

---

## **Executive Director's Report**

### **November 2014**

**(covering time period of October 23 – November 20, 2014)**

#### *New York Library Association (NYLA) Annual Conference*

The theme of this year's Annual Conference was *Open Libraries, Open Minds* and the focus of the theme was on helping attendees from all types of libraries to collectively develop more creative, innovative and imaginative solutions to the issues and challenges faced by libraries. The keynote speaker, Richard (Rich) Harwood, president and founder of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, noted that libraries are needed now more than ever and that libraries can and should have a place at the center of every community. He stated that libraries have the opportunity to be the "builders" in their community. As builders, libraries can lead a charge that pivots communities and individuals from points of frustration, hopelessness and despair to points of engagement, hopefulness and openness to new opportunities.

One of the first steps in this change process requires libraries to acknowledge that there are rarely perfect solutions for imperfect problems. Life is messy and while details are important, libraries need to develop strategies that help their communities move forward as best they can. Another important step is to recognize that as a culture, there has been too much emphasis on individual needs rather than on shared interests. Efforts of meeting short-term gratification are often made at the expense of achieving long-term direction. Libraries need to help communities find the balance between short-term and long-term goals. Finally, libraries need to do an honest self-assessment and determine if their energies are focused outward to the community or inward to the organization. In moments of stress and survival, institutions often turn inward as a means of short-term self-protection, but this tactic just serves to alienate the institution from its community.

To establish an outward focus and move from the role of libraries as spectators to libraries as builders, libraries can tap into their facilitation and delegation skills and help people in the community engage in a common goal by:

- Focusing on shared aspirations by avoiding the placement of blame, asking about unrealistic possibilities, and identifying what matters the most to people in the community.
- Do shared work together as a way to build trust.
- Pay closer attention to the stories that are created and shared. Words have a powerful way of framing perceptions, attitudes and behaviors.

Mr. Harwood challenged libraries to restore the belief that as individuals and communities we can come together to get things done. He identified libraries as a potential leader in helping

communities to create new narratives and civic parables that demonstrate how people successfully do work together.

Mr. Harwood has been working closely with the American Library Association (ALA) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on the Libraries Transforming Communities initiative that helps libraries become community leaders and change-agents. Elena Falcone, WLS Director of Public Innovation and Engagement, has been trained in these techniques and can serve as a resource for libraries interested in exploring this approach as part of their long-range planning and community engagement activities. More information about this initiative can be found at <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/libraries-transforming-communities>.

### Advocacy Updates

*Westchester County:* The Westchester County Board of Legislators will be hosting Public Hearings on the FY 2015 budget as noted below.

November 20 <sup>th</sup>	New Rochelle City Hall Chambers, 515 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY
November 25 <sup>th</sup>	Somers High School 120 Primrose Street, Lincolndale, NY
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Chamber of Board of Legislators 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains, NY

In the proposed 2015 budget, WLS has been allocated \$1 Million to support ongoing services. This allocation is the same amount received in the prior annual budget. Because the first two hearings are in conflict with the WLS Annual Meeting and the WLS November Board Meeting, written testimony has been submitted to the Board of Legislators to thank them for their past support and to highlight how the funds received provide value and improve the quality of life for all residents in Westchester County.

*New York State:* NYLA launched its first advocacy initiative of the 2015 Legislative Session in the form of a hard copy letter writing campaign. NYLA sent out a statewide request to library directors asking them to submit, on their library letterhead, a pre-drafted letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo advocating for additional library aid in his proposed FY2015-16 Executive Budget and inviting the Governor to come and visit their library. NYLA will collect all the letters (which must be postmarked by November 18<sup>th</sup>) and then deliver them in mass to the Governor's office. The expectation is that delivering all the letters at one time will have a greater impact than having the letters arrive through normal mail. The immediacy of this initiative was driven by the New York State budget timeline. The Governor's office, in conjunction with State agencies, is currently in the process of formulating the Executive Budget proposal for FY2015-16. NYLA is scheduled to meet with staff from the Governor's office and the State Division of Budget in early December to advocate for additional library aid in the proposed budget.

Once the Executive Budget is released in January, WLS will inform library supporters how they can help. For now, please save the date for Library Advocacy Day, which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, February 25, 2015.

## **#GIVINGTUESDAY**

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, WLS will be participating in #GIVINGTUESDAY, a global day dedicated to giving back. Inspired by Black Friday and Cyber Monday, on Giving Tuesday, charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students from around the world will come together for one common purpose—to celebrate generosity and to give.

As a member of NonProfit Westchester (NPW), WLS will be part of a county-wide campaign that will generate awareness in collaboration with NPW and LoHud. The official kick-off on October 24<sup>th</sup> started a number of strategic events and social media postings to encourage people to give to their favorite charity. Interviews with LoHud were held and strategic communications will be shared via Facebook and Twitter. WLS has also signed onto the national initiative. A link to a special donation page that will offer users the opportunity to support individual libraries and WLS will be posted shortly to the WLS website. Please help us by joining the social media campaign, re-tweeting tweets, liking WLS on Facebook and encouraging library patrons to participate as well.

## **Upcoming Events**

November 20      WLS Annual Meeting – Sheraton Hotel, Tarrytown  
January 30-      American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting – Chicago, IL  
February 3

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner  
*Executive Director*

## LIST OF VISITS AND MEETINGS ATTENDED

October 23 – November 20, 2014

### OCTOBER

- 23 Webinar: *Property Tax Cap Review and Tax Freeze Details - Local Governments*  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)  
Lucinda Manning, Trustee, Ossining Public Library, re American Library Association's (ALA)  
United for Libraries
- 24 NonProfit Westchester (NPW) Improving Perceptions Conference, Manhattanville College,  
Purchase, NY
- 27 INN-Reach Demonstration, Southeastern New York Library Resources Council (SENYLRC),  
Highland, NY
- 28 3M Cloud Meeting  
Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
WLS Budget Committee  
WLS Board Meeting
- 29 Pat Braja, Director of Development  
Hui Sheng, Manager, eContent & Resource Sharing Services  
WLS Staff Meeting
- 30 The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Brotherhood Breakfast: *Access to Capital Easier Than You Think*, Doubletree  
Hotel, Tarrytown  
Douglas Wray, Manager, Cataloging Services  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)
- 31 NPW Board Meeting  
Business Council of Westchester's *The Road to November: An Exclusive Election Preview with  
State's Top Political Leaders*, Reckson, White Plains

### NOVEMBER

- 3 Demonstration: *University of Fashion*  
WLS Space Program Kick-Off: Marc Jacobs, Jones Lange Lasalle (JLL); Dennis Noskin, AIA,  
and Teal Postula, Director of Interior Design, Dennis Noskin Architects; Francine  
Feurman, Chief Financial Officer, Rob Caluori, Director of IT, and Elise Burke, Executive  
Assistant, WLS  
Bedford Hills Free Library Trustee Workshop Preparation Meeting, Bedford Hills
- 4 Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
Sirsi Operations Conference Call  
Elise Burke, Executive Assistant
- 5-8 New York Library Association (NYLA) Annual Conference – Saratoga Springs, NY
- 10 Elise Burke, Executive Assistant
- 12 Pat Braja, Director of Development  
Hui Sheng, Manager, eContent & Resource Sharing Services  
Webinar: *10 Must-Have Skills for Today's Library Director*  
Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
Total Boox Product Overview & Update
- 13 Westchester Library Association (WLA) Board  
Douglas Wray, Manager, Cataloging Services  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)
- 14 Training: *Become a Gmail Power User*
- 17 Not For Profit Educational Leadership Summit, Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown  
Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Finance Committee
- 18 Brian Risse, Vice President-National Sales Manager, Public Libraries, Cengage Learning |  
Gale, re *Career Online High School*  
Bedford Hills Free Library Trustee Institute

*NOVEMBER (continued)*

- 19 Pat Braja, Director of Development  
Conference Call re New Yorkers for Better Libraries
- 20 PLDA General Membership Meeting  
Elena Falcone, Director, Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)  
WLS 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Sheraton Tarrytown Hotel