

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2007/2008

Gail Hedstrom PLA National Convention March 26-28, 2008

I want to first thank you for the scholarship allowing me to attend the PLA conference in Minneapolis. I had a great time and really enjoyed the opportunity to meet people from throughout the nation.

I traveled to the event and lodged with two library directors from within Viking Library System and it was nice to get to spend time with them and share information about the sessions we each attended during the day.

The Nancy Pearl "Book Buzz" was a great way to start the conference; it was very interesting to hear what new titles will be available in the near future and getting some insight into the books. I was most pleased with the presenter from Milkweed Press, I am a huge fan of small presses and learning about exciting Milkweed books and forthcoming titles reinforced my love for small presses. I look forward to bringing many of these titles to our patrons.

John Wood was completely inspirational as he spoke about "Leaving Microsoft to Change the World." I am hopeful that locally we can do a bit of fund raising for his organization. I was also contemplating on the irony that often we have to fight to maintain funding for school and public libraries in the United States; you would think our founders and government would get it, libraries are essential to success and Democracy.

I attended two author luncheons, one featuring Pat Mora and Raul Colon the author with Louise Erdrich. It is very meaningful to learn about what motivates and inspires writers. Learning more about the writers body of work helps provide better readers advisory service. I attended the following the sessions:

"What does it take to Be Good at Reference in the Age of Google?"

"Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development"

"How Branding Can Increase the Relevance of Your Library"

"Public Libraries as Community"

"In the Tradition: the Legacy of Culture Messengers from Langston Hughes to Tupac Shakur"

"When the Story is true: Practicing Nonfiction Readers' Advisory"

I enjoyed all of the session, especially those related to libraries working communities. While it is obvious to me why we are essential for economic development and community enrichment; making sure we spread that message and have other people in our community actually saying those things is essential to the growth our libraries.

The session on branding was also very inspiring and full of great ideas without using much money. The video featuring "Queens Library" was moving.

"In the Tradition" was also a favorite, because my learning curve was huge and I went home and looked up Gil Scott Heron on youtube.com

I plan to share the information I gained at PLA with the library board and my co-workers, ensuring that we all get a little something from my experience.

With Sincere Thanks,
Gail Hedstrom
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