

WVLS Post-Conference Report

*Dominic Frandrup
Antigo Public Library*

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?

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Find Them Where They're At (Patrons, that is)!

Wendy Rosenow (Speaker) Shawano County Library

Kristie Hauer (Speaker) Library Director, Shawano County Library

Mikki Moesch (Speaker) Shawano County Library

Description: With our main library in the exact same spot for over 55 years, staff challenged themselves to 80 outreach activities in 1 year after still being amazed at frequently hearing "I didn't know we had a library in town!" and "Hey, when was a library built here?!" Since then, Shawano County Library has increased its outreach efforts by nearly 25% in just 3 years. This session will cover successful outreach efforts (and a few less successful ones!), including planning, implementation, and budget. From presentations to parades, book giveaways to elderly programs, photo booths to escape rooms, and storytimes to historical events, travel along with Shawano's reigning Scarecrow Content winner as we share how we've crisscrossed our service area and often piggybacked on other community events, lessening our own workload to great success demonstrated through higher awareness of our library's services leading to increased funding in recent years.

*What made this session meaningful to me was the amount of outreach Shawano County libraries were able to accomplish. It was cool to have a neighboring county library present at a national conference as I didn't know they were going to be there at the time of registration. I was able to talk with Kristie after the presentation and during a lunch speaker about some of the challenges and opportunities specific to rural Wisconsin not covered in their presentation. Travelling to Vermont in order to network with a peer a county away was something I didn't expect but was very fortuitous.

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Closing Speaker: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich: Executive Director at the Mid-Hudson Library System (NY)

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (MLS, LEED AP) currently serves as the Executive Director at the Mid-Hudson Library System (NY) where she assists 66 public libraries in the areas of leadership, funding and facilities and is an adjunct professor at Long Island University. Rebekkah is the author of Sustainable Thinking: Ensuring Your Library's Future in an Uncertain World, Resilience, the Handbook for Public Library Directors in New York State, the co-author of the Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State, and is the sustainability columnist for Library Journal. Rebekkah co-chairs both the New York Library Association's Sustainability Initiative (NYLA-SI) and the American Library Association's (ALA) Special Task Force on Sustainability and serves as an advisory board member to the Center for the Future of Libraries

at ALA. Named a Library Journal Mover & Shaker, Rebekkah is a frequent national presenter on the topic of leading libraries forward in smart, practical and effective ways.

*What made this session meaningful to me was the passion she had for libraries and librarians as activists especially in the area of sustainability, which was the focus of her keynote. Traditional library training was to try to be neutral in regards to information regardless of topic. However this seems to be changing a little within the library profession to be more “social activists”, which relies on peer reviewed science and as an information professional would be resources I’d guide patrons to anyway. I like the change and the opportunity.

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Stork Storytime Helps Libraries Deliver Literacy

Jennifer Jordebrek (Speaker) Assistant Library Director, North Liberty Community Library

Description: The Stork Storytime initiative (previously Womb Literacy) is an expecting family education initiative that encourages families to develop a daily reading routine before baby arrives, learn about early literacy skills and empowers caregivers to be more confident in their role as a child's first teacher. Attendees will learn about the variety of programs that have been developed including the Reads program, a yearly Expo, monthly Talks podcast and a free online Reads Toolkit for librarians. The Toolkit empowers even the smallest of libraries in implementing this program, saving them valuable time and resources.

*What made this session meaningful to me was the idea of predictive services. Of being in touch with patrons and being able to promote programs to them before they, or someone they know, will need them. Discussing this thought with another conference goes after the session, options for delivery of items to patrons post-surgery. APL already delivers to people during the winter when travel can be tough for patrons with mobility issues, but this was a fresh twist on how outreach is important to our patrons. Partnering with the hospital has been a challenge due to HIPPA but marketing the library outreach services has been given a new twist as we think of more ways to help our patrons before they might need our services.

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?

The experience other than attending a conference session that had a large impact on me was when I rented a bike in downtown Burlington and was able to ride 20 miles out Causeway Park on a rail-trail which extends almost all the way across Lake Champlain. I used this time to re-center and think about the conference sessions I had attended. I was able to make plans on how to implement some of the ideas I had observed, and think about who I would talk to without the distractions of the conference center. It was a windy and gorgeous day riding the path that extended to far into the lake and greatly benefitted my wellbeing and helped me rejoin the conference the next day in a refreshed and more focused state after transferring my post ride thoughts to my to-do list.

3. As a result of attending this conference, what three things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?
 - a) Looking at expanding our outreach services to post-op patrons who may need deliveries for a short time while they recovery from surgery. Need to find an inroad with the hospital to distribute fliers of services, and make connections with patients. Another goals is to work with pre-natal patients to start reading to their babies prior and post birth.
 - b) Re-messaging library impact in the community, not just programs, but how we influence the community. Telling the stories of APL's patrons to community members and funding bodies.
 - c) Expanding services and programming outside the library. Will specifically target our local farmers market as that group regularly utilizes our meeting room.

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?

Staff support, time and money. And/ or reprioritization of current staff/ money. My library board is supportive of change and new ideas, but we have to determine what services to drop in order to add new ones within our current funding. The Library Trustees has these types of discussions regularly while attempting to juggle political realities. We will be making priorities for various services a focus of our library strategic planning process in 2020.

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

Perhaps my conference experience would have been improved or impactful to me if I would have been able to read between lines a bit more for a couple of the session descriptions. There were a couple of "Choice A" sessions that sounded fantastic but I wasn't getting a lot out of and so went to a "Choice B" session for that time slot and ended up being much better for me. I saw others doing this as well, so it's something I'll keep in mind for the future.