

2022 WAPL Conference Scholarship Reports



**The Ingleside Hotel
Pewaukee, WI**

WVLS Post-Conference Report
Andrea Bennett - T.B. Scott Free Library (Merrill)

1. Please highlight two sessions from the conference.

What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?

My favorite session was: It's a Beautiful Day in This Library: Lessons from Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. She discussed the 6 basic necessities of learning; sense of self-worth, sense of trust, curiosity, capacity to look and listen carefully, capacity to play, times of solitude. Each necessity was defined, why it is important for development, and the role adults play in helping children. She also referred to a program she uses regarding child development, Reimagining School Readiness, which I am not familiar with. I currently use Every Child Ready to Read which focuses on Play, Read, Write, Sing, and Talk. We then discussed ways to incorporate the 6 basic necessities into programs, such as storytime. I learned so much about the ways in which adults play a key role in child development. As a librarian we can play a key role in this as a model to the parents and a special person to the child.

The session: The Dynamic Dozen, was a lot of fun. Listing 12 basic craft staples, that most of us children's librarians always have on hand, and 50 crafts you can make with them. There were so many great ideas. All of us have tweens and teens who can be restless in the library at times. All of these crafts would give them something fun and creative to do while hanging out at the library. The best part is they are all cheap and easy to put together. Sometimes it seems like you do the same thing over and over, so it was great to get some new ideas, and we were able to make our own crafts to take home.

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?

I had a pleasant conversation with a librarian whose session I attended earlier in the day. Their library is very small, 900 square feet, so most of their programs are held outside at different locations. She shared some creative ideas on how to present programs and ways to allow for books to be checked out outside of the library. I was amazed at the creativity and came away with so many good ideas. Being able to connect with her one on one and talk programs was great, and she gave me some great programming ideas to consider, especially for summer. Conferences, such as WAPL, are a unique opportunity for connecting with other librarians from other places. Each library and community are unique, and we all have so much we can learn from each other.

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

I will be doing more research into the information given at the Mr. Roger's Neighborhood session. I want to research the Educator's Neighborhood which is funded through the Fred Roger's Center. The

Fred Roger's Center has a variety of information available regarding the 6 basic necessities, as well as book recommendations. I have also signed up to receive their newsletter. I am always looking for ways to implement reading and school readiness skills into programs. I can take information I find and look for ways to implement it here in programming.

We will be putting together new makerspace kits and plan to have them ready for the beginning of the school year. Some of the ideas from the Dynamic Dozen will be put into kits. I am also going to implement some ideas from the session: Taking the Show on the Road. They host a fun program called, Trick or Read, that ties in reading and Halloween. I love their program, but already have ideas to do even more, since we do have space to work with in my library. I'm excited to put this program together for October.

WVLS Post-Conference Report
Krista Blomberg, Rib Lake Public Library

1. Please highlight two sessions from the conference.

What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?

Author, Kao Kalia Yang was the Keynote speaker for the Thursday morning breakfast session. She read from two of her books, one was a children's book titled, "From the Tops of the Trees". I was moved to tears and so impacted by the way she wrote about her experience as a child in a refugee camp in a way that children could read and understand no matter their own experiences in life. It was a story of struggle and yet also of resilience and overcoming and hope! I look forward to sharing this book with children (and adults) in my community. She also shared from a book of stories she has gathered from others who have lived in refugee camps. And again, so much that helps me feel a little of that experience and improve my understanding of it. This is critical in our time.

I also attended, "Once Upon a Time: Practical Tips for Gathering Stories to Promote Your Library" with Angela Hursh. She gave some great tips on how to gather them, but also on how to present them and use them for best impact. These are from notes I took. I especially LOVED the story of the young patron who did a video on the importance of library funding!

- Focus on The characters (describe them, who are they- patrons, staff, etc)
- The complication- what is the hurdle or problem.
- The turning point - helping explain how they overcame the hurdle
- The resolution- explain how your library has made their patron lives better in a way that helps other patrons understand how it can change their own lives!

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?

Two things stand out in my mind. First, I went to the book signing with Kao Kalia Yang and told her about how her writing impacted me, I ended up crying just talking about it. She told me something I will never forget. She said, "My father told me that tears are a gift we give to each other."

Second, I presented at a breakout session for the first time. I had an amazing experience preparing for it with Jamie Matczak from WVLS who gave of her time and expertise, listened to my presentation, gave me some awesome feedback, and generally helped me feel more excited than nervous as I got ready to present.

Both of these personal connections are the things that mean the most to me and will stay with me the longest.

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

I plan to work on asking more people for their library stories! We have a google form to collect them, but we need to reach out more and use word of mouth to encourage our patrons to use the form OR maybe even to just share it with us directly.

I also plan to work with the Wisconsin Water Library to bring one of their collections to our library!

WVLS Post-Conference Report
Katrina Kubeny, Elcho Public School District

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

Kao Kalia Yang - Keynote speaker session - Simply wonderful

It's a Beautiful Day in this Library - Alison Loewen

All The World's A Stage - Claire Kinder, Michelle Dennis

The keynote speaker was my favorite part of the conference. It was so meaningful to me because I began my career in teaching thirty years ago teaching the adult Hmong. This presentation was close to my heart and inspiring. I am so excited to add her resources to my library and expand the knowledge of my community.

The other sessions were effective and meaningful to me because the information shared was useful beyond the library setting. Topics covered incorporated the importance of soft skills. Working with others and having strong communication skills is essential in being successful in almost every job. Having a toolbox to use on how to work with difficult people is helpful when dealing with patrons, students, administration and coworkers. Infusing the soft skills when working with others allows for meaningful interactions with fewer difficulties. As an educator, it reinforced my beliefs that even if a child may not remember you, the experience you provide for them is always embedded in their memory. Treating others with respect, care and compassion is important when dealing with people of every age.

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?

I met several people at this conference and had many meaningful conversations. My daughter is graduating with a Library Science degree in June. After talking with the attendees of the conference, they explained that the field is facing many vacancies. This was encouraging in terms of thinking about future job opportunities for her, but also a bit disheartening hearing about why they believe there are so many vacant positions. Concerns covered issues from politics, difficult board members and funding. This made me view the conference as even more important for people in the field to attend. The networking for this profession provided at this conference is helpful because professionals provide helpful information with options to try to solve problem solving

solutions to make their home base run more efficiently. During my interactions with others I found the grant funding opportunities very valuable. Funding has been a challenge for my school district. Colleagues at this conference not only shared the grant funding opportunities with me, but even shared the proposals they wrote which resulted in their libraries receiving the funds. It was exciting for me to know about other grant opportunities that will allow me to incorporate new features to our library.

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

As a result of attending this conference, beyond adding resources written by Kao Kalia Yang, I plan on implementing in my library in the next six months are digitizing VHS and DVD materials and creating a Financial Literacy lesson for the students in our school using a new free resource provided by the ALA : Thinking Money for All Kids: Diverse and Inclusive Reads to Teach Young People about Money. It was developed in collaboration with FINRA Investor Education Foundation (FINRA Foundation). The resource that I was given includes a booklist developed in collaboration with librarian advisors. I will be adding the book choices into our library. This will be a great resource for our school to strengthen teaching Financial Literacy. Teaching Financial Literacy is close to being a requirement state wide. Incorporating these lessons into the library will be beneficial for students, staff and community members. Hopefully the grant opportunities I learned about at the conference will aid in the implementation of the digitizing process. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

WVLS Post-Conference Report
Esther O'Brien, Rhinelander District Library

1. Please highlight two sessions from the conference.

What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?

- **Build Facilitation Skills for Better Meetings and Increased Community Engagement** (Cindy Fesemyer & Amanda Standerfer)

Fesemyer and Standerfer made this presentation effective in two ways. First, they asked for audience participation. For example, they asked the whole group for examples of good and bad meetings; later, they also asked each table to discuss as a small group. This participation kept the audience engaged. Second, they gave practical, actionable facilitation techniques. For example, one of their suggested techniques was to monitor small group conversations, then when coming back as a group, say "I heard a group say..." even if no group actually mentioned that; in this way, the group can discuss topics that need to be brought up but haven't been.

The presentation was especially meaningful for me, not only because of what I can apply in the future, but also because what I've learned in the past. Many of the techniques discussed here—monitoring small groups, setting a question aside for later, asking open-ended questions—are also used in teaching. The presentation built on what I had already learned as a teacher, making it easy to process. Also, as I step into programming and community outreach, I will need facilitation skills to conduct meetings not only within the library, but also with community or patron groups. Interpersonal "soft skills" are invaluable in today's workforce, and this presentation was helpful in giving examples of best practices in these areas.

- **Project Management Lifecycle: Plan for Every Possibility** (Brittany Larson)

This was most useful presentation for me, and it was especially effective because Larson was realistic and supplemented the information with examples of real projects from her own library. She started out with the premise that the goal isn't to *eliminate* problems, but to *minimize* them. This is a realistic premise that doesn't use the high-minded, impossible rhetoric often seen in library and information science. This realism was supplemented by real-life examples of both successes and failures. For example, Larson described replacing the service desk—only to realize she had not arranged for the removal of the old service desk, an excellent example of the need to think the process through.

I can use the basic principles presented in many different areas of my work: marketing, programming, internal projects like shifting or weeding, discussing building proposals, assisting nonprofit organizations, etc.

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?
 - I mentioned during a session that I taught English in South Korea. Later, at lunch, another librarian asked me for the story behind that decision. As I explained it to her, I realized that I embrace many of the same principles as a librarian that I used as a teacher, just in different ways. Her thoughtful questions led to a meaningful conversation about why I chose to leave the discipline of education, why I chose to practice librarianship instead, and how both disciplines share similar principles. The conversation gave both of us a new perspective that we might not have seen otherwise.

3. As a result of attending this conference, what two things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?
 - Use **project planning** and **facilitation theories** to plan the library's role in starting a local literacy initiative. I have already begun to put this into practice, using my notes from the two sessions described to draft a step-by-step actionable process and a list of critical questions that need to be asked.

 - **Facilitate** both internal and external meetings. Internally, I plan to hold several meetings to garner and organize programming ideas for the two big, long-term programs that the library will run in the next year: the November Writing Challenge and the 2023 Summer Reading Program. Smart facilitation will allow all adult staff members to contribute their ideas and allow the group to discuss complications before they happen. I also hope to help facilitate an initial meeting of stakeholders for the literacy initiative.

WVLS Post-Conference Report
Cindy Wendt, Minocqua Public Library

1. Please highlight two sessions from the conference.

What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?

“Build Facilitation Skills for Better Meetings and Increased Community engagement” by Cindy Fesemyer and Amanda Standerfer.

Communication skills will always be crucial when working with the public. The structure of a meeting what to say and how to asks questions. An overview of digital resources was given.

“Infinite Tech Questions...Itty-Bitty Working Space” by Teresa Schmidt

My favorite session of the conference. A very practical guide on how to create a technology help program for our patrons. Excellent tips and tricks on how to educate yourself on technology and fitting it into your everyday work. Excellent presentation.

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 actual trip itself was memorable. The WVLS staff and Board did an amazing job organizing this trip. The chartered bus was a great way to travel. It was a fun road trip. They were very friendly and approachable during the entire conference. I was happy to see the WVLS group Wednesday night at the WAPL social. It was nice to feel included.

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

As the leader of the library's two adult book discussions, knowing how to better prepare for these groups will improve future discussions. And I am now on two WVLS committees and would like to contribute even more at those meetings.

Developing a realistic policy or plan on assisting patron with technology. It would benefit the staff as well as patrons. I plan on sharing this with the staff at the library.

WVLS Post-Conference Report

Jessica Zellers, T. B. Scott Free Library, Merrill

1. Please highlight two sessions from the conference.

What were the session topics? Who presented them? What made these presentations effective and meaningful to you?

In Times of Uncertainty – Get Strategic! presented by Cindy Fesemyer and Amanda Standerfer. They gave some good advice about selecting Board members. Try to get lawyers and accountants, if you can. If there's someone with a passion for reading who wants to serve, steer them toward the Friends group instead.

Build Facilitation Skills for Better Meetings and Increased Community Engagement – also presented by Cindy Fesemyer and Amanda Standerfer. As a fairly new director (just over one year of experience) it was nice to hear from other directors who sometimes have difficult meetings with their boards.

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?

I talked with a few people I didn't know, but networking wasn't a big part of the conference experience for me. I tried to figure out why that is and I think the biggest factor is that vendors weren't there. This was my first library conference in Wisconsin. At other conferences, I've made the most connections when visiting the exhibits hall or getting coffee with vendors.

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

One, I want to send other staff to conferences. I know it's important for admins to attend professional development, but I'm mid-career. I've been to dozens of conferences. So many of the WAPL sessions would have been more valuable to staff who've never been to a library conference.

Two, I'm going to start the groundwork for the next iteration of our strategic plan, which is due for revision next year. One of the session presenters pointed out that you shouldn't set goals like "increase circulation by x%" or "increase program attendance" because those factors are outside your control.