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## WLS Department Reports June 2016

### **CATALOGING SERVICES**

*Contact: Douglas Wray, Manager [231-3243]*

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, Douglas Wray, Manager of Cataloging Services, and Nancy Coradin, Coordinator, Multi-Language Collections & Services, held a workshop titled, *Cataloging @ WLS 2016*. The workshop had 12 attendees. Mr. Wray and Ms. Coradin reviewed the services provided by the department; offered suggestions to help streamline the process (for example, advanced searching tips and guidelines for spotting duplicate records in the catalog); took questions and comments; and discussed some current issues. Some of these issues included: the option of using subject headings in bibliographic records to spotlight local authors (done by request of the member libraries, who have the responsibility of identifying their local authors); a recent increase in unmarked items arriving at the department; and the reason why some items stop displaying in the public catalog even though they are still linked to the circulation system (it depends on their status, e.g. "missing", "lost", etc.).

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

*Contact: Rob Caluori, Director [231-8642]*

The PLDA Finance Committee considered several different options for updating the WLS IT Finance Model. The Committee held seven regional workshops to walk library directors through the potential changes, gather input and develop a final recommendation. At the Committee's request, Rob Caluori has been providing information related to the operations and economics of the IT Department. The proposed changes are scheduled to be discussed at the June PLDA Meeting before being sent to the WLS Board for final approval.

Rob Caluori and Joe Maurantonio have been working with various vendors to procure the data, security and audio/visual solutions and services needed for the new WLS office. To date, all the data and security wiring is mostly complete and audio/visual and security systems are in the process of being installed. Lightpath and Cablevision services are also in the process of being installed. Installation of these items has been timely, and we expect the essential services to be ready for moving day. There may be some services that will be completed in the week following the move.

The new space will feature a new communication system. Since 2009, WLS has provided its phone system internally using an open source communication server called Asterisk. Asterisk, first released in 1999, remains an actively maintained and regularly expanded upon open source project and has led to several open source and commercial products, including FreePBX, which is used by WLS to administer its Asterisk installation.

ABCmouse.com is a monthly subscription website that provides children ages 2 to 5 with early literacy education in a game and activity orientated presentation. About a year ago, they announced free access to their site to public libraries for patrons to use inside the library—an offer that WLS has been taking advantage of since its release. Mr. Caluori has been working with Age of Learning, the company behind the ABCmouse.com Early Learning Academy, providing advice on the development of their next philanthropic

venture—providing free access to ABCMouse.com to library patrons at home. The pilot of the new service was released on June 14<sup>th</sup>, and WLS and its members are the only libraries in the country to have access to the initial release of this product. After this beta test/initial release period, this new service will be made available to all public libraries in the U.S.

Wilson Arana, Allison Midgley and Terry Kirchner attended the Customers of SirsiDynix User Group Inc. (COSUGI) Conference in May. This conference is held by the users of systems made by SirsiDynix and is a forum where we, as users, share our experiences and best practices for use of these systems. The conference also provides an opportunity for SirsiDynix to present on various topics including software development plans and progress and introduction to new products.

## **PUBLIC INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

*Contact: Elena Falcone, Director [231-3240]*

### **ADULT SERVICES OUTREACH**

#### **Westchester Seniors Out Speaking (WSOS)**

Target audience – seniors, low-income seniors

- **Outreach:** Elena Falcone attended the Westchester Public Private Partnership Senior Law Day (SLD) Planning Committee meeting held at the offices of Keane & Beane. As an outcome of WLS/WSOS' participation in this committee, we are recognized as a sponsor of the SLD effort, which gains us ongoing promotion of our program services. WLS/WSOS' contributions to the effort include hosting the seniorlawday.info site. New this fall will be the inclusion of our presentations in the roster of SLD offerings, on site Medicare counseling, and a hands-on session to assist seniors in understanding how to access and navigate relevant online resources.
- **Volunteer Education:** The June Update took place at the Greenburgh Public Library. The Medicare topic covered addressed durable medical equipment. Additionally, the volunteers were updated regarding CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services) recommended pause in assessing compliance by hospitals with the "two-midnight rule", which is used to determine whether a patient should be classified as an inpatient or an outpatient (and, accordingly, whether the hospital should bill Medicare Part A or Part B, respectively, for the patient's hospital stay). All volunteers have been registered for the NYS HIICAP exam (Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance), which is scheduled to be released at the end of June. The exam, offered by the New York State Health Insurance Program, is used as a confirmation that counselors' knowledge of Medicare is current and of sufficient depth. We expect to be able to report that the majority (if not all) WSOS volunteers are "HIICAP certified."

#### **TASC Connect!**

Target audience – low-literate adults

- **Volunteer Training and Recognition:** A dozen new and existing volunteers attending a training on June 8 to review changes to the TASC program and learn how to work with the new program resources. On June 16, volunteer efforts were celebrated at a social event held at the Marriot Coopers Mill.
- **Planning for Orientations in Spanish:** Program Coordinator Amy Gonzalez has begun translating selected orientation materials in preparation for offering a Spanish-language presentation on high school equivalency options. This presentation will include a hands-on training in the use of Spanish-language self-study resources available through WLS. Yonkers, New Rochelle, White Plains, and Port Chester are planned sites for this new program, which will launch in the fall. Additionally, several Spanish-serving agencies have expressed interest.
- **HSE for At-Risk Youth:** Program Coordinator Pam Hoffman is exploring work with the Ossining High School (and Ossining Public Library) to match tutors with students who have recently dropped out of

High School but are participating in a school-led support program. Our aim would be to help keep these students engaged in their pursuit of a High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma—via the TASC exam—over the summer, as well as provide a more robust introduction to the public library as a resource for life-long learning and problem solving.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES & RE-ENTRY SERVICES

Target audience – correctional facility library patrons, those formerly incarcerated, and those navigating parole or probation

- **Re-Entry Services: RAP Sheet Workshop Project** – Knowing the content of and correcting errors in RAP sheets (i.e., a record of arrests and prosecutions) is a key task for those in re-entry seeking employment. This is made all the more vital given that a large percentage of RAP sheets contain errors (research estimates range from 30-50%) and the process to resolve those errors includes costs (finger-printing) and legal guidance needed to retrieve and repair records from various courts. Currently, accessible programs to learn about and address this common challenge to ex-offenders are only available in NYC. WLS and the Pace Law School are exploring the requirements to offer such a program in Westchester County. The need for this program has been raised repeatedly during re-entry outreach activities.

### YOUTH SERVICES OUTREACH

Target audience – children, teens and parents county-wide, special needs children

- **Parent Engagement:** Activities this period included the following:

Mrs. Vernon presented at the May Head Start Parent Council meeting on why children having good attendance in pre-school and kindergarten is important. The 25 parents in attendance were given handouts on the topic to take back to their respective Head Start Centers to share the information with other parents. Mrs. Vernon will also be presenting at the Council's June meeting on the importance of involving children in meaningful summer activities, which will contribute to their development in a positive way. Parents will be encouraged to have their children participate in summer programming at libraries.

Mrs. Vernon was one of the presenters at the Yonkers Public School District's May Early Childhood forum attended by 20 parents of children going into Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten in September. Her remarks focused on what parents of young children can do at home to support the development of pre-literacy skills. She also shared information on selecting stories to read aloud and how librarians can help parents find the "right" book. Her presentation included a demonstration on ways to engage children in the story, making the parent/child "story time" not only fun but also a learning experience.

In late June, Mrs. Vernon will represent WLS at the Westchester Child Care Council's Babies Step Forward Early Head Start Parent Conference. Over 100 parents are expected to attend. WLS's display will include information on summer programming for children at community libraries. In addition, lists with suggestions of ways for parents to help support the development of their children's early literacy skills will also be available.

- **Youth Engagement:** Y.O.U. University (YU) – WLS provided programming and materials in support of YU, a program led by Family Ties of Westchester. Family Ties identified 40 at-risk young adults and engaged them in a six-week workshop series focused on goal setting, planning for their future, and making key connections to the community. Elena Falcone participated in programs about educational and vocational opportunities and offered follow-up information services to teens interested in college search. Notably, the majority of sessions for this program were scheduled at area libraries, which included Mount Vernon, White Plains, and Yonkers Riverfront.

In June, Mrs. Vernon worked to wrap-up the operations of the After School Buddy Program hosted at the Mount Vernon Public Library throughout the school year. The program, an extension of the now completed Learning Ambassador project and our long-standing relationship with Great Potentials, successfully engaged 15 teens in training and paid service in support of young children seeking

homework help. The teens developed work readiness skills; and the children responded well to the teens as helpers and benefited from the support and encouragement they received to complete their school homework assignments. The second half of the program proved challenging given the unexpected departure of involved staff at Mount Vernon. Mrs. Vernon stepped in to assure that all participants had appropriate oversight and support during all of the program's afternoon sessions.

## **WEBS**

*Contact: Elaine Sozzi, Director [231-3239]*

The WEBS seminars were recently completed for the spring cycle, and scheduling and publicity efforts are now underway for the Fall seminars with registration beginning in mid-August. We will alert clients who are on waiting lists so they are guaranteed a place. WEBS will continue its individual counseling program at the Yonkers Public Library and the Mount Vernon Public Library throughout the summer for clients who need assistance.

As the fall programs are being planned, it is important to consider the current needs of job seekers with particular emphasis on the long-term unemployed, returning veterans and displaced workers. These groups often need retraining in order to obtain the skills that employers are seeking. Currently, 65% of all jobs require more than a high school diploma, but it doesn't always take a four-year or a two-year degree to develop a career pathway for the future. Registered apprenticeship programs and short-term training courses can lead to many well-paying jobs. The WEBS counselors are very familiar with educational and training programs in Westchester, and they will continue to connect clients to appropriate programs.

The spring career workshop series continued this month and included a particularly successful program at the Chappaqua Public Library called, *Job Search That Works*. Targeted to college students and recent graduates looking for jobs, it attracted a dynamic audience of young people (and some older ones) who engaged in a lively discussion about self-assessment, career exploration and focused planning in preparation for a job search. Participants worked together in group exercises in which they discussed target industries and job functions. They also practiced introductions during a paired networking exercise. We received very favorable comments about the program including an email from one young man who said, "I was hesitant about going to the event because I thought I knew how to find jobs. However, this workshop not only helped me with search ideas that I had never considered, it also gave me insight on improvements for both my resume and cover letter." Kudos to counselor Marie Riffel who did an excellent job in facilitating this program.

WEBS director Elaine Sozzi attended a breakfast panel discussion on *Talent Wars* as part of the Westchester County Association's Business Intel Series. Innovative strategies and tactics for attracting talented employees and creating a culture to retain and grow teams were discussed. The present workplace employs four different generations of people who can benefit from coaching on how to manage diversity and collaborate with each other. Professional development programs to help new employees "onboard" successfully were also described. One panelist emphasized the importance of being clear and transparent at the interview when a prospective employee is being considered. Since 25% of new employees leave their jobs within 90 days, it is crucial that they understand the scope of the job and some of the business issues facing the company. The program ended with a discussion of various management strategies, with one panel member proposing that competency, trust and care are the traits that employees value most in a manager.

This month Ms. Sozzi met with several WEBS counselors to discuss program ideas and changes for the Fall. She also met with OJ Yizer at the One Stop Employment Center and attended the PLDA Luncheon at the Eastchester Public Library.