



Pictured L to R: Denise Chojnacki (Rhineland), Erica Dischinger (Minocqua), Annette Miller (Tomahawk)

**Stephanie Schmidt, Director, Crandon Public Library**

WLA Membership/Professional Development Scholarship Winner

**1. Please highlight three sessions from the conference. What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?**

**Fines Free: A Year in Review**

Fines free was one of my favorite sessions from the conference. It was presented by a panel of libraries, each with a different service population with the largest being Eau Claire Public Library. For a while now the Crandon Public Library has been tossing around the idea of fines free. Attending this session helped me identify some valid points to make when justifying the need to go fines free. I think showing the facts, figures, and successes from other libraries across the state might help change the mindset of what it really means to be “fines free”. One of the panelists at the conference commented that much to her surprise, after going fines free “the stuff came back, and the people came back.” I hope we see similar results.

**How to Be an Indian in the 21st Century**

This session was presented by Louis V Clark III who is a tribal member of the Oneida Nation near Green Bay Wisconsin. This presentation was relevant to me and my community because the city of Crandon is situated between two Native American reservations. Therefore, attending a session led by a Native American poet was a great opportunity to better understand the Native American experience. I also think attended this particular session because I believe strongly in bridging the gap between Non-native and Native American culture. This session provided some insight on some unique challenges Native Americans face that others do not.

**At the Movies with Librarians**

This session was presented by a panel of four librarians from Wisconsin libraries. One of the panelists was Sherry Machomes from Northern Waters Library Service. This program was beneficial to me because it was interesting to hear other’s perspectives on if certain books should be made into films. I also think it benefitted me because now I have a list of films based on books that will be coming out in 2020-2021. This is helpful because not all of the patrons who visit the library read—many check out DVDs. Maybe a good film would encourage a non-reader to check out the book the film was based on. If nothing else having these upcoming films in my back pocket will assist me with collection development.

**2. Please highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session. Did you talk to someone you didn’t know at a session? Sit next to someone at a luncheon and have a meaningful conversation? Visit with an exhibitor? How did this experience affect your overall outlook of the conference?**

While at the conference I met several of the vendors who I exclusively interact with virtually. It was exciting to be able to put faces with names. I also met two representatives from ProQuest. ProQuest published my master’s

thesis so that was a unique experience I might have not had if it weren't for attending the conference. The conversation about my thesis then transformed into a discussion on all the different things ProQuest does and how they are useful to libraries in a variety of ways. Meeting with these representatives in particular was special for me and made me realize that the "library world" is far reaching and that many different companies are useful to or have stake in libraries.

**3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?**

**Fines Free**

After attending the conference, I presented a polished fines free proposal to my board which will be voted on in mid-November 2019. I used the information presented in the "Fines Free" session to support my plan. If the proposal passes the Crandon Public Library will be fines free on children's materials. If that goes well and the data shows that our materials continue to be returned the board will consider going fines free on all materials in 2021.

**Makerspace Lab**

I also got some interesting ideas about how to improve our Maker-space lab from "The Science of Play" session. This session focused on how libraries can integrate more STEM themes into programming for children. Right now, we have a Makerspace/STEAM lab with roughly 6-8 kits at a given time. There are some STEAM-related kits like a programmable toy mouse, Kinnex, and an Orbeez Sensory ball kit—but the WLA workshop gave me some ideas of other projects and materials we could include in our Maker-space lab.

**Film Showings**

The library currently does film screening for adults, adult book clubs, and children. The one demographic we are really missing is film screenings for teens. While at the "At the Movies with Librarians", I saw a trailer for a film called JoJo Rabbit which I thought might be a great film for teens. We have struggled with getting teens into the library so trying a film screening is a new approach we are willing to try. When the film JoJo Rabbit comes out on DVD, I will give it a try!

**4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees? Assistance from WVLS?**

Going fines free is the only item listed that would require approval from the board and significant assistance from WVLS. If the board does approve it, I will look to WVLS for help with pulling necessary reports and changing our current settings within the Sierra software. The other two items listed, improving our Makerspace and implanting teen film screenings will likely only require support from the Crandon Public Library staff. If we work together and brainstorm these ideas, these two goals will likely become a reality.

**5. How might your conference experience been improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?**

The conference overall was great. I came away with much insight and met many people from neighboring systems. The opportunities for networking were outstanding. I think one thing that could have made the conference more impactful to me is if there was at least one more session that focused on the Native American experience. Native Americans are very clearly underrepresented in many facets of our society, and libraries should not be one of those facets. The Crandon Public Library is striving to make conscious changes that ensure our space reflects our community. Therefore, it would be nice to have training opportunities or more sessions on Native American materials and the Native American experience. I would suggest to the WLA planning

committee that they find a tribal librarian who would be interested in telling her story and sharing her experiences at the conference in the future.

- Stephanie Schmidt, Crandon Public Library

## **Denise Chojnacki, Library Assistant II, Rhinelander District Library**

WLA Membership/Professional Development Scholarship Winner

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### **1. Please highlight three sessions from the conference. What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?**

#### **The Room of Requirement**

Libraries and This American Life with Lydia Sigwarth. Her family was homeless when she was a child. She spoke about her experience with the library during that time and how we can make the library a stable force in the child's life that is unstable. The library had a huge impact for her and she is now a librarian and upcoming author. This made me think about really looking at how we can make our library be that affecting institution.

#### **Writing in the Library**

This was a panel of people from different libraries that provides writing events for youth throughout the year. The one that I was really drawn to was the Intergenerational Pen Pals. I felt that this might be an opportunity to work with our Senior Outreach at the library.

#### **Eat Your Veggies**

Healthy Ideas for Youth Programming with Kirsten Almo from Edgerton Public Library. I've sat in on a session with her before and she always has great ideas. At her library they do some pop-up bike shops during Bike to the Library week. I thought that perhaps our local bike shop here might want to collaborate on a program next summer. There were also great ideas on grants to pursue to help purchase programming items.

### **2. Please highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session. Did you talk to someone you didn't know at a session? Sit next to someone at a luncheon and have a meaningful conversation? Visit with an exhibitor? How did this experience affect your overall outlook of the conference?**

What comes to mind for a conference experience is being somewhat of a mentor to another librarian who is very new in the field. I stayed connected to her throughout the conference to help it not be quite so scary the first time and we were able to split sessions on a couple that were presented at the same time and share information. Networking is always a highlight of these events for me.

### **3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?**

My first course of action is to start an Intergenerational Pen Pal program from the Writing in the Library session. This has already started to come together quickly building some excitement about the collaboration. We will be connecting with a local after-care program and pairing them with seniors from our Senior Outreach program. The three of us met today and have a plan in place to start in November with introductory post cards. Secondly, I would like to check into the grants that were talked about in both the School & Public Library Collaboration or the Healthy Programming session to see if either might work at our library. Third, I would like to check into having some kind of cardboard creating program from my session with Chad Sell, author of the Cardboard Kingdom. Whether it's costumes or arcade games I will be exploring that avenue.

**4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees? Assistance from WVLS?**

I feel like I'll be supported in any of those potential goals. May need support from my co-workers and members of the community to make some of these things happen.

**5. How might your conference experience be improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?**

The only improvement to the conference experience I can think of is to avoid having more than one youth service session at a time on the same day or to repeat the session on another day if it has the potential for being a popular one. Luckily, the colleague I spoke of earlier agreed to split sessions and share the information so that we could both benefit.

A big thank you to WVLS for the scholarship and also for the WLA membership for the coming year. Continuing education is a driving force for me, and I'm grateful to be on the receiving end of such a wonderful opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,  
Denise Chojnacki

**Erica Dischinger, Youth Services Librarian, Minocqua Public Library**

Youth Services WLA Membership/Professional Development Scholarship Winner

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**1. Please highlight three sessions from the conference. What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?**

**The Room of Requirement**

Libraries and This American Life presented by Lydia Sigwarth (Platteville Public Library) This session stood out to me because of the way it made me feel after the presenter was finished speaking. The presenter did an excellent job of describing and displaying through examples how the children's librarian of her own childhood made her feel like she was the only child in the whole library. Her librarian had the skills and qualities to make her feel so special that her perspective of her life situation at the time, which happened to be pretty terrible in reality, was made magical. It really made me think about how I can personally connect more with the patrons I see in my department daily, not only those that I meet through programming, and how I can form better relationships with them. I am fairly shy by nature and stepping out of my comfort zone to make contact is a bit daunting, but the presenter offered some simple suggestions, such as "personalize things in your department" and "create special spaces for kids to have a sense of belonging" that got me thinking, "I can do that too!"

**Writing in the Library presented by Alyssa Pisarski (North Shore Library, Glendale), Anne Kissinger (Wauwatosa Public Library), Lisa Quintero (Shorewood Public Library), and Melody Schuetz (Oak Creek Public Library)**

I enjoyed the ideas presented in this session. I have been thinking for a while now on how to get kids doing more writing in the library, because I know that it is just as important for early literacy as reading. These presenters gave some easy, yet fun, ways to incorporate writing into programs, both active and passive. The first presenter discussed a homeschool creative writing club, the format for each session, and activities included. Some of these sounded easy to duplicate, including "Would You Rather" prompts, "Fill-in-the-Blank" stories, and "Telephone Pictionary". Even though I don't think that a homeschool creative writing club is a possibility for me, I am thinking of using some of these ideas as passive programs in the kids' room, and possibly teen room, here in Minocqua. Another presenter discussed how she was able to do a teen writing contest and another talked about

an intergenerational pen pal program. The last presenter explained how to do writing workshops. Again, I appreciated this session because of the number of ideas and creative methods from a variety of presenters that I can tweak to fit my own library.

**Move Over Mother Goose: Focusing on Families First presented by Dawn Foster (Portage Public Library)**

I was a bit surprised by this session, in a very nice way! It wasn't at all what I was expecting, and it definitely made me think about my job in a new light. I expected tips and advice on how to include parents and get them more involved in children's programs that I am already doing, such as storytime, but what the presenter really focused on was actually doing programs just for the parents! Examples of the types of programs that the presenter does for the parents in her community include a "back-to-school breakfast" for parents after dropping their kids off on the first day of school. She said that she had noticed that many stay-at-home parents seemed "lost" after dropping their kids off and were wandering aimlessly, or even tearfully, through the library. She recognized a need and created a way for parents in a similar situation to connect. Other programs that she has done specifically for parents include topic presentations from local experts on things like "How to Raise a Leader", "Don't be a Bully" and "Establishing Routines". Even simple things like creating a "Diaper Depot" in the restrooms for emergencies so that parents don't need to leave the library sets up a welcoming environment for the adults as well as the children. This presentation really opened my eyes on how to move above and beyond w

**2. Please highlight a conference experience, other than attending a conference session. Did you talk to someone you didn't know at a session? Sit next to someone at a luncheon and have a meaningful conversation? Visit with an exhibitor? How did this experience affect your overall outlook of the conference?**

Even though I have met Denise Chojnacki (Rhineland District Library) and Annette Miller (Tomahawk Public Library) before, I really enjoyed getting to know them better and developing a closer relationship with them. I attended sessions with them and we enjoyed each others' company in between sessions as well. It was really neat to compare the different services we offer at our respective libraries, since we are in three libraries in the far north of our library system and serve similar populations. I learned, for example, that Annette does her "storytime" as more of a "drop in play time" and not a structured program with a theme. We all discussed how the kids we have attending our programs seem to be getting younger and younger and how we have adapted, or could further adapt, to this change. We also discussed things we liked and didn't like about the sessions we attended together and different ideas that we feel we could implement at our libraries. Getting to know these two better and chatting with them really made the conference more fun for me.

**3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?**

Three things that I am planning to implement in my own library include ideas from the three sessions that I described above. The first thing I would like to focus on is how to get kids doing more writing in the library. I have already set up a passive program for the month of November, which is National Novel Writing Month, with greeting cards, paper and a real mailbox, asking kids to write letters to their librarians. We will post responses on the wall above the mailbox. I have already received a letter and I just put the program out late last week!

The second thing is to make the kids' room here in Minocqua more "about the kids". We have a lot of kids that stop in between school and extracurricular activities for a few minutes here and there to play. Instead of focusing my time and attention on active programs, I would like to start thinking more about how I can set up the environment to make them feel special and welcomed, such as putting out a cardboard castle for them to read in (to correspond with our upcoming summer reading theme), or setting up a dramatic play center with rotating themes that correspond with the holidays. Even doing things like "name the stuffed animal" or "add an ornament to our tree" can help kids feel a sense of ownership and belonging.

The third thing I would like to do is to think of more ways to help parents. I am currently posting “early literacy tips” at my storytimes, but maybe actively testing out some of these skills would be helpful. I would like to post “tips for playing with your kids” in the play area and someday offer kits to check out with books on topics such as “how to help if your kids are bullied”. I am also thinking about how I can set up my space so that it is easy for parents to know which books are best for the different reading levels and how to move from board books to picture books to chapter books, for example. Even something as simple as offering reading lists and spotlight authors can make things easier for parents to grab and go.

**4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these three things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees? Assistance from WVLS?**

I would like to have a meeting with my director to discuss some of the changes that I plan to implement (mentioned in #3 above). My director has been very supportive of my ideas and trusts me to spend my budget how I feel is the most advantageous for the families that utilize our library, so I am confident that she would be willing to help me in any way needed. I am also planning to make a presentation to our Library Board later in November to discuss some of my goals and the ways that I am hoping to spend my programming money. I also feel very well supported by my board and feel that they accept any ideas that I have.

Another thing I would like to do is to work with Anne Hamland from WVLS. She has been a sort of “mentor” to me since I became a Youth Services Coordinator, and I know she would be willing to chat with me about where to begin and how to accomplish things if I get “stuck”. Also, attending different meetups and workshops through WVLS has allowed me to get to know other librarians in our system (and other systems as well) who have offered great advice and ideas on how to get programs up-and-running, so turning to my network of fellow librarians will be a big help as well.

**5. How might your conference experience been improved to be more beneficial/impactful to you?**

I honestly wish I would have known that Denise and Annette were attending the conference so that we could have carpooled. I would have had connections to make me feel more comfortable right off the bat. Also, I wish some of the sessions that had multiple topics of interest to me could have been recorded and archived so that I could have “attended” both. Overall, though, I really enjoyed the conference and gained a lot of great ideas, so I am very thankful for the scholarship, which allowed me the opportunity to attend!

- Erica Dischinger, Minocqua Public Library

**Marla Sepnafski, Director, WVLS**

**WVLS Staff Conference Report**

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**1. What was the title of the session you attended?**

Motivating Library Staff and Why it Matters

This presentation will help supervisors and managers understand what motivates employees and how to meaningfully recognize and reward staff achievement for all levels of staff ranging from full-time employees to student workers. Via an interactive presentation, the presenters will explain how recognition boosts productivity and include best practices for ensuring all staff feel valued and recognized.

**2. What two things are you taking away that you heard, or think are most important?**

- Clarity is kindness. Be clear, consistent, fair, and firm if necessary
- Also be flexible and understanding
- Communicate opening and transparently:

Share important news, both good and bad

Share and encourage input about projects, plans and assessments

Explain decisions, examples go a long way

Learn by doing

- Train effectively; gamification of training and engagement (Kahoot; When2Work)
- Think through a difficult conversation first; have a plan
- Stay curious. Be Open. Don't go into a difficult conversation with your mind made up
- Ask staff: What is going well? Is there a staff member you'd like to recognize? Do you have any concerns?
- Motivation:

Tangible methods – monetary (raises/bonus), written, edible

Intangible methods – time off, change in duties, verbal

- Negative Performance Issues:
  - Take care of internal systems that may be prohibiting people from doing their best.
  - These are the expectations; these are the ways you are not meeting expectations. Do you understand?

Don't get sucked into an emotional conversation

You have either a reformed employee or a former employee

- A comfortable work environment in which to give/receive feedback

Should feel safe

Culture of improvement (not punitive if there is a mistake made)

Culture of caring

- Invest in staff; staff is the most valuable resource in a company

### **3. Were there any key websites the presenter shared or thinks people should check out?**

*Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business* by Danny Meyer

Works by Brene Brown

*Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity* by Kim Scott

*In Search of Excellence*

### **4. What was the audience reaction to this session? What kinds of feedback was given?**

This session offered techniques and resources used by experienced colleagues, and my anecdotal impression was that the audience found the information shared to be very helpful and relevant.

## **Anne Hamland, Public Library Services Consultant, WVLS**

WVLS Staff Conference Report

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### **1. What was the title of a session you attended?**

#### **Connecting with Your Mission and Creating Patron-Centered Spaces on a Dime**

Kelly Johnson, UW-Oshkosh Fox Cities

What are the steps to take when a library space is not living up to its potential? Maybe it is dated books, unused periodical runs, waiting room style seating or just a general sense of being stuck in a library time warp? By assessing collections and usage of the physical space and asking patrons what they wanted from their library, the library was able to dramatically change its spaces with little cost. Topics include: tips for weeding collections to best support the mission and free up space, and repurposing existing library fixtures and furniture to create updated layouts that support diverse spaces for patrons.

### **2. What two things are you taking away that you heard or do you think are most important?**

Observe: walk through the space you are assessing and map specific questions on the hour:

Butts in seats: where are people sitting?

Devices people are using: laptops, phones, other?

Ask for input from those who are using the space and non-users.

Whiteboard questions

Post-it notes

Paper/Online survey

Map out where electrical outlets are. Does this correspond with where the popular seating areas are?

Make signage to put on the wall above your outlets for visibility. Consider coordinating placing hotspots where outlets are dense.

Looking for specific space uses helps to plan out specific aspects of your remodel/redesign.

Start with the easy changes... move the furniture you have, use the supplies and talents you have.

Do what you can with what you have if you do not have a budget. i.e. short shelves become a high-top table.

Weed items and staff areas and place them in a book sale or sale table. Use the proceeds for making changes to the library space!

Use data, statistics, visuals and official assessments (is this space ADA accessible?) to ask for money.

### **3. Were there any key websites the presenter shared or things people should check out?**

[Planning Optimal Library Spaces](#). 2018.

There were no other major websites, but a key statement I took away was: Change it then assess it! Never stop changing and assessing.

### **4. What was the audience reaction to this session? What kinds of feedback was given?**

The audience was excited and empowered to try taking on the simple assessments and easy changes such as asking for feedback, moving furniture, labeling electrical outlets at chest height on the wall.

### **1. What was the title of a session you attended?**

#### **Sensory Storytime and Beyond**

Heather Kent, E.D. Locke Public Library, McFarland; Jess Lawinger, McFarland School District, McFarland  
Sensory Storytimes are a perfect collaboration opportunity for public libraries and schools. The E.D. Locke Public Library sensory programming began in 2018 and was developed by their children's librarian along with McFarland Early Childhood staff - including the special education coordinator, occupational therapist and physical therapist. Through this effort, the school has been able to utilize the library as a resource for children identified as needing early intervention through IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) and the library has been able to grow and develop best practices for both sensory and regular programming. The presenters will discuss the collaboration, programming, and extensions of sensory programming in the library and how other libraries can grow their own sensory-friendly programming.

### **2. What two things are you taking away that you heard or do you think are most important?**

Working with local experts and small changes helps to get you started.

Closest hospital: occupational therapist, physical therapist

Experts can give you feedback on planned activities and suggest areas that librarians can put more focus on during regularly scheduled programs and activities.

Many adjustments or additions to make a storytime more friendly benefit the entire group.

Visual schedule for storytime to see what is next or when the group is done.

Small changes

carpet squares or carpet tiles help assign personal space

supplying a fidget box with weighted stuff animals, teeters, wiggle cushions, noise cancelling headphones, manipulatives can help those who need to move or provide stimulus to their body to focus better in a way they can control.

Nametags

Consistent greeting and goodbye songs

Incorporating American Sign Language for hearing loss but also for fine motor skills

**3. Were there any key websites the presenter shared or things people should check out?**

Bintiva (wiggle cushions) offers a group purchasing discount.

Most items can be found on Amazon or big box stores

[Library youtube channels](#) for [songs that incorporate ASL](#)

**4. What was the audience reaction to this session? What kinds of feedback was given?**

Wonderful. The presenters invited attendees to observe their storytimes and visit their libraries. The small changes were exciting to attendees.