

## Executive Director's Report April 2019

### Evergreen Update

After 30 days following the migration to the Evergreen Integrated Library System (ILS) platform, the focused efforts and hard work of the Information Technology (IT) Department staff resulted in the resolution of most of the issues that have occurred. While there are still issues to be addressed, with each day the new ILS platform is getting stronger. In addition, member library staff are receiving hands-on training to help them better utilize the ILS features. Up-to-date best practices and new improvements are available through ongoing email communications from WLS staff and from the FAQ webpage found on the [IT wiki](#). As we move into the ongoing maintenance phase of the new ILS, the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) is in the process of reviewing the PLDA ILS Committee and how it will provide guidance for prioritizing issues for resolution as well as identifying future features for the Evergreen ILS platform and whether its membership should include staff that operate the ILS on a day-to-day basis in addition to directors.

### Celebrating Westchester Libraries Breakfast

Over 80 people attended this year's *Celebrating Westchester Libraries Breakfast* at the Doral Arrowwood in Rye Brook. The following legislators made opening remarks Thomas Abinanti [NYS Assembly 92<sup>nd</sup> District], David Buchwald [NYS Assembly 93<sup>rd</sup> District], Shelley Mayer [NYS Senate 37<sup>th</sup> District], Steven Otis [NYS Assembly 91<sup>st</sup> District], and Nader Sayegh [NYS Assembly 90<sup>th</sup> District]. Rosanne Finizio, Assistant to the County Executive/Operations, represented Westchester County Executive George Latimer. Guest speaker Michelle Young, President of New York Library Association, shared stories of how today's libraries are influential and powerful—saving the world one byte at a time. She inspired all with her enthusiasm which encouraged breaking the stereotype of libraries to create new stories.



WLS Director of Development Pat Brigham announced that WLS was 1 of 24 national winners of the Barbara Bush Foundation Adult Literacy XPrize Communities Competition for a share of the \$500,000 prize. Phase 1 of this competition is focused on building awareness and use of mobile learning resources for hard-to-serve adult audiences. The mobile learning resource selected is Learning Upgrade. Handouts of this product were distributed at the breakfast, and all were encouraged to get involved with Phase 2 of this competition that involves achieving 1,500 downloads of Learning Upgrade between April 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> (see below). All were thanked for their contributions to Westchester's library community.

## **Learning Upgrade**

Introduced at the June 2018 American Library Association (ALA) conference, Learning Upgrade is a new tool using a mixed media approach to keep users engaged and is a fun way to learn reading and math. Available as an app for Android and iOS as well as via web browser, the program allows users to take a brief placement test or choose a starting level. Each level offers 60 brief lessons that offer points and badges to encourage learners to move quickly toward their goal.

The WLS Public Innovation and Engagement (PIE) Department tested the application with adult learners in WLS programs—specifically reentry, Read Better, and HSE (High School Equivalency) Connect. All participants and agencies contacted thought that this was an excellent tool, and WLS applied for the Barbara Bush Foundation Adult Literacy XPrize Communities Competition. As mentioned above, WLS was 1 of 24 national competitors selected.

Phase 1 of the competition focused on building awareness and use of mobile learning resources for hard-to-serve adult audiences. In Phase 2, the three teams that achieve the most downloads across three tiers of activity will share a \$500,000 prize. WLS's competition tier has a goal of 1,500 downloads and use that must take place between April 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>. Individuals must create an account using our Special Class Code (3355738) and must use the program on an Android device on three separate days. The emphasis in this period will be to promote WLS learning tools and libraries as a resource and partner for learners of all ages and on any platform.

In the coming weeks, copies of a new brochure - *Free Online Learning Resources for All Ages* - will be distributed, followed by advertising, outreach and hosting of "download events" at a number of locations. To encourage participation, one Android tablet will be raffled off each week. While showcasing Learning Upgrade, all learning resources available through WLS such as Tumblebooks, Learning Express, and Tutor.com, will also be emphasized that serve adults seeking to build their skills as well as those that help adults support the learning of their children and teens.

## **ALA 2019 Report: The State of America's Libraries**

Earlier this month, ALA released its 2019 report, *The State of America's Libraries*, that covers current activities for all types of libraries. Three important issues facing public libraries were highlighted, and below are examples of ways that WLS is addressing these issues.

**Involvement with the 2020 Census:** As noted previously, the 2020 Census will be conducted primarily online. This move to a primarily online census survey will create additional challenges for those individuals and communities that have limited access to the Internet and/or low digital literacy skills. Public libraries are expected to be a key provider of Internet access and assistance in completing the survey for these individuals and communities.

WLS is a Complete Count Committee (CCC) for the 2020 Census. Working with our regional Census Partnership Specialist, Mario Garcia, WLS will set up training sessions that will be designed to help all WLS member library staff gain a better understanding of what is the census, why it is an important process and what public libraries can do to support the census activities in their community.

In addition, further research will be conducted by WLS staff to help member libraries better identify the anticipated Hard-To-Count (HTC) communities within or adjacent to their chartered service

areas. The [Census 2020 HTC Map](#) provides a visual aid for identification of anticipated HTC communities.



The first meeting of the Westchester County's CCC was held on March 25<sup>th</sup>. I am serving as one of its 25 members, and we were tasked with ensuring that all Westchester residents are counted so that the County does not lose out on both federal representation and federal dollars that will be based on the 2020 Census data. For the Census 2010 survey, Westchester County's response rate was only 76% of households.

Four key questions were identified as starting points regarding current and needed data required to better understand the communities within the County; key

stakeholders to engage, most effective strategy for fostering engagement and how to best help individuals complete the Census 2020 survey. More information will be forthcoming as WLS continues working with the member libraries, the Westchester County CCC and other strategic partners on this initiative. The above photo of the Westchester County CCC is courtesy of Westchester County.

***Homelessness and addiction:*** WLS is going to provide member libraries with free access to an online training opportunity, *Librarian's Guide to Homelessness*, from June 1, 2019, through May 31, 2020. Additional information about this online resource is available at <http://www.homelesslibrary.com>. Onsite workshops will also take place in June and July with guest facilitators from agencies that work directly with homelessness to encourage group learning and discussion about this empathy-driven approach to providing public service.

The opioid addiction has been a major concern throughout New York State and in Westchester County. Public library staff are being called upon to interact with individuals, as well as their families and friends, who are dealing with the addiction. The NYS Department of Health's [County Opioid Quarterly Report](#) (January 2019) provided data related to Westchester County's opioid overdose rates for the time period of January 2017 through June 2018.

Indicator:	Total # 1/2017-6/2018
Death	160
Outpatient ER visits	380
Hospitalizations	152
Unique clients admitted to OASAS-certified treatment program	3557
Reported Naloxone administration (actual numbers may be higher)	499

In response to the growing occurrence of opioid overdoses throughout NYS, [Public Health Law §3309](#) was updated and [Education Law §922](#) was passed to allow public libraries to administer naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal drug. The NYS Library in coordination with the Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO), the State Education Department, the State Department of Health, the New York Library Association (NYLA) and the Harm Reduction Coalition created a [guidance document](#) to outline the policies and procedures needed by a public library to administer naloxone nasally. A statewide survey indicated that most public libraries have chosen to implement a Good Samaritan program where individual staffers voluntarily receive training on

administering naloxone versus implementing a formal library-wide opioid overdose prevention program.

The Westchester County Health Department provides free Naloxone (Narcan) training to Westchester residents. WLS member library staff interested in receiving the training can register at <https://health.westchestergov.com/narcan>. Public libraries interested in hosting a training for staff volunteers can contact the Division of Health Promotion at (914) 995-6584.

***Equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice:*** The WLS mission, vision and values are built upon and support ongoing efforts to create a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and just society. The renamed and redefined WLS Nominating and Board Development Committee has been charged with helping the organization to build a Board recruitment process that will continuously reflect the diversity within the County.

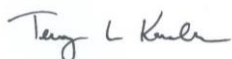
The *Addressing Sexual Harassment: Building Respect in a Diverse Workforce* workshops offered at least twice per month at no cost to the member libraries are designed to meet the annual preventing sexual harassment requirements and to increase awareness and foster discussion about ways that public libraries can better support equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice through policies, procedures and the types of services and programs offered. Examples of workshops recently offered include *Enhancing Library Services for LGBTQ Patrons*, *Implicit Bias Training* cosponsored with Westchester Library Association (WLA) and *Immigration and Library Service* cosponsored with WLA.

The budgeting of Central Library and other funds to support online products as [hoopla](#), [Kanopy](#) and [PressReader](#) expands the ability of our member libraries to serve patrons who do not have access to specific titles from their local library or who have difficulty getting to the library during their normal operating hours. These three products in particular offer a broad range of print and visual resources from different cultures and countries worldwide. WLS is also working with Westchester County and other strategic partners promote digital literacy skills through online learning tools such as [Tutor.com](#), [LearningExpress Library](#) and [FirstFind](#).

### ***Future Events***

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| May 20      | WLS Trustee Institute – Briarcliff Manor Public Library – 6-8 PM<br><i>Guest Speaker: Alexander Cohen, MLS, Project Leader and Library Consultant at Aaron Cohen Associates (ACA)</i> |
| June 12     | WLS Trustee Institute – Hendrick Hudson Free Library (Montrose) – 6-8 PM<br><i>Guest Speaker: Robert J. Freeman, Executive Director, New York State Committee on Open Government</i>  |
| November 21 | WLS 60 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – Place to be Determined – 8:30-10:30 AM<br><i>Guest Speaker: Rich Harwood, President &amp; Founder of The Harwood Institute</i>                  |

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner  
Executive Director