

WVLS YOUTH SERVICES GRASSROOTS MEETING REPORT - March 8, 2017

Exhibit 9-C

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The 2017 Wisconsin Valley Library Service "Grassroots Gathering" discussion was held on Wednesday afternoon, March 8, 2017 following Children's Book Fest in Rhinelander. It was attended by 4 public youth librarians (representing small, medium and large libraries) from WVLS, one public youth librarian from NWLS, the NWLS director and a WVLS consultant. The discussion ran from 1:30 to 3:30 PM. Responses to WVLS public library youth services list serv reminders indicated that several other librarians who have participated in the past made the decision to attend the Children's Book Fest Tuesday evening session instead of Wednesday due to weather and staffing concerns.

The usual questions were used as discussion starters, though actual discussion was free ranging and blended.

1. What youth services issues most concern your school or library at this time?
2. What are the best services that WVLS offers in the area of youth services? (What are we doing well?)
3. How can WVLS better support the needs of youth services librarians?
4. What are some ways that public and school librarians can work together in mutual advocacy and support of common goals?
5. What statewide coordination or assistance through DPI/DLT is essential to WVLS youth librarians?
6. What success stories or innovative programs would you like to share with the group?

The topics of coding for kids, makerspace activities and STEM/STEAM/STREAM activities sparked the longest discussion. Challenges include finding staff time to become comfortable enough with new technology topics and activities, learning what resources and materials are "out there" to assist at all age levels, budgeting decisions to support new initiatives, and providing physical space and supervision necessary for demonstration experiences while protecting a library's investment in purchased or (in the case of system produced makerspace kits) borrowed equipment. Libraries are exploring community partnerships with schools and other organizations such as 4-H in this area.

Additional topics raised included suggested read-a-louds for older children, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten programs, summer incentives/activities and performer recommendations, as well as utilizing community members with special skills/areas of expertise to provide low/no cost library programs of interest to all ages.

WVLS feedback: Librarians are enjoying the enhanced messaging since Communications Coordinator Anne Hamland was added to the staff and bestowed high praise and huzzahs upon her efforts. WVLS investment in the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten app and coordination of movie licensing is appreciated. The WVLS list serv for youth librarians remain popular and useful. A WVLS member youth librarian created an online free forum to share performer information and bookings <http://wisconsinperformertalk.freeforums.org/index.php> as an experiment to gather data in a central location without needing to keep track of a series of emails. Including a coding component and makerspace kits review in the December youth services workshop program would be appreciated.

DPI/DLT feedback: Tessa Michaelson Schmidt's emails to her YS list are much appreciated. System staff members from NWLS and WVLS updated the group on recent state level discussions about inclusive services. The Coding initiative in Wisconsin Public Libraries partnership with ALA's "Libraries Ready to Code" (detailed at <http://wvls.org/digital-lites/careers-code>) was mentioned along with a need for code for librarians training modules. Those who have attended DPI institutes and other *in person* trainings spoke highly of the professional boost and opportunities to interact with peers. More regional trainings sponsored by DPI/DLT would be appreciated.