit of Everybody Reads 2015 author Mitchell Jackson to that facility.

There followed a discussion about how youth who use the library to connect with peers can evolve to become youth who participate in library programs and contribute to teen services. Ms. Ryan shared that many teen councils don't self-identify as readers; rather, they are excited about the library as a community space and a place to contribute and be valued by the community.

Ms. Ryan described several collaborations with All Hands Raised, including the work that School Corps does with the 9th Grade Counts program to ensure youth don't lose skills during out-of-school time in the summer.

In response to an inquiry from Chair Whitehead, Ms. Ryan shared how the library performs classwork outreach to teens, including School Corps' Banned Books Week presentation and tutorials for how to use the Mango language learning application.

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Hawthorne about teen groups vis-a-vis travel or international issues, Ms. Ryan shared that the Sellwood-Moreland teen council has hosted exchange student guests. Similar instances have existed and this is an area where determining appropriate partnerships could expand this work.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Merris Sumrall reported that TLF is determining what programs and initiatives they will be raising funds for next year. Ms. Sumrall recognized Ms. O'Dell and Terrilyn Chun for their work developing funding requests. Ms. Sumrall provided an overview of the funding request and review process and what criteria are used to determine which proposals will move forward.

Ms. Sumrall reported that TLF received a gift of \$200,000 from an anonymous donor for the Rockwood Library makerspace project.

Ms. Sumrall reported that TLF has procured \$350,000 worth of prizes for the Summer Reading program.

Ms. Sumrall discussed the goals of the Every Child, Every Family children's literacy campaign, for which TLF will be fundraising for the next four years.

Ms. Oehlke expressed appreciation for the work that TLF does for the library as well as its support of the Rockwood Library makerspace project.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

On behalf of the Friends of the Library, Becky Cobb reported that the Spring Used Book Sale will take place this weekend, April 18-19, 2015 at Gresham Station. There will be a special sale for members only on Friday, April 17 as well as a collector's corner. Ms. Cobb invited attendees to visit the sale and support FOL.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Marc Alifanz shared that his wife published her first novel in December 2014. Mr. Alifanz thanked the library for procuring six copies of the book. He related that it is very gratifying to receive support from libraries nationally as this directly impacts how authors are able to get their work distributed.

Ms. Oehlke shared that she will be visiting New York City this month to participate in a panel discussion sponsored by Publishers Weekly. The conversation will include how libraries create opportunities for people to discover authors and how this benefits publishers. Later this year, MCL will be participating in a project with David Vinjamuri that will demonstrate the connection between deep displays at libraries, author discovery and sales.

Ms. Stevens thanked board members for their advocacy in bringing in applications for the LAB. The nominating committee has received eight new applications. The application window is open until the end of April. The nominating committee will follow up with applicants in May.

Ms. Stevens shared that April 14, 2015 is Equal Pay Day, a date which symbolizes how far into the year women must work in order to earn what men earned in the previous year.

Following up on the item from the Director's Report, Ms. Chun shared that FOL has incorporated Gresham Library's Russian Book Club into its Pageturners grant. Friends of the Library has also increased its donation for the number of fall author visits, from 10 to 16.

Chair Whitehead adjourned the meeting at 8:30 am.

Respectfully submitted by:
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