

# WVLS Scholarship Report



Krista Blomberg



## **WVLS Post-Conference Report – Krista Blomberg/ Rib Lake Public Library**

*Please note: This report will be shared with the WVLS Board of Trustees and posted on the WVLS website in an upcoming board meeting packet.*

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 first highlight for me included all of the main sessions which were set up in a conversational atmosphere and highlighted BIPOC authors. That format was impactful and engaging. My two favorites were the first evening which was a conversation with Meg Medina -a Newberry Medal winner and the National Ambassador for Young Peoples Literature. I just loved her passion for kids being able to see themselves in the books that are available to them. My other favorite was Friday morning with Daniel Nayeri (a Newberry and Printz Award winner) who was born in Iran and immigrated to the United States. His sense of humor and passion for stories was something I will remember for a long time. I am very aware that my perceptions of people from the middle east are biased. Having a chance to hear Daniel share his stories and be able to relate to those stories even in a small way does something to chip away at that bias.

A second highlight was the session Optimizing Services for All Babies and Their Families presented by Betsy Diamant-Cohen founder and trainer of Mother Goose on the Loose and Tess Prendergast from the School of Information at the University of British Columbia. The first note that made a significant impact on me was learning about the research that shows how families affected by poverty who move from having almost nothing to having just a little experience the most marked improvement in the outcomes for the children's lives. Less stress and better support make them more able to engage with their children and to read to them. I came away from there encouraged that doing a little can be effective. A similar session: Turning the Page on Trauma talked about libraries as safe havens in a community. (presented by Ewa Wojciechowska, Gabrielle Stoller, and Georgette Spratling) They shared a Trauma Toolkit that I look forward to exploring in detail.

The third highlight for me was the session Building the Mosaic with Multilayered, Diverse Representations presented by Anne O'Brien and Ramona Caponegro and research by Dr. Krista Aronson. I learned all about using the Diverse Bookfinder as a resource for readers advisory to help put books into kids' hands where they will be able to see themselves represented in that book. I also learned about the CAT tool they provide to help libraries assess their collection regarding BIPOC characters and authors and work towards filling in gaps in their collection. I am excited about how we can improve our library with this tool.

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 so much fun at the networking event fundraiser for putting books in the hands of Kids in Crisis. I got to know the librarians attending from the Middleton Wisconsin library and learned about the considerable number of book challenges they have received in the past year or so.

That was eye opening and concerning and I also realized even more than I have in the past what a treasure we have here in Wisconsin with the CCBC and that it is an organization that serves not just Wisconsin, but our whole country when it comes to book challenges and also offering great book reviews.

I also attended a session on cooking in the library presented by Jacquelyn Chi, Kristina Selby, and Nadia Martinez. It inspired me to think about doing a program for kids in our library. During one of the breaks when I visited the Exhibit Hall, I had a chance to talk with the Charlie Cart organization because they were part of the cooking in the library session. I like to dream big. It makes life exciting. So, I decided to ask about the details of Charlie Carts and I followed up by having a great conversation with Kristie Hauer (WVLS) -who attended the conference with me - where we just dreamed about the possibilities of applying for a grant and sharing a Charlie Cart among our library consortium. You never know what could happen! This is the power of networking and great conversations.

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 I want to follow up with the Diverse Book Finder Resources, especially the tool for assessing and filling in gaps in our collection. I would like more individuals in our community to see themselves in the books on our shelves. And I would like to bookmark the readers advisory tool on our front desk for staff to become familiar with and to use.

Secondly, I would like to try out a cooking class or a short series of classes with older elementary age students. If it is a hit, it would be helpful information to include in a prospective grant application related to my dream of a Charlie Cart to share.

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

I already discussed the Diverse Bookfinder tools with the director Tammie Blomberg and my next step is to watch the video on how to create a file of our children's collection and upload it to the CAT tool. She also shared with me other tools for finding gaps in our non-fiction collection.

If I were to try out at least one cooking in the library program, a tip from the session talked about how much it helps to have another person available to help. We have a staff member to manage checkouts during a program, but I would like to find a volunteer for the class or someone else to run it and I would provide the backup support.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Wisconsin Valley Library Service for the growth opportunity they provided for me to attend by way of the ALSC scholarship. Neither my personal budget nor our library budget would have been able to make that possible. I came away from the conference energized and excited about the future. My world expanded and that is always worth an investment of time and resources. Thank you so much!

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