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## **Executive Director's Report October 2022**

### *Cataloging Services*

At the time of this writing, Westchester Library System (WLS) Cataloging Services is on the verge of choosing between two very qualified applicants for the position of full-time cataloger. The position became open when Qingshe Ren retired at the end of June. The former head of cataloging at WLS, Steven Pisani, returned on October 3<sup>rd</sup> to fill the position of part-time cataloger. Between leaving WLS in 2011 and returning, Mr. Pisani worked as a cataloger for the Bibliomation public library consortium in Connecticut and as a high-level cataloging manager at New York Public Library.

Director of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray and Manager of Cataloging Services Melissa Glazer have been joined by Mr. Pisani in the endeavor of cataloging the book collection of the National Maritime Historical Society in Peekskill; the project is approximately two-thirds completed.

Mr. Wray is also continuing to catalog the New Rochelle Public Library's Louise Edeiken Score Collection.

The Westchester community relies on the shared online WLS catalog to know the holdings of the member libraries, and to be able to place holds on materials, borrow them or simply view them. The WLS catalogers often need to create bibliographic records "from scratch." Here are examples of recent original cataloging by Mr. Wray. All of them would be valuable to anyone interested in local history – for research, or simply for fun reading.

*The Day I Shot a Squirrel: Stories of a Twentieth Century American Boyhood* / John Francis Smith III

A blurb on the dust jacket of this book describes it as "The memoir of a boy growing up in Irvington, New York, in the mid-twentieth century." (Cataloged for Irvington Public Library)

Two works by Paul D. Rheingold (assisted by Norm Davis on the first one):

*How the Streets of Port Chester Got Their Names* (Cataloged for Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library)

*The Streets of Rye: How They Got Their Names* (Cataloged for Rye Free Reading Room)

In addition to street names, both of these illustrated books discuss historic buildings and the history of development in these locales.

### *Policemen's Benevolent Association of Westchester County: 1929 Official Register*

This book was created and published by the Association and could be a very useful source for genealogists as well as historians. It features many portraits. (Cataloged for Mamaroneck Public Library)

## **Development**

Earlier this month, Pat Brigham, Director of Development, convened a group of nonprofits working to advance digital equity to discuss their respective work, share challenges in reaching underserved communities and to explore how we can collaborate to bridge the digital divide in Westchester. This conversation resulted in a collective interest in expanding the network to include additional community-based organizations and establishing a county-wide Digital Inclusion Coalition. Based on this conversation and the publication of the Westchester Children's Association's (WCA) 2022 Digital Access Survey Report (<https://wca4kids.org/issues/remoteteaching/>), Ms. Brigham and Ms. Limarie Cabrera, Director of Data, Operations & Finance at the WCA, were invited to discuss the need for a Digital Inclusion Coalition to the Westchester County Legislator's Public Safety, Human Services, Human Rights and Equity and Families Task Force at their October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Brigham and Dr. Kirchner, along with Linda Smith, Digital Resource Navigator for the Reconnect with Tech program, and Joe Maurantonio, Special Projects Manager and program lead for Digital Equity on the Road, attended the AnchorNets 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Washington, DC (October 12-14). WLS was invited to present as part of a Digital Equity Workshop panel with seven other members of the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB). Ms. Brigham and Dr. Kirchner's topic, *The Public Library as a Community Digital Connector – a Public Private Partnership*, focused on the value of strategic collaborations from the public and private sector to advance equity and bridge the digital divide.

Ms. Brigham and Ms. Smith, along with *Reconnect with Tech* partner, The STEM Alliance, met with Westchester County Department of Corrections officials and pre-release staff. Ms. Barbara Lambros, Director of Special Programs for the Westchester County Department of Corrections, facilitated the visit which included a meeting with Westchester County Corrections Commissioner, Joseph K. Spano. The *Reconnect with Tech* team had an opportunity to share program goals, operations, and impact. The Commissioner expressed his interest in and appreciation of this important program for returning citizens.

*Reconnect with Tech* is a program that will provide access to digital training, Chromebook ownership and a one-year wifi subscription for justice impacted individuals in Westchester County. WLS will provide support during and after the program to participants through Digital Navigators who will provide resource guidance and referrals. *Reconnect with Tech* will be formally announced at a press conference on Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, at 9 am at WLS Headquarters. It is expected that County Executive George Latimer and Commissioner Spano will attend; recent participants will talk about the positive impact the program has had in their reentry process.

## **Digital Equity Initiatives**

On Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, the Mount Kisco SeptemberFest resulted in a wonderful partnership between the WLS and Mount Kisco Public Library (MKPL). Working together, WLS and MKPL staff

offered attendees information on how to get library cards and borrow materials like books, hotspots and Chromebooks. The display table provided many takeaways for visitors including brochures, bookmarks, and WLS-branded mini-flashlights. The MKPL team shared information about their in-person programs while the WLS team discussed our online resources. A number of people went into the library to get a new library card or update their old one. Several people who do not live in Westchester County were happy to learn that they could get a library card because they worked in the Village.

WLS has been able to hire bilingual (Spanish & English) hourly staff, Ms. Alejandra Orellana and Ms. Marcia Macneill, to support the digital equity initiatives.

Dana Hysell was joined by Ms. Orellana at the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry on Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, for their morning food distribution. This was Ms. Orellana's first public event with WLS, and she proved an enthusiastic member of the team! People were particularly interested in the GED Academy and the HSE program. A few participants came back after going through the food line to ask questions about where to go online to access information on the GED and what exactly they needed to bring with them in order to get their free library card.

Mr. Maurantonio, WLS Senior Technology Trainer Allison Midgley, WLS Technology Trainer Allison Pryor and Ms. Macneill braved the cold weather on Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, at the Peekskill Rotary's Fall Festival. The team shared and informed participants about WLS-supported online resources, career counseling and device loans.

The Chromebook and Hotspot Lending Program is now active at the Yonkers Public Library Grinton I. Will Branch Library. More mobile lending devices have been sent out to the Yonkers Public Library Riverfront branch, Harrison, and Purchase libraries as well, highlighting the continued community need for digital access. Feedback of the Chromebook and Hotspot Lending Response to the program has been positive from both staff and patrons.

Mr. Maurantonio and Ms. Hysell attended New York Comic Con on Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, where they spoke with representatives from DC Comics, Marvel Comics and IDW Comics about promoting reading by connecting with libraries and nonprofit partners in our community. They also attended a NYPL program discussing how to engage young adults in the library with an online art/drawing application called Pixton that allows individuals to create their own art stories, mini-comics and zines that can be shared with others.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

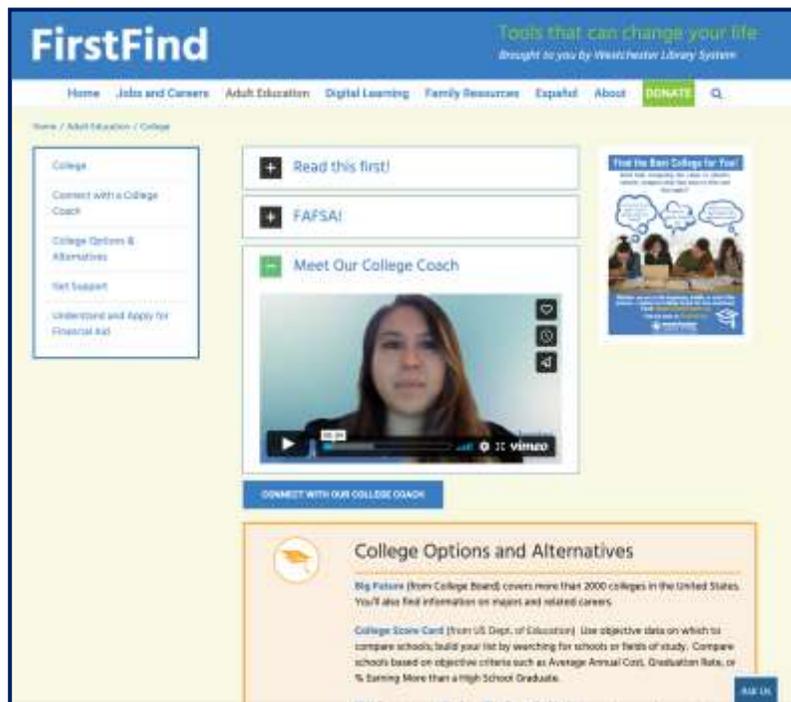
As we approach the final quarter of 2022, WLS IT is in the finishing stages of two major projects of this year: installing new network connections for the member libraries and deploying Windows 10 at the member libraries. The network switch over is nearly completed and most libraries are now operating with a unique and faster speed Internet Service Provider (ISP), which is a monumental step for both WLS and the member libraries as this enhances the overall security of the network environment. The Windows 10 deployment is nearly completed at all library locations. Some delays in deployment in the VDI/Windows 10 environment have been related to unique situations that must be addressed to support staff workflows and due to required infrastructure upgrades at libraries to support the VDI/Windows 10 environment. The issue of library infrastructure is not new and is frequently discussed at PLDA Technology Committee meetings. As WLS IT continues to

move forward with technology enhancements, some member libraries struggle with older internal infrastructures and budgeting restraints. WLS IT will continue to work with member libraries to identify potential challenges and solutions that will help all libraries to have a stronger technology infrastructure.

The Service Level Agreements (SLA) for 2023 have been generated and distributed to all participating libraries, and we anticipate that all libraries will be submitting their signed SLAs for at least some level of IT service support.

## Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)

### Pilot Program: Find the Best College for You | College Guidance Coach



In March 2022, a pilot program for college guidance was launched at the Mamaroneck Public Library. The local program is primarily intended for Spanish-speaking, first-generation students who may need additional support in navigating their path to college. Concurrently, the content on the FirstFind.org website was enriched to support all site visitors and encouraged connection via Zoom with our College Coach, Amy Gonzalez.

Ms. Gonzalez has worked with WLS for several years in a part-time role focused on our high school equivalency program. Currently, her work with HSE Connect! is focused

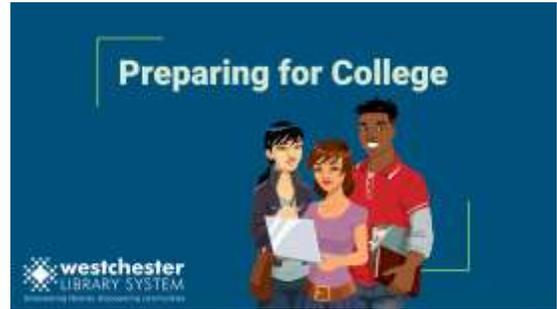
on Spanish-speaking adults who want to use our online program GED Academy. Additionally, she fields all Spanish-language inquiries to our helpline.

Ms. Gonzalez's personal experience as a first-generation student in the Mamaroneck and Rye Neck school districts (she also now has both a BA and MA) sparked her interest in working to support students on their educational journey, including work at NYPL in their adult education program and with LatinoU as a mentor to first-gen college students. Currently, she is a program specialist for liberal arts/science/social sciences at Westchester Community College (WCC); and in 2021, she gained her certification as a counselor with the National College Attainment Network, which she has been leveraging through this pilot program.

Since its launch, Ms. Gonzalez has worked to build relationships with the current guidance staff at area schools. These contacts have been vital to reaching the intended audience. It has taken time, but now several presentations have been scheduled with Mamaroneck High School and Middle School (high school English Language Learners and middle school parents) and a planned program for WLS member libraries. Her presentation, *Preparing for College*, was given at the

Mamaroneck Public Library (in person and virtual, in English and Spanish). She is working with WLS's Francine Vernon, Coordinator of Parent/Youth Outreach, on a program to encourage college consideration among middle-school students—designed for the students served by the SUNY Great Potentials Program.

Guidance has also been given to several students and families. This type of assistance is multi-layered and requires relationship building and trust. Ms. Gonzalez has been successful in her work with these clients, as seen in a sampling of her work notes below that illustrate the type of assistance offered and the outcomes achieved:



- Student's sibling has special needs for which the mother pays out-of-pocket. Mom does not qualify for a PLUS loan. Student was accepted to Pace; discussed appeal of FAFSA award because they cannot afford the balance (\$23,000). Mom will be getting documentation on medical bills to support financial hardship. Contacted Pace for status on appeal and worked to complete the TAP application. Corrected FAFSA application and amended with student's interest in student work.  
Outcome: The student will be offered work study for over \$4,000 to help with tuition and also giving her the opportunity (due to special circumstances) to borrow more money from unsubsidized loan programs. They now have an affordable amount to pay out-of-pocket.
- Undocumented student - does not qualify for Dream Act benefits due to 1 year of HS - even though he passed Regents in one year. Noted that the WCC bill was very high; accompanied student to bursar's office. Learned that he was categorized as an out-of state resident; he will not get this benefit unless he does 1 more year of HS.  
Outcome: Student will be enrolled SW BOCES GED for a year to be able to come back to WCC to get increased aid.
- First-gen student needed assistance with a very last-minute filing for FAFSA and TAP.  
Outcome: Received aid for 2022-23.

More general inquiries included:

- Discussed information about college applications and how to get started on the process. Advised the student to look for a summer job or volunteer activity. She is unsure of where to apply and what she would like to major in. Helped her to search for possible summer jobs that would leverage her existing skills as a lifeguard. Assisted in preparation of resume.
- Brainstormed his college essay and reviewed examples from other writers.

The college guidance pilot is still ongoing but so far we have been able to create and share enriched college preparation content, have built stronger relationships with several school districts, received requests for other member libraries interested in hosting these presentations, and have drafted a list of ideas for future programming that could help inform member library staff and the broader community about this college guidance program should it be expanded.

**Upcoming Events**

***Thursday, October 27 at 9 AM***

Reconnect with Tech Press Event

[Registration requested](#) for this in-person event – WLS Conference Room, 570 Taxter Rd., 4th Floor, Elmsford, NY 10523

***Thursday, October 27 at 5 PM***

Trustee Institute – Effective Meetings Utilizing Parliamentary Procedure Webinar

[Register for the online event](#)

***Thursday, November 10 at 6:30 PM***

Trustee Institute – Digital Equity in NYS with Lauren Moore, Assistant Commissioner for Libraries and State Librarian

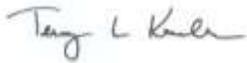
[Registration requested](#) for this in-person event – WLS Conference Room, 570 Taxter Rd., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Elmsford, NY 10523

***Tuesday, November 15 at 3:30 PM***

WLS Retiree/Alumni and Pre-Holiday Event

[Registration requested](#) for this in-person event – WLS Conference Room, 570 Taxter Rd., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Elmsford, NY 10523

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner  
*Executive Director*