

WVLS Staff 2024 WLA Conference Report

Name: Kristie Hauer

1. **What was the title of a session you attended?** Overdue For Action: Naloxone and Harm Reduction Training for Wisconsin Libraries

- **What two things are you taking away that you heard or do you think are most important?**
 - Wisconsin created a Harm Reduction Response Team (HRRT) in 2023 by opening an office in Madison and primarily serving areas within two hours of Madison. In 2025, a second office will be opening in Rhinelander to serve northern Wisconsin.
 - This team can provide supplies, free-of-charge, directly to residents or organizations, like libraries, to have available to residents. These supplies include sterile injection equipment (ie, clean needles), Nasal NARCAN, intramuscular naloxone, Fentanyl and xylazine test strips, safer sex supplies, hygiene and comfort items, and Rapid HIV and hepatitis C testing. The HRRT even has a mobile van that visits 12 distribution sites per month.

- **Were there any key websites the presenter shared or resources that people should check out?**

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aoda/harm-reduction.htm>

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

Extremely positive! The audience was interested and asked many questions. Many people left with lots of harm reduction supplies for their libraries.

2. **What three things did you enjoy most about the conference?**

- I always enjoy keynote speakers.
- Networking opportunities!
- I like the opportunity to support librarians I know by attending the sessions they present.

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Name: Jamie Matczak

1. What was the title of a session you attended? Library Programs Idea Exchange - For New (and Not So New Attendees)

Designed for first-time conference attendees (but open to everyone) this session will offer you the chance to meet people while engaging in an informal discussion about programs offered in all types of libraries.

Bring your stories about programs that worked well (or did not go well), and your program wish list. Afterwards, we'll head over to the luncheon keynote together.

You'll come away with some new ideas and some new connections!

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

- One of the questions asked was, “what has been some of your most successful programs?”
 - Tea party event as hybrid; allowed for intergenerational programming
 - Bluey party - passive program in the meeting room. Available for two days. Offered crafts, etc.
 - Monthly craft in October – spooky painting transformations involving painting on existing paintings.
 - The library’s meeting room has a stage. The youth adults group did a play at the library. Library staff helped, but much of it was student run using royalty-free plays.
 - Make-and-take gingerbread house kits
 - Winter reading challenge incorporating the Iditarod theme.
 - Teen gaming
 - (Academic library) drop-in programs work best with college students; stations to create friendship bracelets and ghost paintings have been very popular (using stock images and paint markers)
 - Escape room events; events that require kids to use critical thinking
 - [Woodsy Dude](#) (woodsydude) – survival themed events
- Another question asked was “what programs have been a disaster?”
 - Open lab times each week; students only came if they received extra credit
 - Monthly space for fiber arts – never took off.
 - Tween book club – initially successful; once they introduced gaming events for
 - Digital art series -people attended, but the topic area was so broad and skill levels were so diverse, it was too difficult to teach.
 - Slime experiment – accidentally bought the wrong kind of glue that didn’t stick together. Made lots of goop!

Were there any key websites the presenter shared or resources that people should check out?

- People shared where they receive their program ideas:
 - Programming Librarian Interest Group on Facebook
 - Pinterest
 - Local newspaper/media
 - Post-program surveys
 - TikTok, social media channels

- Keep a spreadsheet/running list of past programs, notes, past ideas
- [“Teachers Pay Teachers”](#) website
- Homeschool parents
- Partnerships with local groups, such as Master Gardeners, etc.
- Eavesdrop” on other libraries around the country

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

Excellent! It was well-attended, and most attendees took turns to speak or add ideas. The questions and discussion areas changed frequently to keep the content fresh.

3. What three things did you enjoy most about the conference?

- Seeing old friends/colleagues and meeting new people. I helped coordinate the professional headshots and it was fun talking with people who said, “So, you’re Jamie? I see a lot of your emails.” It was nice to talk to people face-to-face who I have not seen in years.
- The variety of sessions in terms of content and speakers.
- Celebrating Kris and the other award winners!

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Name: Brenda Walenton

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

Games, Learning and Libraries: Harnessing the Power of Play in Wisconsin

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

1. Games shouldn't be thought of as whatever funds you have left you will put in the collection - because it will draw in a large audience.
2. There are a lot of resources to help build the games collection at the library

- **Were there any key websites the presenter shared or resources that people should check out?**

Yes there were many links embedded in the presenter's powerpoint.

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

The presenter was entertaining which I think the audience enjoyed. There was a lot of dialogue and many stayed afterwards to ask questions.

2. What three things did you enjoy most about the conference?

1. See people that I don't get to see often.

2. Working with the exhibitors.
3. Being on-stage with Jamie for the Exhibit Hall Closing Showcase.

WVLS Staff 2024 WLA Conference Report

Name: Erica Brewster

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

“Why is the Librarian Paid Less than Everyone Else?”
Kari Preuss, Elroy Public Library

Asking for a raise is not easy. Listen to the harrowing journey of a plucky small-town Library Director who asked, was approved, was denied, was devastated, and then was determined to prove her worth so she would not get denied again. Hopefully you get inspired to stand up for more than just your patrons, and begin to stand up for yourself.

This was a case example of a library director that was grossly under-staffed and then realized she and her employees were grossly underpaid both by library market rate and compared to other employees of the city – both equally and less qualified and doing equal or less-skilled work.

• What two things are you taking away that you heard or do you think are most important?

- While the details of this story were unique to Kari Preuss in Elroy, Wisconsin, the overarching theme and scenario were frighteningly spot-on to the experiences of many library directors and their staff, specifically in:
 - o Staffing/budget limitations forcing a library director to regularly work more than 40 hours a week, sometimes to the point of leading to serious mental and physical health problems.
 - o Library boards not aware of or empowered to act on their responsibility to advocate for budget for their library.
 - o Pay/benefits for library staff (director and others) grossly lower or less than other comparables – either other libraries or other municipal department peers. Often the librarians are unaware of these equities for years.
 - o Library staff/directors do not generally advocate for pay equity, or generally do not make a habit of asking for pay increases.
 - o Library staff are predominately female.
 - o When library staff/directors do advocate for their librarians, they are often met with apathy or outright denial.
 - o Library directors are often more comfortable advocating for others than they are asking for themselves.
 - o Library directors often spend countless hours and lots of energy over the course of years to create a foundation on which they then are able to ask and receive equal consideration.
 - o In almost every case, open records requests can and do show in stark black-and-white that these inequities do exist, and often without explanation.

- Other WVLS library directors in the room strongly related to this experience but don't feel they can be as effective in turning their situation around.

• Were there any key websites the presenter shared or resources that people should check out?

- League of Wisconsin Municipalities - <https://www.lwm-info.org/>
- SRLAAW – Compensation Study - <https://srlaaw.org/compensation-study/>

• What was the audience reaction to this session? What kinds of feedback was given?

- The session attendees strongly related to the experience shared in the session. Many expressed admiration for the effort made by the library director both in advocating for her own needs and for the needs of her library and staff.
- There was an air of general relief in the room to hear such a frustrating and common experience finally being talked about openly.
- Post session discussion revolved around how and if this could be replicable in other communities, and concern about the amount of energy involved in seeking equitable/deserved pay – whether the effort and risk of failure made it worth it.

2. What three things did you enjoy most about the conference?

- The opportunity to reconnect in person with colleagues from WVLS libraries and around the state. Each year it seems to get a little bit easier to have productive conversations in person in the time allowed.
- The chance to celebrate Kris Adams Wendt's induction into the Wisconsin Library Hall of Fame!
- Seeing some unique sessions on the docket on topics I wouldn't have expected, such as the one detailed above.