

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2007/2008

**Linda Black
PLA National Convention
March 26 – 28, 2008**

This was my first library conference of any kind. I found it very interesting but very hard on the feet. Next time I will wear running shoes.

The opening speaker was John Wood, ex-Microsoft executive. He was awesome. What a wonderful blessing he received when he took up the challenge of building schools in Nepal. How could he know it would change his life forever? His organization, Room to Read, will aid poor communities in developing nations to open their own schools. This year alone, 1600 schools will exist where there were none before. I intend to get his book.

My library is small with only me for staff. It is open 20 hours a week and I have four closed hours. As you might expect, there isn't much time to spare. Getting the day-to-day library work and programming done will always be a stretch. The classes I attended leaned heavily toward small operations like mine.

Grant writing seemed to be on everyone's minds. You can't program without grant writing. You can't do just about anything without granting; makes me cringe. They next say how time consuming writing a grant can be. Time is one thing we small branches don't have or anybody else for that matter.

The title, "Sexy Senior Programming," proved how having a great program name makes a huge difference. It really wasn't very sexy but the program was standing room only. It was the best class of the whole conference. The two presenters, Ing Kalchthaler, head of youth services and Mary Mullen, head of outreach services are both from Bethel Park Public Library in Bethel Park, PA. They called their ideas, "WAY-outside-the-box" and they are. They are heavily into intergenerational programming and have done it very successfully. Moreover, they had a blast doing it.

One of the intergenerational programs that was a huge success right from the get-go was a tournament gaming night. The teams were families and had to have a young person(s) and someone over 55. The families competed as teams and really got into it. They wore team t-shirts. Attendance was 150 the first night!

They hold senior computer training during closed hours. Part of the sign up is the question, "Do you know about the mouse?" If not, they explain about mouse tutorials and the need to do one before the class.

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