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## **Executive Director's Report**

### **October 2014**

**(covering time period of September 29 – October 22, 2014)**

#### *Small Business Forum*

NYS Assemblyman David Buchwald [93<sup>rd</sup> District] hosted a forum at the White Plains Public Library on October 7<sup>th</sup>. The forum entitled, *Not-for-Profit Organizations and the Business Community*, was the third in a series. The previous two forums were held at the Mount Kisco Public Library and explored challenges faced by small businesses and how to attract and keep young professionals in Westchester County. Library Directors, Galina Chernykh of Harrison and Brian Kenney of White Plains were also in attendance.

One of the goals of the forum was to showcase the natural synergy that exists between not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. From an economic perspective, not-for-profits often serve as major customers for many small businesses. This economic relationship also exists in public libraries when library patrons who come to the library for events and/or to take out materials then go on to make purchases at local stores or eat at nearby restaurants.

The forum included three presentations. The first was by Fran Barrett, New York State InterAgency Coordinator for Not-for-Profit Services. Ms. Barrett's position is new and her primary role is to oversee the newly created New York State Grants Gateway. This gateway went live on May 15, 2014, and functions as the primary outlet for State agencies to post upcoming and available funding opportunities. Through the gateway, individuals and organizations can search for and download available and anticipated grant opportunities and register to receive email notifications when specific types of grant opportunities are posted. The gateway can be accessed at <http://www.grantsreform.ny.gov/>.

Emily Guthman, Director of Business Operations for the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), reviewed the findings of NFF's 2014 annual survey. Not surprising, long-term financial stability emerged as the top challenge/fear experienced by the nonprofits that responded to the survey. What proved more insightful was the NFF's message that non-profits function as a core infrastructure for our communities and societies. When the quality of non-profits begins to erode, our social infrastructure begins to crumble. Public libraries are acknowledged as the center, the foundation or core infrastructure of their communities; and financial challenges experienced by public libraries have limited the support that can be provided to help communities heal, grow and thrive. The NFF's 2014 annual survey results can be found at <http://nonprofitfinancefund.org/state-of-the-sector-surveys>.

Glenn Shell, Vice-Chair of SCORE Westchester, provided an overview of the services provided by this non-profit organization to small businesses and other non-profits. Approximately 10% of the SCORE clients are non-profits and have received assistance on a range of issues such as

launching a new service, improving website design and updating/creating business plans. Currently SCORE advisors are based in five public libraries in Westchester County: Katonah, New Rochelle, North Castle (Armonk), White Plains and Yonkers. The SCORE service could prove helpful to library directors and trustees looking for assistance on specific issues. More information about SCORE Westchester is available at <http://www.scorewestchester.com/>.

### **WLS Trustee Institute**

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 40 people attended the WLS Trustee Institute entitled, *Emerging Technologies*. Speakers Norman Jacknis, Patricia Braja and Rob Caluori spoke about the latest technology trends including the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA); artificial intelligence and speech recognition; the ubiquitous Internet with wearable devices and artificial keyboards; maker spaces; 3D printing and Shapeoko and the softwares that drive them; and of course, the future role libraries will play as curator, creator, navigator and incubator for these new tools. The presentations and actual demonstration sparked conversation and interest; and the materials from the event will be posted shortly to the WLS website.

### **WLS 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

The guest speaker for this year's Annual Meeting on Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, is Kerri Willette, Empire State Digital Network Manager of METRO. Her position was newly created in March 2014, and one of her roles is to support the technological infrastructure needed to host and display digital resources from hundreds of New York's libraries, archives, museums and cultural heritage institutions. Another equally important role is to help public libraries, archives and cultural institutions understand how they can contribute to and use information from the DPLA. While many libraries have local digital content, this important historical information often exists in a silo environment not accessible to the general public. Through the work of regional service hubs like the Empire State Digital Network, DPLA provides the resources needed to "unsilo" digital content and to help individuals of all ages discover documents and images that help them learn more about the history of local communities, the individual U.S. states and territories, and the nation as a whole.

Ms. Willette's work supports efforts by public libraries and local historical groups in the region to digitize content and to make the content available for public use. As the DPLA grows in content, it will transform into a first-use reference tool for staff in our libraries. It will also provide new opportunities for public libraries and local history groups to collaborate on projects to share existing collections and to create new digital collections to capture today's history and to support future research. At some point it is possible that the DPLA could be partially or fully integrated into our existing online catalog. Learn more about the DPLA and explore its digital collections at <http://dp.la/>.

In addition, the second WLS Trustees Award will be presented to co-winners Sue Feir, Director of the Hastings-on-Hudson Public Library, and Barbara Morrow, President of the Friends Association of the Hastings-on-Hudson Public Library; and all those nominated for the Award will be recognized. Invitations have gone out, and all are welcome to join us on November 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 6 p.m. at the Sheraton Tarrytown, 600 White Plains Road, Tarrytown.

## *Aspen Institute's "Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries" Report*

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, WLS Trustee Norman Jacknis and I attended a panel discussion on the Aspen Institute's new report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, that was held at The New York Public Library. The mission of the Aspen Institute is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. Panelists included: Charlie Firestone (moderator), Executive Director, Communications and Society Program, The Aspen Institute; The Honorable Karl Dean, Mayor, Nashville, TN; Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO, Brooklyn Public Library; Dinaw Mengestu, Lannan Chair of Poetics at Georgetown University and 2012 MacArthur Fellow; and Ralph R. Smith, Senior Vice President, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Managing Director, The Campaign for Grade Level Reading.

The report acknowledges and applauds the many successful ways that U.S. public libraries have adapted to the digital era, and urges libraries to assume even broader roles as digital innovators and as platforms for community building and information dissemination. To accomplish these broader roles, the report recommends that communities better leverage three important library assets: people, place and platform. Public libraries connect people and foster relationships that strengthen the human capital of a community. Libraries as physical places support economic development and neighborhood revitalization, and support the strengthening of social bonds and community identity. As virtual places, public libraries allow for extensive discovery of and access to information and resources. The platform of public libraries is user-centered, allowing for the curation and sharing of a community's knowledge and innovation, thereby supporting the learning and civic needs of the community.

The report concludes that the long-term health of libraries is essential to the long-term health of the communities they serve. The report goes on to identify four strategic opportunities for action that could guide public libraries as they continue to transform in their efforts to meet the needs of the digital era. The four strategic opportunities are:

1. Aligning library services in support of community goals;
2. Providing access to content in all formats;
3. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of public libraries; and
4. Cultivating leadership.

These strategic opportunities are elements that WLS and the member libraries have continuously been addressing. This report confirms that we are heading in a good direction but also highlights the need for ongoing evaluation. The full report can be found online at <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/rising-challenge-re-envisioning-public-libraries>.

### *Upcoming Events*

November 5-8 NYLA Annual Conference – Saratoga Springs, NY  
November 20 WLS Annual Meeting – Sheraton Hotel, Tarrytown

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner  
Executive Director

LIST OF VISITS AND MEETINGS ATTENDED  
September 29 – October 22, 2014

SEPTEMBER

- 29 Pat Braja, Director of Development  
Elise Burke, Executive Assistant
- 30 Rob Caluori, Director of Information Technology (IT)  
WLS Board

OCTOBER

- 1 Webinar: *The Digital Shift: Libraries @ the Center*
- 2 Sirsi Operations Conference Call  
Douglas Wray, Manager, Cataloging Services  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)
- 7 Assemblyman David Buchwald's Small Business Forum: *Not-for-Profit Organizations and the Business Community*, White Plains Public Library  
Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
Marc Jacobs, Jones Lange Lasalle (JLL)  
WLS Budget Committee  
WLS Trustee Institute: *Emerging Technologies*
- 8 Pat Braja, Director of Development  
Joanna Straub, Executive Director, NonProfit Westchester (NPW)  
Webinar: Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Grantee  
Lifetime Arts, AARP Foundation, and WLS Conference Call  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)
- 9 Westchester Library Association (WLA) Board Meeting  
Peyton Stafford, VP Library Services, Total Boox; Rob Caluori, IT Director, WLS  
Irena Burton, Director of Communications & Licensing, Ideas Roadshow
- 14 The Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries Report Release Rising to the Challenge: Re-  
Envisioning Public Libraries, New York City  
Jason Kucsma, Executive Director, METRO, New York City  
Archons of Colophon, New York City
- 15 Pat Braja, Director of Development  
Rob Caluori, Director of IT
- 16 Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) General Membership Meeting, Hendrick Hudson  
Free Library, Montrose  
Douglas Wray, Manager, Cataloging Services  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)
- 17 Westchester Alliance/Livable Communities Education Collaborative: 2014 Think Tank report:  
*Are You Being Taxed Out of Westchester: Students Offer Insights*  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)
- 18 WLS Battle of the Books
- 20 Creative Aging Planning Meeting  
WestFair Rides Northeast Advisory Council Meeting
- 21 Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
Elise Burke, Executive Assistant
- 22 Pat Braja, Director of Development  
Van Kozelka, Director, Katonah Village Library