

LAC Minutes - (Wheaton/11-18-2024)

Attendees: Yesvy Gustasp, Chair; Grace Manubay, Board Liaison; Dianne Whitaker, ex-officio; Members, Eric Wallace, Ania Waller, Barbara Freidman, Carol Bender, Thelda McMillian, Farah Nageer-Kanthor, and Andrew Rein

Absent: Hoa Nyguen, Diana Dubrawski

Opening Business:

Yesvy called the meeting to order. Ania moved to approve the October 21, 2024 Minutes and Eric seconded the approval of the minutes.

Membership Update:

Yesvy shared and Dianne reiterated that on November 14, 2024, the Library Board renewed the membership terms for Carol Bender and Thelda McMillian. Their term dates are November 2024 through November 2027. Carolyn Teich resigned.

Wheaton Library Managers Report to the LAC

Dianne shared the Manager's Report for November 2024.

Facilities – There are no updates on outstanding work orders.

Collections – Wheaton is meeting all Collection Management deadlines and targets for FY25.

Displays featured in November are – Native American Heritage Month, and Veterans Day in the Adult and Children's area. Adults are featuring Novel Writing Month and National Alzheimer's Awareness Day. Children's Displays are also featuring for Thanksgiving and Dinovember.

Programs – Wheaton branch participated in the MD STEM Festival – including two Children's and six Teen programs. The Engineering a Cotton Ball Launcher on November 13 was particularly popular.

The Winter Reading Challenge Kick-off will be held on Saturday, December 28, and "Create a Graphic Novel" will also be held in December.

Adult Workforce Development Program with C2C, Saturday morning Conversation Club. Yoga, Internet Basics, Big Read – Writers Workshop held on Nov. 16, 2024.

Regular Children's and Teen programs include monthly bi-lingual story-time, Wednesday and Friday Family story-times; Fun Fridays play time in the program room; Duplo and Lego Construction Crew on Tuesday afternoons. Family story-times continue to be our most popular program. We have 90 seats and all seats are filled with two programs of 45 persons each. Customers have requested unlimited seating; however, we really are focused on making this an "early literacy learning time".

Staffing- Wheaton has filled the second Library Aide position and has a part-time Children's librarian position vacant.

Board Liaison's Report presented by Grace Manubay

The Library Board met during the week of November 11, 2024. This was the first hybrid meeting of the Board in a long time. Yesvy attended virtually and observed that there were over 20 participants. The

new Director, Darcell Graham, attended the meeting and met the Board. She is the former interim president of Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. She is getting to know the people she needs to know and is very excited to be a part of the system and make a contribution in Montgomery County.

Grace described the focus of a few of the Board's workgroups. One focuses on LAC activities, and discussed how to better support LACs with recruitment, retention of members; and learn from what other LACs are doing. Wheaton's LAC is well established and survived the pandemic in a strong position. The Workgroup is thinking of having a networking meeting to share experiences, ideas, and lessons with some of the newer LACs. Grace told members to be on the lookout for an upcoming joint meeting, perhaps in January 2025. She shared that February is 'Library Lovers month' and the Board may do an outreach/tabling event. Grace will share more when details are finalized.

Another workgroup is developing an advocacy agenda for the upcoming county budget cycle. Workgroup members are combing through the many comments that were received to identify priorities for library system.

The next meeting of the library board is in the 2nd week of December and January 2025 will be the next joint meeting.

One of the board members shared a NYT article related to library staff being asked to take on more of a social service role. The new director has some experience with this and will likely discuss at an upcoming board meeting.

Grace is open to hearing from LAC members who want to learn about specific topics and invited folks to let her know.

Discussion

LAC members asked about library staff serving patrons in languages other than English. Dianne explained that library staff seek certification in world languages to be able to demonstrate that they can engage with library patrons who speak different languages. Yesvy suggested that it may be helpful to have staff with these language skills wear a pin or be somehow identified so that patrons can be aware of which staff have multiple language skills.

Grace asked Dianne how this works at Wheaton. Dianne shared that each department is allotted a certain number of staff who can be translators (spoken and written). County funds foreign language interpretation in Spanish, Mandarin, Chinese, Vietnamese, French, and Amharic as these are the 6 most commonly spoken languages in MoCo (though there are over 160 languages spoken in the county). There is an in-county translation service via a language line that people can use to access support. Library staff have to pass an oral and written exam to be able to provide language assistance to patrons. There are currently one Chinese, one Amharic, and four Spanish translators "Advanced Certified" for MCPL and a number of additional staff who have conversational foreign language skills and are able to help patrons with basic needs. The branch's lead children's librarian is a certified Spanish speaker.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Yesvy raised the topic of new needs in the community for services to support patrons with various accessibility needs.

Yesvy shared that several people with macular eye issues and have asked him about library resources. He recalled an April 14, 2017 County memo during Parker Hamilton's tenure as the Library Director addressing the role of libraries in meeting the needs of all community members and raised the availability of tools including magnifier, narrator, OPTELEC clear view / clear reader, and other resources.

Dianne shared that there are ADA requirements for what kinds of resources the library should be providing for people. All of the public PCs have the function to read text to patrons. The library does have ocular capability on some machines to support vision-impaired patrons as well as black-white text change function and tools to support hearing impaired and ASL. With the advent of audio books, people can still access library for the blind resources through a specific process. Services for hearing impaired- does have some ASL staff and have some Deaf Digital Resource Center resources. On staff member manages this collection.

For those wanting more current information on this, can find out schedule for Accessibility LAC and/or having Elizabeth Lang, Facilities & Accessibility Program Manager come to speak to the Wheaton LAC. Dianne is trying to figure out both passive and active programming at a system-wide level to institute some support for this group. Some staff want to design children's programs but others feel that it is more relevant to develop general services for this group. Yesvy asked if Elizabeth Lang can send LAC something about this- similar to the previously referenced 2017 memo that he can have as a resource and use to inform his 'talking points' to patrons about this issue, as appropriate and needed. Dianne will follow up with Yesvy on this item.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Wheaton LAC is on Monday, December 16 at 7 pm.

Ania moved to adjourn the meeting and Farah seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned a 7:56 pm.