

Westchester Library System
Annual Meeting
November 5, 2015 – Approved November 17, 2016

The 56th Annual Meeting of the Westchester Library System (WLS) was held on Thursday, November 5, 2015, at the Westchester Marriott, 670 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY.

There were 50 directors, trustees, and guests representing WLS and 29 of its member libraries. WLS President Chris Hansen welcomed all and opened the WLS Business portion of the Meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: President Chris Hansen called the Business Meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and introduced the WLS Trustees who were in attendance.

MINUTES OF THE 2014 ANNUAL MEETING: The minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting were approved on a motion made by Mr. Hansen and seconded by Naseem Jamali. The motion passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF NEW TRUSTEES: Sue Neale, Chair of the WLS Nominating Committee, proposed the following slate of trustees who were nominated by their represented libraries and are willing to serve:

District X [Port Chester, Rye Brook, Rye City, Rye Town]
Alex Payan (to a full term ending December 31, 2020)

District V [Armonk, Bedford Village, Mount Pleasant, Pound Ridge]
Sean Ryan (to a full term ending December 31, 2020)

District XIII [Mount Vernon]
Julie Mills-Worthey (to a full term ending December 31, 2020)

There being no nominations from the floor, the above Trustees were elected to the WLS Board of Trustees on a motion by Ms. Neale and seconded by Dave Donelson. The motion passed unanimously.

The business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. without objection.

Terry Kirchner, WLS Executive Director, gave an overview of WLS's accomplishments in 2015 that have taken place through the ongoing collaboration between WLS and the 38 member libraries as well as other community partners. Highlights included: Enhanced and expanded access to electronic resources with self-learning tools available 24/7 such as Lynda.com (an extensive video library of top-quality courses taught by recognized industry experts) and University of Fashion (online video lessons created by fashion industry professionals); Improved access to library content and ADA accessibility for the online library catalog; Receipt of the 2015 Distinguished Public Health Service Award from the Westchester County Board of Health in recognition of WLS's WEBS Career and Educational Counseling Service, Westchester Seniors Out Speaking, and Senior Benefits Information Centers;

Senior Law Day sponsor and website host of 24/7 information site; Implementation of library staff training programs focused on mental health education; Second Battle of the Books, a book trivia competition for grades 4-9 that included teams from more than half of the libraries in the County;

WLS Unlimited Possibilities Mini-Grant Initiative (a grant program established to fund community engagement projects that foster creativity and love of learning for all ages).

Innovative programs need a place to happen. Dr. Kirchner thanked New York State for including Library Construction Aid funds in the 2014-15 budget; a total of \$669,526 was awarded to 15 WLS libraries for 16 library projects. The majority of these projects were for improvements to the essentials—roofs, HVAC systems, lighting, an elevator and a back-up generator. Others were for renovations to library spaces—improving access, adult and teen areas, program rooms, bathrooms, and even an entire library. This vital program enables libraries to ensure a safe environment for all and to focus on providing innovative services to meet their community needs. Dr. Kirchner also thanked Laura Rossi, Executive Director of the Westchester Community Foundation, for awarding WLS a \$25,000 grant to support library staff training in marketing, media, public relations and related activities that will help create greater community awareness of and deeper interaction with the resources and services found in libraries.

Key trends facing the library community include: increased accessibility to content; the expansion of mobile technology as

the primary personal device; a growing entrepreneurial and freelance-based economy that offers less employment stability but more flexibility; more emphasis on sustainability; library programs as community engagement tools; libraries as educational places that support and encourage informal and active learning; a re-thinking of library spaces to foster more hands-on activities and provide community meeting and working spaces. Libraries must face these trends while dealing with several challenges, such as low budget growth and the fast pace of changes in technology and social attitudes. However, one of the real strengths of the library community is its resilience. Successful libraries listen to their communities, adapt to meet anticipated needs, and find ways to inform the community about the services that are available. Dr. Kirchner was thanked by all for his vision and leadership throughout the year.

Future directions will continue to build on our accomplishments and to advocate for additional public and private funds. Upcoming activities will focus on the potential relocation of the WLS headquarters to a new space. The current lease expires in June 2016, and WLS is actively exploring ways to redesign the existing space or move to a new location. WLS is also finalizing the next WLS Plan of Service for 2017-2021. All were encouraged to attend the WLS Breakfast on April 13, 2016, to celebrate and honor the great work performed at Westchester libraries. Keynote speaker will be retired Congressman Barney Frank, who has actively promoted civic engagement, diversity and lifelong learning throughout his career. This event also serves as the primary fundraiser to support the Unlimited Possibilities Mini-Grants that have provided the member libraries with the means to try new ways to create sustainable community engagement and to attract new people to their libraries.

Dr. Kirchner led a special interactive discussion on *Library Trends: New Ideas to Engage Your Community* to share the success stories of the following libraries who are using collaboration, WLS leverage, and creativity to engage their communities in programs that foster learning, inquiry and discovery.

WHITE PLAINS PUBLIC LIBRARY: Director Brian Kenney spoke about how makerspaces and a designated teen area, The EDGE, has transformed teen programming through use of their Media Lab and MakerSpace with hands-on audio visual, 3D printing and music editing equipment.

HENDRICK HUDSON FREE LIBRARY (Montrose): Assistant Director Risa Getman spoke about how community programs funded with mini-grants represent a new trend in libraries and how they have engaged adults and inspired them to become part of the action. The success of a Creative Aging Grant, which focused on developing a staged reading of *Twelve Angry Men* with a teaching artist through Lifetime Arts, built a core group of participants who expressed interest in developing the Library as Community Theatre. This interest led to the development of a future project—a production of *Love, Loss and What I Wore*.

THE FIELD LIBRARY (Peekskill): Teen Librarian Liz Anastasi described the impact of one of their exciting teen programs offered as part of a system-wide collaboration that engaged 4th through 9th graders in reading for fun and competition and led to participation of the teens in the 2nd Annual WLS Battle of the Books. Two other programs seek to engage diverse urban teens in projects that incorporate STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) learning activities. One entitled, *Electronic Fashion—Creating Wearable Smart Materials*, was a program taught by an adjunct professor at Parson's School of Design who used tactile experiences of sewing and fashion design to teach the electronic digital elements of technology, circuitry and computer programming and took advantage of the University of Fashion database. The other is entitled, *Trash to Treasure*, was held in conjunction with the Peekskill Youth Bureau. Under the guidance of an accomplished Westchester artist/author, teens explored, through artwork and essay, the science of creating natural pigments using sustainable sources and transforming repurposed materials into works of art via collage, painting and sculpture.

THE WARNER LIBRARY (Tarrytown): Director Maureen Petry, Young Adult Librarian Liz Siracusa, along with President Rob Kissner of the Digital Arts Experience (DAE) discussed how their project will use gaming software to inspire teens to create a digital model village design as part of the public input component for the study of the Metro North Train Station in Tarrytown. One of the goals of the project is to encourage sustainable development in a rapidly growing area.

Overall discussion covered the number of participants involved in each project; the importance of scheduling around school sports schedules; and how the projects offered an opportunity to work with new partners and drew communities together.

Dr. Kirchner thanked all for coming and for their support of WLS over the past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Sozzi, *Recording Secretary*