Exhibit 22

2024 PLA Conference WVLS Scholarship Reports

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WVLS

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Columbus, OH

WVLS Post-Conference Report
Allison Puestow, Tomahawk 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?

How to say the Hard Things – Brandi Cummings
This session was about crisis communication, what it entails, and how to respond. A lot of my staff are conflict avoidant, so learning ways to communicate effectively during a difficult topic. I want to share some of the tips I learned with them to help us all become better communicators. She talked about the 3 C's of crisis communication:
 Clarify – what do you really need to say simply, only answer the question being asked
 Connect – people are still human and we are here to serve them, we can't change everyone and we need to accept that
 Conflict – you have to be ok with sitting in conflict, we get stuck trying to change everyone instead of just saying the truth
I think going over this with my staff will hopefully help them when/if they have to deal with this situation.

Library accessibility – Caroline Smith & Kaitlyn Hodges
We were recently chosen for a national grant for accessibility, so I wanted to attend this session to see if there were areas that we should keep in mind when looking at accessibility at our library, like insulating the pipes around our sinks and making sure that our inside doors can be opened with the right amount of pressure.

Safety by design - Rick Amweg, Jeannine Purtell, Wendy Tressler, Rick Ortmeyer
The basis of this session was based on the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), and how to bring that into your library when designing or redesigning spaces. It was interesting to see how design choices can help mitigate risk of unwanted behavior while still being consistent with an open and welcoming environment. Seeing what challenges other libraries faced and how they made their spaces safer while also keeping it inviting and accessible was fascinating. They gave a lot of tips and examples, including how to work within your existing building without a total redesign.

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?

Thursday night I participated in Dine-Around Columbus. I met a member of the Columbus Public library and 4 other librarians from across the country. It was really nice to talk with them in a relaxed setting outside of the main conference. I've never been to a conference this huge before, so it was a little overwhelming; this dine-around was a nice change of pace and allowed me to actually get to know some librarians without talking over a crowd.

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 on going over the safety and accessibility sessions I attended with my director as we work towards completing the grant we received to make our library more accessible. Information form other sessions I plan on sharing with my staff gradually over our morning meetings, as well as at our next staff training day in June.

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

Most of the support I will need will be from my director, who I plan on working with to share and utilize the information I gathered. Any changes in regard to accessibility will probably be talked about to our staff and decided upon by our Board.

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?
   1 – "Telling Meaningful Stories: Sharing the Impact of Library Business Services" presented by Megan Janicki from the ALA and Audrey Barbakoff from Co/lab Capacity. This session was meaningful because I'm in the midst of expanding MCPL's outreach efforts to the local business community, including entrepreneurs, and I got some great ideas and learned about the ALA's "Libraries Build Business Playbook," which will be a tremendous help!
   2 – "HOW TO Start and Manage an 'Expert in Residence' Program at your library," presented by Natalie Dielman from the Way Public Library. This was one of the conference's 20-minute talks on its "How To" stage and was meaningful because an artist-in-residence program is something we've discussed at MCPL. I learned through this library's efforts that it doesn't have to be an artist – it could be an astronomy professor (like the Way Public Library) or a naturalist or almost anything else! Inspiring.
   3 – "Pivoting to Meet New Censorship Tactics" with Deborah Caldwell-Stone and Eric Stroshane from the ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom and Lisa Varga from the Virginia Library Association. This panel was a bit depressing but also super interesting and inspiring. There was a recap of recent book challenges and First Amendment law, and it was inspiring because it was a strong reminder of the responsibilities of public libraries to provide all kinds of material – and the ways libraries can be protected legally for doing so.

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   I had a brief conversation with author David Wroblewski (who also signed a copy of his new book!) and was happy to make the connection because he will be one of the headliner guests at MCPL's 2024 Central Wisconsin Book Festival.
   Otherwise, to be honest, one thing that struck me is the number of people I *didn't* talk to. Granted, I didn't go to any of the extracurricular networking events, but so many people seemed glued to phones before and after sessions that I found it difficult to strike up a conversation with random people. Maybe library workers aren't as social as I thought!

3. As a result of attending this conference, what two things do you plan on implementing at your library in the next six months?
   1 - Pieces of the "Libraries Build Business Playbook" and more outreach to the local business community about ways MCPL can foster and support local business and entrepreneurs
   2 – Working with our Marketing Specialist to find new and unique ways of telling MCPL's story and stories of our patrons. One of the last sessions I attended was called "Film Production and Storytelling as a form of Community Dialogue, Engagement and Advocacy," and I found it to be

inspiring with great ideas on how we might be able to better utilize some of the film production equipment we already have at MCPL, as well as storytelling through audio production.

4. What kind of support is needed for you to implement these two things? Support from your staff? Your Board of Trustees?
I already have the support from MCPL's administration to grow our outreach and support of the local business community (it's one of my employee goals for 2024). I guess more support from the business community about all the great things MCPL has to offer would be nice, though!
I don't see support as an issue for telling MCPL's stories, either. We've already done some minor marketing around National Library Week, and we're just about to embark on a 5-year strategic plan that contains some marketing initiatives as well.

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?

A. As someone who is cautiously optimistic about the advancements being made in regard to artificial intelligence, I attended a session called "RA Meets AI: Building and Launching a Reader's Advisory Kiosk." The presentation was led by three staff members from Ohio's Worthington Libraries: Kara Reuter (Digital Library Manager), Travis Clark (Web Developer), and Stefan Langer (Web Developer). The library wanted to give patrons another resource that would help them locate books of interest, thus the "Recommendation Station" was born. Situated near the library's indoor book return, this kiosk utilizes Polaris and NoveList in order to provide read-alikes to patrons when they scan the barcode of a book they enjoyed. The item can be placed on hold directly from the kiosk, or the patron can print the call number and look for it on the shelf. While my library (Marathon County Public Library) subscribes to NoveList, the information is somewhat hidden in our catalog and has to be sought after by patrons or staff. I believe a kiosk such as this would allow library users to more easily find books to add to their reading lists.

B. Public libraries are meant to be for everyone, but can everyone truly feel welcome when the language in our catalogs is outdated and disrespectful? The need to update subject headings with more modern terminology was discussed in a session called "Changing Subject Headings for a More Inclusive Library." Speakers included Lia Ryland, Cataloging Manager at the San Francisco Public Library (California), and Emily O'Neal, Technical Services Manager at the Deschutes Public Library (Oregon). The two presenters discussed making changes to vocabulary surrounding government protected classes: race, age, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, genetic information, citizenship, and veteran status. They gave numerous examples of terms to use (ie. "Inuit" and "undocumented immigrants"), and those to remove (ie. "Eskimo" and "illegal aliens") in order to be more respectful and to improve discoverability of diverse titles. Since I have been working to develop a collection that is diverse and inclusive, I believe it would be worthwhile to ensure that our catalogs, too, positively represent the members of our community.

C. "When you have nowhere else to turn, you should be able to turn to the library." Abby Black shared this sentiment in her session, which was entitled "Mamas Matter: Creating Restorative Spaces in Public Libraries for All Mothers." Now the Director at the Allendale Township Library (Michigan), Abby shared her traumatic birth story and lamented about how sad and lonely she felt after having her baby. She wanted a support group, but she didn't feel comfortable in a church and she was horrified at the idea of returning to the hospital to attend one of theirs. Out of this experience grew the idea of having a maternal support group at the library, a safe space where mothers could talk, listen, and offer understanding and advice. Abby also shared that, after implementing her "Mama Bear Support Group," the number of distracting caregiver

conversations during storytime decreased, as the adults had another outlet for sharing their stories and airing their worries. As an expecting mother, myself, I can already see the value in talking to other women about their experiences as new moms. Perhaps when I return from maternity leave in the new year I can provide a similar offering for local parents.

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At this particular conference, I felt like the exhibit hall was just as valuable as the sessions. During breaks between presentations, I regularly found myself wandering back to the exhibit hall to talk to as many of the nearly 200 exhibitors as possible.

One booth that caught my attention featured StackMap, a digital platform that maps your entire collection. Instead of relying solely on a call number in order to locate a book, StackMap offers users a visual representation of the aisle, bookcase, and shelf on which the item can be found. This service allows patrons to confidently find items within the library, which would perhaps be most useful when an item of interest has a shared call number. At MCPL, for example, an item with the call number J PILKE could be a beginning chapter book, juvenile fiction, or juvenile graphic novel.

Another exhibitor I found interesting demonstrated the use of Talpa Search, which the company refers to as a "Magical AI Search." Using this service, a searcher can type a vague description of an item--such as "vampire book with an apple on the cover"--in order to be presented with items in your library's collection that match that criteria. This search tool seems especially useful for times when people can't remember the title of a book, but they know several details about the storyline or cover image.

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

Two goals I have as a result of attending the PLA Conference are to offer a program to new and/or expecting parents and to create a map of the youth collections in Wausau. While I wouldn't be able to lead a recurring parental support group until the new year, I can reach out to organizations that are willing to provide information and resources to new or expecting families. With the help of these various organizations, I would love to host a "Baby Resource Fair"! I would also like to help set our patrons up for success by creating a map of MCPL Wausau's youth collections and hanging copies near the catalog computers in the Children's Department. A low-tech version of StackMap, these staff-created maps could prove just as valuable to patrons who like locating their own materials in the library.

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

Since neither of my goals would require a great deal of funding, general approval from my supervisor and team members are the primary support I would need. Any insight my colleagues and/or the community could provide in regard to what organizations to invite for a "Baby Resource Fair" would also be useful. At the program, I would like to have bags for attendees that contain useful items, such as swaddles, bottles, books, and toys; perhaps local businesses would be willing to donate items such as these. As for creating maps, I believe our Web and Graphic Design Specialist has already made a general map of the library. Together we should be able to add details to the map to point out the specifics of what types of materials--and call numbers-- can be found down each aisle.