
Executive Director's Report May 2021

Cataloging Services

Manager of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray and Cataloger Melissa Glazer completed the #OwnVoices project for Harrison Public Library. This is a special collection of juvenile fiction written by authors from marginalized or under-represented groups. The library selected the titles from their collection, and Mr. Wray and Ms. Glazer added the series heading "#OwnVoices" to all of the bibliographic records, in order to make the works findable for someone searching the catalog. Ms. Glazer is now working on an identical project for the West Harrison branch library.

Mr. Wray has been busy with the "Illegal aliens" subject heading project. Most recently, he has been communicating with the Equinox Open Library Initiative to ensure Evergreen's cross-reference functionality. This involves linking between newly edited bibliographic records in the WLS catalog and the local authority file. The purpose is to have the system display "see" references directing users to the new headings when they enter the old terms while searching the catalog. For example, "For Illegal alien children, see: Noncitizen children."

The WLS catalogers perform original cataloging when a request from a member library cannot be filled by a MARC record from a vendor or by a bibliographic record found in the OCLC database. Here are three examples of original cataloging done recently by Mr. Wray:

Reality Check / Kirpa Singh

This is a young adult novel about a 16-year-old girl who is suffering greatly from schizophrenia and about her friendships; cataloged for Yonkers Public Library.

Village of Larchmont, Westchester County, New York: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey / Larson Fisher Associates

Prepared for the Village of Larchmont Historic Preservation Task Force, this generously illustrated work contains extensive information about historic buildings in Larchmont; cataloged for Larchmont Public Library.

The Death of a Library: an American Tragedy / by Patricia Vaccarino

In 1982, the grand Yonkers Carnegie Library was demolished, upsetting many people. This book examines both the event and the various, still-current speculations about the reasons for the library's demise; cataloged for Yonkers Public Library.

Cybersecurity

Recent cyberattacks on SolarWinds and Colonial Pipeline have helped to highlight how vulnerable any organization can be to a security breach. WLS has continued to invest in network security improvements, but cybercriminals continue to expand their range of targets and approaches. At

last month's WLS Board Meeting, a question was raised concerning how WLS's current cybersecurity insurance policy would provide assistance in the event of a cyberattack.

WLS's policy offers financial, technical and legal assistance to help mitigate the impact of a cyberattack, with an emphasis of providing assistance in four core areas:

1. Cyber Incident Response Expenses
2. Business Interruption Loss
3. Contingent Business Interruption Loss
4. Digital Data Recovery Costs or Extortion Expenses

Should the policy be activated, a Cyber Incident Response Coach would be assigned to WLS to provide referrals for consultative and pre-litigation legal services, forensic investigations, public relations or crisis communications, and the establishment of patron notification services or credit monitoring services. The best course of action is to prevent cyberattacks from occurring. While it is helpful to know that this policy could help mitigate the consequences of an attack, WLS staff are focused on continuing to enhance the physical infrastructure of the network and to offer cybersecurity training to WLS and member library staff. Training of this type is an essential component of a cybersecurity program to limit the risks to the network from inadvertently opening an infected file or falling prey to a phishing email.

Information Technology (IT)

The focus this month has been on finalizing the WLS Service Level Agreement (SLA) and IT billing structure proposal for the Integrated Library System (ILS). Each rendition has been shared with the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA), and feedback continues to be incorporated as part of the process. Based on discussion from the May 20th PLDA General Membership Meeting, WLS staff is now developing a final plan for implementation. This proposal will be shared with the WLS Board as soon as possible for approval at the May meeting.

Digital Equity Projects

The Digital Equity Projects are up and running. There are three independently funded projects running concurrently. First is **The RXR Project**, funded by RXR Realty, that has put 60 refurbished desktop computers in the homes of families in temporary housing. Included in the package received are: keyboard and mouse, web camera, monitor, a temporary library card and information on library services. An additional 25 desktop computers remain for disbursement to families in need. Any library who can identify a family who needs a desktop computer should contact Joe Maurantonio [joem@wlsmail.org] with "RXR" in the subject line.

The second project is **Chromebooks for Family Shelters and Head Start Families**, funded by a *Westchester Community Foundation (WCF) Grant*, that will disburse 270 Chromebooks, some with Wi-Fi subscriptions, in the next few weeks. Mr. Maurantonio and Dana Hysell-Alongi are working with *WestCop's Head Start* Director and their Family Advocates to develop criteria and identify 200 families in need. Seventy families at three Westchester family shelters (*White Plains Coachman; WestHelp, Mount Vernon; and Vernon Plaza*) have already been identified to receive Chromebooks. Mr. Maurantonio and Ms. Hysell-Alongi are working with each shelter to set up in-person distribution and orientation on how to use their devices and how to set up and access a

Gmail account. Follow-up workshops on using library resources, cybersafety and more are planned. On all Digital Equity projects, if the client does not have a library card, WLS will issue a temporary card and direct them to their home library. In addition to the Chromebook, clients receive a "Passport" describing WLS outreach services (in English and Spanish), a mouse and a WLS/WCF branded computer case.

The third Digital Equity project is funded by **NY Cares/IMLS** (Institute of Museums & Library Services) and connects patrons to Chromebooks that they can borrow and pick up at their local library. This grant supports the purchase of 100 Chromebooks, adherence to compliance requirements, marketing, training, and distribution. Federal funding requires CIPA compliance on each device and that borrowing patrons are currently receiving Federal assistance. The program is set up with a special WLS bilingual phone line (231-3275) to assess eligibility and to reserve a Chromebook. Francine Vernon is working with Ms. Hysell-Alongi to arrange the patron connection with their library. A targeted bilingual postcard mailing was distributed throughout community-based organizations including: Feeding Westchester, Westchester Children's Association, and the Peekskill Pastors Association. This announcement of the availability of Chromebook loaners, which included reservation instructions, went out in early April and May. As of this date, the NY Cares/IMLS Project has connected patrons to Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library and Yonkers Public Library-Riverfront Library. Additionally, the phone line connected White Plains Public Library patrons to their library's device loaner program.



Mr. Maurantonio and Ms. Hysell-Alongi have been following the Emergency Broadband Benefit program, a temporary federal program offered through the FCC and geared toward connecting more households to the internet—at a time when digital connectivity is relied on more than ever before. There is hope that additional funding will be provided for digital navigators (library staff) to help direct community members on how to access this important funding.

Project Hope

The Westchester Crisis Counseling Team has been working with organizations across Westchester to provide crisis counseling, resource referral and navigation. They are working with organizations such as Family Services of Westchester, NAACP of Peekskill, Hastings-on-Hudson and Katonah School Districts. There are currently six trained Crisis Counselors on the team, and four are bilingual. We are still waiting to hear whether FEMA will extend the program; however, the Office of Mental Health is optimistic that the program will be continued.

Recent program highlights include:

- The WLS Team is second out of all Westchester County providers for providing public education and/or group counseling sessions as shown in the table below.
- The WLS Team holds weekly events at the Larchmont Public Library and has held events at the Greenburgh Public Library.
- The Team has helped a student from a complex home situation gain internet access for remote learning.

Project HOPE RSP Group Crisis Counseling/Public Education Participants Summary by Provider/Agency		
Report Level: Regional	Report Period: 09/17/2020-04/18/2021	
Region: Westchester County	Data Extracted On: 04/21/2021	
Provider/Agency	# of Sessions	Total Participants
Empress EMS	1	10
Family Services of Westchester	53	674
Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, Inc.	2	8
PEOPLE USA, Inc.	3	49
Westchester Library System	22	477
Total	81	1218

Special Projects

Library Author Talks and Trustee Institute: The Trustee Institute on *Design Thinking for Libraries* offered by Dr. Alison Carson, the Director of Manhattanville's Center for Design Thinking, was well attended and received. There were several questions and emails about the content, and the demand seemed appropriate for a follow-up program.

On May 13th, *Social Poetics: Coronavirus Haiku*, a conversation with Prof. Mark Nowak & the Worker Writers School, was held. A lightly attended evening of exceptional poetry and stories from "frontline workers" during the COVID crises shared their stories of isolation, survival, fear, joy, politics, race, and laughter. We are hoping that the presenter will allow the recording to be made publicly available.

The series continues on Wednesday, June 9th, at 7 p.m. with author Lori Soderlind (Director of the Manhattanville College Master of Fine Arts Creative Writing Program) who will be reading from her new book, *The Change*, which tells the story of a journey in a trailer with an old dog, finding hope in despair and coming to terms with loss. Afterward, there will be a discussion on the shifting identity of the United States, and how to find hope in times of struggle.

WEBS

The WEBS Seminar, "Managing Your Career in Changing Times," was traditionally done in-person in five libraries throughout Westchester County and consisted of eight sessions along with an orientation and individual participant sessions. Due to Covid-19, the program was re-designed, utilizing past materials, and changed to a virtual format.

The new format offered three programs, each consisting of six virtual sessions, 90 minutes each, that included an individual orientation upfront to familiarize participants with the program content and logistics. The seminar ended with an individual session to address participants' specific career goals and needs. There were a total of 30 participants for the Winter Program with ten in each group.

Feedback showed that 100% of participants responded that the virtual format worked well. The following comments supported the 90% *Excellent* rating received:

"I was impressed by the course material. It was helpful, progressive and leading edge. The material provided me with security and confidence going forward in my career path."

"The facilitator was very helpful and made everyone feel at ease considering that the participants might be in a stressful moment in their lives."

"The mix of interactive discussion, lecture and introducing break out rooms helped me feel more confident with random people."

Counselors leading the workshops noted that the following are areas that worked well:

- The virtual format and size of the group made it convenient, and the discussion and breakout sessions make it more interactive than many Zoom sessions.
- Adding an evening session proved to be positive for participants who work during the day or find the evenings more convenient.
- The overall structure of the seminar and one session building on the next one is viewed as very favorable.
- Breakout sessions allow participants to practice what they are learning and to network with others in the group. This is very helpful for the introverts in the group.

The following are areas that need further review:

- Provide follow-up workshops that will give participants more opportunity to explore topics such as LinkedIn, Networking and Interviewing in more depth. Include additional practical tasks around networking and resume creation within the seminars.
- Create a system that allows participants and facilitators to share documents with each other in one place.
- Improve outreach and publicity to readily identify participants who are interested in the seminar. Suggestions include developing relationships with individual libraries and external referral sources to educate them about the program.
- Re-brand the WEBS program name and incorporate into all marketing materials i.e. website, social media, flyers, and brochures. Create an online version of the intake form so that participants can complete prior to the orientation session.

Dr. Kirchner will be meeting with counselors in June to incorporate this feedback into future offerings.

Respectfully submitted,


Terry L. Kirchner
Executive Director