

Northern Lights Library Network

Director's Report February 19, 2011

Meetings/Events

December

Dec 11 NLLN Governing Board meeting cancelled due to weather conditions
Dec 14 Meeting with Fran Rethwisch re: Becker County Early Childhood Initiative
Dec 15 Submitted multicounty, multitype talking points for MLA/MEMO Legislative Platform
Dec 16 Tested Skype effectiveness with Erika Rux – (worked easily and well)
Dec 20-30 Christmas break NLLN Office closed 12/27-12/30

January

Jan 3 Attended Stephanie Gerding's WebJunction webinar on "Accidental Trainer"
Jan 3 Attended ISTE SIGMS webinar
Jan 5 Attended MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee meeting – online
Jan 10 Viewed: "Future of Public Schools and Democracy" – Merrow ASCD Conference
Jan 12 ISTE SIGMS "1 Tool at a Time" webinar on Audacity – online
Jan 17 Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday observed
Jan 18-19 Multicounty, Multitype Director's meeting – St Cloud
Jan 23-24 North Star Library Consortium workshop, Fergus Falls, "Creating Your Digital Destiny"
Jan 27 Library Journal webinar: "Libraries are Essential- providing core services for Readers"

February

Feb 2 MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee meeting – online
Feb 8 Spotlight on Books Conference – planning meeting, Detroit Lakes
Feb 9 Meeting with Barb Fabre & Mary Leff re: White Earth Childcare and Early Education programs; Readmobile; Brain Dev Conference – Detroit Lakes
Feb 10 Creation of the Spotlight on Books conference brochure
Feb 15 Meeting with Paul Bursik regarding meeting agenda
Feb 17 Meeting with Erika Rux regarding scholarship guidelines/application
Feb 17 Meeting with Stan Iverson regarding Director's job description
Feb 19 NLLN Governing Board meeting.

North Star Library Consortium:

- Had a very successful workshop in Fergus Falls on "Creating Your Digital Future". Laurie Conzemius (Sartell schools) was the primary presenter on Monday; Gay Galles also presented, along with Matt Lee of Minitex. Sunday evening included a time for sharing devices and apps. This Workshop was done in partnership with Central Minnesota Libraries Exchange and was open to a statewide audience. 23 people attended – a small number, but a great size for this type of workshop. It was a

productive and useful workshop in a nice venue (Big Wood Event Center, Fergus Falls).

- The White Earth Readmobile has expanded their programs and have new employees. We will try to do some basic Destiny training for them this Spring. Their programs are expanding rapidly and they need assistance in keeping staff up to speed on the use of Destiny to support their work. The Leech Lake Early Childhood program has also had some turnover in staff and requires some training. We will include them when we do something for White Earth.
- We continue receive inquiries from potential new members of the North Star Library Consortium, but basically this Consortium is self-sustaining and progressing on its own with less direct involvement from NLLN. We have 205 member libraries in the Consortium, continue to provide interactive communication channels for these members, training opportunities, and high quality staff development workshops throughout the year.

White Earth Early Childhood Initiative/White Earth Child Care and Early Education:

- I would like to see NLLN support their literacy efforts and their nationally-recognized Brain Development conference by partnering with them to have John Coy (Minnesota author) as a keynote speaker on getting boys to read. He will also do some breakout sessions at the conference.
- White Earth Child Care and Early Education programs are growing in some amazing ways and I have been working with them to make literacy a high priority, to advise on library matters, and to link them to library resources. The challenges are huge, and the needs are enormous, but the rewards are equally big.

Continuing Education/Professional Development

- See above for the Destiny workshop in January.
- We have been working furiously on the Spotlight on Books Conference, April 8-9, 2011. We'll have an additional Thursday evening pre-Conference soiree this year. We have a great program outlined and hope to have good weather and good attendance!
- Scholarship applications are coming in on a regular basis which is great. We have also been asked to fund a team of teachers from the Moorhead Middle School (Horizon) to attend the Conference. They would be coming with their media specialist and working to incorporate literacy into all areas of the curriculum. This is an exciting development and I hope to use it as a model for other schools that would like to encourage media specialists and teachers and administrators to work more closely together.

Legislative Forum/Library Future Initiative

- The legislative platform is available, as well as talking points for each of the planks.
- Peg Werner has created a talking points document related to library maintenance of effort issues (HF7/SF159 have an MOE repealer).
- We are watching the testimony that surrounds the use of Legacy funding and hoping that regional public library systems continue to receive this funding in the future.
- I continue to participate in the MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee meetings.

Special Projects/Professional Engagement Funds

- We are funding multiple Professional Engagement Fund opportunities in FY2011
- We have received a request from the Viking Library System for Special Project funds for their expanded/enhanced delivery in that region.

- We have been asked to partner with the Brain Development Conference to sponsor Minnesota author (and library friend) John Coy to a keynote presentation and 2 major break out sessions at their annual conference.
- We are using Special Projects funds and/or Professional Engagement Funds to support 3 participants from our area in the Library Futures Initiative and have contributed \$5,000 of Special Project Funds to help underwrite the overall costs of the LFI.
- Facilitation of a National Indian Child Care Association book publication and distribution project
- Facilitating the establishment of a Becker County Reach Out and Read program

Scenarios for hiring a new NLLN Executive Director and other thoughts

- The job Director's job description is ready for finalization and posting when then timeline for recruitment is determined. I would advise advertising broadly on the electronic job boards in March-April; first review of applicants in mid-April; interviews/decision in mid-May/early June, and a beginning date for new Director of July 1 or later.
- It is my intention to submit a formal letter in April requesting to retire effective June 1 and continue employment with NLLN in a part-time, advisory-consultant-transition-special projects role for up to one year [what exact terms we will use to describe this are yet to be discussed] under a PERA "phased retirement" program. Terms of retirement and phased retirement will be worked out with the Board in a process determined at our meeting.
- I do this with some hesitation – I love my work, I find the Board supportive and visionary, I enjoy my colleagues in the library community, and there are so many exciting projects yet to do!
- My expectation is that a part-time, "phased" retirement would allow for a smoother transition for a new director, while allowing me to dedicate time to wrapping up or transitioning some of the NLLN special projects already in progress. The North Star Library Consortium no longer needs a lot of direct input from NLLN. The Scholarship and Professional Engagement Fund programs are well established and run effectively. Our financial and reporting systems work well. Our policies are in good shape. I am hoping that several of our other projects – Spotlight on Books, Early Childhood Education (especially on the reservations) – might benefit from focused attention and become more self sustaining. A new director should be free to work with the Board and member libraries in creating and implementing a fresh, new vision for NLLN in the years ahead. All in all, I think it is an exciting time in NLLN's history. I'm very happy to have spent the past 10 years as NLLN's Executive Director and anticipate that it will continue to flourish in the decade ahead.

Ruth Solie
Feb 19, 2011