

WLS Department Reports May 2018

CATALOGING SERVICES

Contact: Douglas Wray, Manager [231-3243]

One part of the WLS vision is to support services that enable libraries to continuously improve services to their communities. As libraries provide new learning opportunities for engagement with and to meet the needs of their communities, WLS Cataloging Services contributes to this effort by cataloging ever more non-traditional items, making it possible for the county's patrons to find them in and borrow them from the catalog. Examples of these creative materials include cataloging for such things as: a popcorn maker (Hendrick Hudson Free Library in Montrose); a collection of lawn games, including bocce, croquet, kubb and others (Yonkers Public Library); a half size classical guitar (Katonah Village Library); and a collection of board games, including some lesser known ones like Ticket to Ride, Where in the World and Isle of Skye (Somers Library).

Manager of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray attended a workshop at the Westchester Library Association Annual Conference titled, *Creating Health & Wellness Connections at Your Library*. It was led by Catherine Riedel, who is Teen Librarian at the Ossining Public Library. She is also the instructor of the yoga classes held at the library, and her presentation focused on this inventive and very popular offering to the community. Several helpful social media tools were recommended: HootSuite, a platform which allows the user to simultaneously post on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., that WLS currently uses, and the Facebook group Let's Move in Libraries, which is focused on "movement" activities.

WLS Cataloging Services is well-equipped and enthusiastic about aiding the member libraries as they expand their collections and their programming into more and more innovative territory. In addition to cataloging, Coordinator, Multi-Language Collections and Services Nancy Coradin is involved in helping the libraries connect with their communities in various ways as noted below.

OUTREACH

Ms. Coradin was invited by Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) to participate in their annual event to celebrate the Week of the Young Child, held April 17th at the New Rochelle Public Library. WJCS recognized Ms. Coradin, and by extension the Westchester Library System, as a partner in supporting the vast early childhood programs offered to Westchester families. New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson read *Bark George* by Jules Feiffer while Maria Hernandez read it in Spanish. Ms. Hernandez is the new Bilingual Library Assistant at the New Rochelle Public Library and was selected from a pool of 20 candidates. Ms. Coradin was part of the interview panel headed by the library's director Tom Geoffino.



(l-r): Patricia Cutty, Director, Parent/Child Program (WJCS); Maria Hernandez, Bilingual Library Assistant, New Rochelle Public Library; Noam Bramson, New Rochelle Mayor

Bilingual Programs @ Neighbor's Link in Mount Kisco

Ms. Coradin co-facilitated a bilingual story time on April 19th at Neighbor's Link with Rachel Izes, Storyteller from the Bedford Hills Public Library. The program is part of a four-session series to show an example of the

types of programs found in the member libraries to the Latino families of Neighbor's Link. Fourteen children and their parents participated in the readings, songs and puppet tales. The most important aspect of the program is demonstration of reading and storytelling skills for parents to model in their mother tongue.

Ms. Coradin and Ms. Izes conducted the last part of the series on April 26th. This time they spoke only to the parents, highlighting the five principles of promoting early literacy: Read, Play, Sing, Listen and Write. Ms. Izes learned of these principles from a course WLS offered titled, *Supercharge Your Storytimes*. The five principles give parents and caregivers tips on how to promote literacy to their young charges. For example, the Play principle encourages parents to play with their children with conversation, in spite of the fact that the child may not speak in full sentences. Engaging the child in conversation and not just one word replies increases their exposure to vocabulary and interaction. The parents practiced the role playing in English & Spanish.

8th Annual Multi-language Book Fair ~ April 24, 2018



The book fair opened with lively folkloric songs from Mariachi Sol Mixteco.

Hosted by the White Plains Public Library, the WLS Multi-language Book Fair had twelve language publishers/distributors showcasing more than 40 languages—at all levels in multiple formats, including ESOL material, e-books, movies and comics. This is Ms. Coradin's eighth annual book fair, and it attracted 104 attendees. Librarians, library directors, bilingual teachers, and ESOL instructors perused the language material and networked with librarians from Westchester, Ramapo, Long Island, New York City and New Jersey. Other images from the Fair can be found on the [WLS website](#).

Westchester Librarians Serving Latinos

Ms. Coradin facilitated a meeting on personal finance and asked what the libraries are offering regarding financial literacy. Guest speaker Ana Gonzalez Ribeiro, MBA, a personal finance writer and teacher, spoke of the work she does @ WISE program in New York City offering personal financial education to underserved populations. She can offer free personal finance workshops at the member libraries in English and Spanish. She recently translated *Financial Advice for the Blue Collar Worker* by Kathryn B. Hauer into Spanish.

DEVELOPMENT

Contact: Pat Brigham, Director [231-3241]



Keynote Speaker Nancy Silberkleit, Co-CEO of Archie Comics & George Latimer says:
"My Library is important because:
It serves everyone!"

The Annual Celebrating Westchester Libraries Breakfast took place on April 6th at the Doral Arrowwood in Rye Brook. Keynote Speaker Nancy Silberkleit, Co-Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Archie Comics, spoke about the importance of early literacy and how the graphic novel and comics can inspire reading. Westchester County Executive George Latimer was also in attendance and congratulated the libraries on the work they all do and acknowledged their importance. He joined the over 100 guests in filling out their WOW! Card (see photo to left). Library Directors Jill Davis (Hendrick Hudson Free Library) and Cindy Rubino (Lewisboro Library) shared how each of their libraries are impacting their



communities in unique ways. Guests also included NYS Assemblyman Steve Otis [91st District], Assemblywoman Sandy Galef [95th District], Assemblyman David Buchwald [93rd District], and Marianne Oros representing NYS Senator Terrence Murphy [40th District]. Many thanks to our event sponsor TD Bank! Additional event photos can be viewed here: [Celebrating Westchester Libraries](#).

WLS received a \$5,000 grant from the Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation for continued support of HSE Connect! In addition, WLS was awarded a \$5,000 highly competitive grant from the National Library of Medicine under their Health Outreach and Awareness Initiative to support WLS's *Essential Online Health Information Guide for Older Adults*. WLS also received notice that a grant request to M&T Bank has been approved for \$2,500 to support WEBS workshop programs in 2018. Entergy has renewed its support with a \$25,000 grant; it will support professional development, mini-grants and library marketing and promotion. These grants help support the WLS initiative to expand its competency as an incubator of library services and adult literacy and will leverage outreach through the member libraries.

WLS Mini-grants were awarded to the following member libraries in January:

- **Ruth Keeler Memorial Library (North Salem): \$1,000 – Landscape Painting in Acrylics** – adult creative art program – 8 two-hour sessions with a teaching artist Sheryl Levine. This project will provide adults an opportunity for meaningful active learning, developing new skills and meeting other adults in the community.
- **Lewisboro Library: \$1,000 – 3D Animation – Teen Programming** – Four 90-minute sessions with Digital Arts Experience. This project introduces teens to some of the basic skills required to make 3D animated films and will be held during the summer in partnership with Digital Arts Experience's mobile lab for a positive, fun learning experience.
- **Harrison Public Library: \$600 – Learn to Fly a Drone – ages 10 and up** – Six 90-minute sessions. This program will further the library's commitment to community engagement around maker technology.
- **Eastchester Public Library: \$1,200 – Reading Shakespeare with teaching instructor Frances Gilmore** – Five two-hour sessions. Building on the Library's active learning initiatives for adults, this experience will take the group on a journey that looks closely at character, theme and oratory skills with a final public performance of selected scenes by the participants.
- **Bedford Free Library: \$1,200 – Awesome Robots – Grades 3 and up** – Summer Program. This program builds on the Library's commitment to informal STEM learning for youth. Working with a skilled instructor, participants will create their own robot over the four-week session in this Mini-STEM Camp.

In addition to these mini-grants, WLS will launch **Marketing Consultation Mini-Grants** this May. Tailored to meet the specific needs of member libraries, as raised in discussions at PLDA meetings, a component of this mini-grant will include a series of sessions with a professional marketing and design consultant to assess the library's current marketing materials and strategies. In addition, selected libraries will agree to one short-term actionable recommendation. Four libraries will be selected through a RFP (Request for Proposal) process. This mini-grant program, made possible with partial funding from Entergy's recent \$25,000 grant, will help WLS learn the challenges faced by the member libraries and understand best practices for implementation of solutions.

Director of Development Pat Brigham attended the United Way of Westchester and Putnam Nonprofit Leadership Summit on May 7th and the YWCA of Central and Northern Westchester's Annual *In the Company of Women Luncheon* on May 11th as a guest of Entergy. Keynote Speaker and Westchester Women's Hall of Fame recipient, NY Secretary of State Rossana Rosado, spoke eloquently on women's equality and social justice, in particular the challenges to re-entry and immigration issues.

Ms. Brigham also participated in the state-wide advocacy effort in Albany on behalf of professional nonprofit fundraisers, representing the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Westchester Chapter and the Hudson Valley. Working with colleagues from around the State, Ms. Brigham met with representatives in their offices

and off the floor, including Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins [35th District] and others from the Hudson Valley.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Contact: Rob Caluori, Director [231-3207]

Rob Caluori attended the Tech Supports for Cognition and Learning Conference sponsored by The Arc Westchester, whose mission is to empower children, teens and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD). The focus of the conference was on pragmatic applications of technology for learning and cognition to helping individuals with ID/DD lead a more independent life. One example is use of smart home technology and voice activated products to instantly create a soothing atmosphere for a person who reacts badly to being overstimulated. For this example, one could create a voice activated command like, "Alexa, Johnny is upset" to activate a playlist with soothing music and dim the lights to respond to the situation quickly. Another example is use of an app that lets caregivers pair pictures and voice recordings with step-by-step instructions to help individuals learn and build confidence with tasks for independent living.

WLS co-hosted the event along with several other organizations, and Mr. Caluori has been an active member of the Conference planning committee since 2016. One outcome from this collaboration was an opportunity for WLS to host a resource website to promote assistive technologies to library staff as well as users. This site will offer curated lists of apps, links to best practices and instructional videos and articles from local experts on the use of technology to support cognition, learning and independence for those with ID/DD. The joint effort was announced at the Conference.

Mr. Caluori and Wilson Arana, Senior Systems Administrator, attended a meeting with representatives from the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center (LHRIC). LHRIC provides the technology infrastructure for Southern Westchester, Northern Westchester and Rockland BOCES—similar to what WLS provides for Westchester libraries. Our two operations utilize many of the same vendors and share network points with high traffic at different times. Working together may potentially enhance services for both sides and realize cost savings from economies of scale, joint purchases and mutually-beneficial service agreements. However, further exploration is needed to see whether the tighter protocols required by schools would prevent a partnership.

WLS switched phone carriers from Vonage Business to Spectrotel on April 9th. The switch to the new carrier will bring slightly reduced costs and a more responsive support group. One of the major issues that went unresolved with our previous carrier was an issue that caused incoming calls to drop off at 45 minutes, preventing WLS from hosting a conference call. That problem is now resolved. The changeover caused phones at WLS to be unavailable for less than 10 minutes, where normally it could take as much as 24-48 hours. This was made possible, in part, by WLS's use of an open-source VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) phone system. Many organizations that implement VoIP phone systems use a cloud-based (sometimes called off-premise) phone system. When WLS moved to an open-source phone system in 2009, a self-hosted (or on-premise) VoIP server was used, allowing WLS to make complex configuration changes without being dependent on a specific carrier and still realize the cost savings associated with VoIP phone service.

Mr. Caluori, Mr. Arana and Chris Hernandez, Junior Systems Administrator, attended the .NEXT conference. This conference is focused on maximizing the value of WLS's investment in Nutanix hardware and software, which structures our server, virtual desktop and network architecture and creates sustainability. Informative presentations on public and private cloud computing, disaster recovery, backup, virtual desktops and software-defined networking were given by service providers as well as industry experts and power users from public, private and government customers.

Mr. Arana and Allison Midgley, Technology Trainer, attended the Customers of SirsiDynix Users Group (COSUGI) conference. This conference, which prides itself on being for users and by users, is an opportunity to see how other libraries and library systems are using the tools from SirsiDynix and how those practices could be applied to improving service here in Westchester. It is also where SirsiDynix presents their

plans for the year ahead to the user community and gathers feedback on needed enhancements and changes. Attendance at this event has proven to be valuable in getting the most out of our investment in this software. Software of this complexity requires customization to run at its greatest potential. Seeing the customizations implemented by other customers allows WLS to better envision its own changes. The same is true for pitfalls and problems, which are only learned about through experience. From meeting with our peers, systems of similar size and composition, we learn not only what we can do, but what to avoid and how to work through potential issues that others have already been through. This conference allows WLS to build a strong peer network and deep knowledge about this software. These are both valuable assets that can be leveraged to verify and prove claims in both daily operations and RFP responses to hold the vendor accountable for claims it makes. The current ILS contract with SirsiDynix ends on March 31, 2019, and WLS currently has an open RFP for which responses are due on Wednesday, June 13th.

PUBLIC INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT (PIE)

Contact: Elena Falcone, Director [231-3240]

Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE) is in a unique position to carry out WLS's strategic initiatives. Not only does PIE serve the audiences that reflect both member library and NYS priorities for outreach services, it also works closely with the community agencies that provide principal services to those audiences. Experience with both allows PIE to formulate programs and informational resources to connect the member libraries and their users to appropriate strategies to meet their needs in a variety of ways.

Unique programming opportunities for member libraries to serve target audiences locally

The **Early Literacy Outreach** effort, in targeting parents of children in Head Start programs (a majority of whom are Spanish-speaking), provides guidance in engagement of children 0-5 in reading as well as an explanation of library services of relevance to busy, often immigrant, families – e.g., jobs, education, navigating the school system, and social services. **HSE Connect** and **SBIC (Senior Benefit Information Centers)** most directly work to educate clients on the use of needed online services to manage benefits or work toward a high school diploma. HSE Connect also extends to youth who are unaware of free services available outside of their schools that can support them to keep up in class, prepare for college, and land a first job. The new **Senior Law Day** program (development supported by a grant from the National Library of Medicine)—*Essential Online Health Information*—is an example of working to address specific patron interests with compelling information and personal training to support understanding and use of needed computer/digital tools.

Supporting websites act as a reference source for library staff as well as a direct client service

FirstFind.org, a plain language portal to local and online learning resources, is structured around specific actions that the target audience (adults without a high school diploma) may need to address, e.g., job search, skill development, identification of social service resources. Similarly, **Westchester Connections** addresses topics of interest for those returning to this area after incarceration, e.g., from legal topics to basic service needs, such as resources for food, shelter, and clothing.

All of the web resources created by PIE include an “**Ask Us**” feature that enables a direct response to audiences for whom site navigation is unclear, their question was not obviously covered, or they have limited language/literacy. **Ask Us** includes live chat, email, and text service; on **Westchester Connections**, this service is offered in Spanish as well as English.

Fostering community engagement at the library

Community Conversations is a topical initiative that fosters community engagement at the library in education and discussion of challenging topics. This program engages new audiences as well as strengthens and expands WLS's links to community service agencies. The program began in 2017 with *Criminal Justice, Yesterday and Today*, a collaboration between WLS and the Sing Sing Prison Museum.

The 2018 Community Conversations focus on screenings and discussions of *Resilience*, a film on adverse childhood experiences, one of the “largest untreated public health issues” of our time.

Library Service Reviews

A considerable amount of time is spent on customized library service reviews done for County agencies and non-profits. These presentations highlight the services of local libraries as well as the deep resources made available through the library system to new audiences. Attendees are encouraged not just to use the library for themselves, but to be library advocates for their clients. Use of library services has the best traction when the value is mentioned in the context of meeting a specific need (e.g., getting a resume reviewed, applying for a job online, helping a child with their homework). This approach has been embraced by the audiences receiving the information.

All of the above programs reach multiple audiences and address multiple topics. A strategy for reaching each audience has been to assure that the content speaks directly to their interests. The table below lists the current outreach programs, noting their target audiences and service features.

| Outreach programs (as of May 2018) Target audience | Un/Under employed | Adult learners | Spanish-speakers | Disabled | Seniors / Caregivers | Re-entry | Corrections | At-risk Youth |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|
| firstfind.org | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| seniorlawday.info | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| connections.westchesterlibraries.org | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| conversations.westchesterlibraries.org **topic determines audience and network | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Correctional Services Support | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| HSE Connect / Job Search Tool Kit | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Family Literacy Outreach | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| WSOS/SBIC | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Youth Workforce Readiness | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ |
| Senior Law Day / Online Essentials | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Music & Memory | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

| Outreach programs (as of May 2018) Content and service types | Jobs | Education | Referral to local agencies & services | Computer / Digital Literacy | Reference / Helpline | Counseling | Topical / Other |
|--|------|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------|--|
| firstfind.org | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| seniorlawday.info | | | | in development | ✓ | | ✓ |
| connections.westchesterlibraries.org | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| conversations.westchesterlibraries.org | | | | | ✓ | | Examples: re-entry, adverse childhood events, addiction, elder abuse, internet privacy |
| Correctional Services Support | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ILL |
| HSE Connect | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Family Literacy Outreach | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| WSOS/SBIC | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Youth Workforce Readiness | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Senior Law Day / Online Essentials | | | ✓ | in development | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Music & Memory | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

Expanding digital inclusion

Expanding digital inclusion has been among the central aims of outreach programming. Though our focus has been on education and directing clients to available technology at local libraries, the passion behind this aim is a recognition that – lacking knowledge of how to use a computer and web-based resources, well and securely, essentially renders many groups voiceless in Westchester County.

Our experience has shown that building trust with the target community is a pre-requisite to engaging them with a technology whose value they may not fully appreciate given other priorities of family, work,

caregiving, etc. Even the lauded entertainment value of these tools becomes an obstacle when there is a lack of confidence in managing routine tasks such as software updates, email, and the ever present specter of online fraud.

When working with new initiatives or programs, the Harwood Institute's model of community dialog could be helpful. This model asks **participants** to articulate their aspirations and the resources needed to achieve them instead of only looking at what an organization can provide. The understanding gained can create a more compelling case for exactly how these technologies can offer benefits. This dialog could be done in conjunction with key community partners in order to better focus and track impact of an initiative/program over time.

WEBS

Contact: Elaine Sozzi, Director [231-3239]

WEBS Career & Educational Counseling Service is committed to updating and expanding its programs and competencies to support the strategic priorities of WLS in the following ways:

- Assist member libraries engage their communities and improve customer service by offering up-to-date counseling services for patrons in career transition. As digital and technological advancements continue to affect workers, WEBS programs provide both technology and people-based solutions to help clients cope with frequent job transitions, learn about future directions for different fields, and develop a proactive job seeking approach with new strategies and tools. All programs will emphasize the use of technology, lifelong learning to upgrade skills, and social networking to advance one's career.
- Help member libraries achieve cost savings by offering career seminars and workshops at little or no cost to them. Private counseling or coaching rates would be beyond the means of most unemployed adults, and they regard the library as a career resource center which can assist them in managing their careers and earning a livelihood.
- Provide professional development for staff at all levels to raise their technological effectiveness in serving patrons. A recent training for library staff on the benefits of using LinkedIn, a networking tool, was conducted by a WEBS counselor. It received excellent evaluations, with attendees commenting that it helped them stay current with technologies and trends in support of their roles and responsibilities. Additional professional development programs are planned.

The nine-week career development seminar series was recently completed at five libraries across the county. The WEBS counselors reported an active job market with more participants being interviewed and some getting hired. The unemployment rate has reached new lows across the nation, but there are persistent pockets of unemployment in Westchester, especially among middle-aged and older adults who will continue to require substantial assistance and support to meet their career goals. The following chart shows the employment status of the 63 participants in this recent seminar cycle:

Employment Status - WEBS Seminar

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Unemployed | 55.6% |
| Employed | 31.7% |
| Homemaker | 6.3% |
| Retired | 6.3% |
| Student | 0% |

Fourteen career workshops are being offered this spring at different libraries across Westchester. Several new ones include: *Creative Approaches to Networking* which has a segment on understanding how people with different personality styles (introverted or extraverted) handle networking. *Thinking about a Career Change?* is another new offering which helps people understand how to assess themselves, research various fields and cultivate new contacts as they re-direct their careers.

As the baby boomers enter their 60's and 70's, many have stepped away from their long-term careers, but still want to stay engaged and utilize their interests and skills in some type of paid or volunteer work. WEBS developed a workshop entitled, *What's Next in My Life and Career? - Discovering Possibilities after 50*, which was recently presented at the Rye Free Reading Room. The program received rave reviews from over 20 participants who explored options for the future and learned about employer expectations and specific job search strategies for mature workers.



WEBS director Elaine Sozzi attended the WLS Breakfast at Doral Arrowwood and a WLS staff meeting. She also met with Evania Thompson, Interim Director of the Mount Vernon Public Library, and Cathy Webb, Community Outreach Coordinator, to discuss strategies for marketing the career counseling services that WEBS offers at that library.