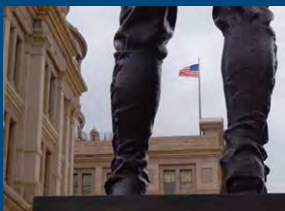


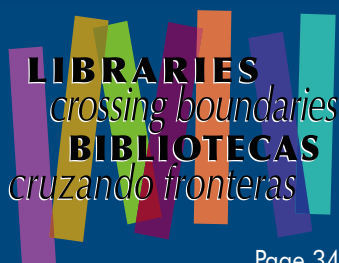


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Strategic Initiatives Webinar Series:
LEADERSHIP



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ABOUT THE COVER: The imagination and creativity that brands Austin Public Library's *LiteratureLIVE!* program is reflected in this whimsical image of APL youth services staff. FROM LEFT: Karen Carlson, Devona Carpenter, Ambray Gonzales, Kathleen Houlihan, Ellen Scott; SEATED CENTER: Anita Joye Rizley.

PHOTO BY Patrick Hughey, APL Senior Graphic Designer; used by permission of Austin Public Library.

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★ *President's Perspective*

I recently read with much interest and dismay a posting on TLA's TLC listserv from a school librarian who was "no longer proud to be a librarian," disheartened by the rate of job cuts in the profession across the state. I truly felt her frustration, as did many others, based on the number of responses she received. Yet, I was also extremely proud of librarians who responded positively, urging their colleague to continue fighting, despite the obstacles.

To be sure, many of our library budgets and jobs are precariously perched in this time of budget shortfalls. Librarians across Texas are being told to brace themselves and be ready to work with less (as though we haven't already been working with less for a long time!). Furthermore, I understand that when we see articles in newspapers telling the story of another funding cut to a library program in Texas, it is easy to succumb to a feeling of helplessness.

However, let me be clear: to despair during these tough times cannot be an option! It is the time for us to rethink, retool, and recharge. I believe we are being provided a perfect opportunity to advocate for library programs and positions at unprecedented levels. For example, every one of us has received an email requesting that we play a pivotal part in advocacy by emailing, writing, or calling state and national legislators to vote for bills that support education and libraries.

To those of you that have heeded the call and followed through with a letter to the editor, I want to thank you for embracing your commitment to our communities and the profession.

However, I know that there are some of us that have never placed a call or written a letter or email, or never have visited with an elected official regarding funding for libraries. To those that have not taken action to advocate for the library profession, do not despair! We need your

Time to Rethink, Retool, and Recharge

help now more than at any other time in recent memory. We have an extremely tough and combative legislative session ahead of us, and we need the collective strength of our wills and voices to meet our challenges head-on in order to support and strengthen libraries in Texas.

The following is how you can advocate for libraries:

Rally for Libraries: For those of you who took the time from work, some on your own dime, and participated in TLA's Library Legislative Day on February 16, 2011 in Austin...a deeply-felt thank you! But, it is not too late for those of us who could not be there. The Legislature is still in session and nothing has more impact than letters from constituents. Send emails, write letters, or call your legislator.

Birds of a Feather: If you plan to attend the TLA conference in Austin, add the Rally at the Capitol to your dance card. This event is not to be missed. Let your legislators see and hear you from their offices!

The Power of the Pen: Write an article or editorial for the local paper. Legislators read their local newspapers in order to keep the pulse of their constituency. Equally as powerful is a written letter to your state representative or state senator. Emails and calls are great, but the time and effort that goes into writing and mailing a letter shows added determination and has even greater impact.

Get on Your Soapbox: Be ready to speak at a moment's notice to groups and organizations in your community about what libraries do for their communities. You have the numbers and facts in order to execute the "elevator" speech most effectively.

Catch the Spirit: Mobilize individuals in your community to "speak" in support of the library by organizing town meetings or small meetings with local stakeholders and legislators.



BY
MARIBEL
CASTRO

Where One or More Gather: Work in tandem with a group or entity that has the same goals. The Texas Association of School Librarians and the Texas Parent Teacher Association (TxPTA), for example, have forged an incredible partnership because both groups understand how they can help one another forward their agendas.

Strength in Numbers: If you are reading this article and are not a member, now is the time to join TLA. Our professional organization works tirelessly to support librarians and advocate for legislation and funding.

I challenge each of you individually to have a look at ways to advocate and commit yourself to some key "opportunities" to advocate for our profession. I, personally, will always answer the call to advocate, because I do not want to see another library have to shorten its hours, cut services and resources, or worse, close its doors. I also do not want any more of our colleagues to lose their jobs. We know that school boards, higher education administrations, and elected officials are constantly looking over their shoulders to see what others have done with regard to cuts and assess the possibilities of doing the same locally.

How you choose to heed the call is entirely up to you. All politics are local, and you know what works best for your community. There are so many ways and venues to showcase the value of our libraries and our work. Please visit the TLA or the ALA websites for more tools and techniques to help you advocate. I am challenging each one of you to advocate in support of libraries this critical year. 🌟

We are now at the mid-point of the state's legislative session, which must deal with the worst budget situation in memory. With practically every sector of government on the verge of steep cuts, lawmakers and the public are faced with untenable choices. If you've been following the status of statewide library funding proposals, you know that the initial state budget would eliminate all state funding for virtually every statewide library program.

Without state support at some level, the real loss is not just funding; it's the erosion of the overall concept of libraries and the role of government in supporting them. The dragon we face is an attitude too consumed with short-term goals to recognize and prevent the deep and deleterious impact of blind, wholesale cuts.

I realize that many people out there do believe the state should cut the budget however is needed to live within revenue projections. I do understand that concern. My response is that libraries, probably more than most institutions, know what it means to do more with less. Our very nature is to save money by sharing resources. Library programs have taken substantial cuts over the last few years, and the state budget proposals cut library programs disproportionately to other programs in state government. The State Library's state funding was cut by a whopping 70%. Libraries are willing to do their part, but zeroing out programs goes beyond "doing our part." It's a mindless slaughter of programs and services that work, are valued, and are cost-efficient. Making hard budget decisions is necessary; making bad ones is not.

With a state budget of \$77.3 billion (state funds only), there is surely a way of providing funding (about \$32 million cut from library programs) to keep library programs viable. That state funding for

library programs is only 0.0004% of the all state funds. Surely, we can come up with some of that 0.0004% for programs that serve just about every school, community, and institution of higher education in the state.

In all our messaging, we talk about the value of libraries – what they contribute to education, economic and workforce development, college readiness, digital literacy, all literacies, health, and research and development. The list goes on. And yet, in this litany of achievements, so much of what libraries do and *mean* remain untold. This story is the one we cannot let lawmakers ignore.

For every person who uses a library or whose enterprise depends on other people who use libraries, there is an individual story that represents more than a search for books or a website, facts or figures. The story is one about exploration and transformation: from reality and the present to the limitless universe of possibility found in literature; from the skills and information we start with to the knowledge and expertise we make our own. The collective library story is a deeply personal narrative of millions upon millions of lives – of answers found, curiosity whetted and satisfied, dreams chased, skills mastered, tests aced, jobs gained, discoveries achieved, pleasures found, inspiration attained, and hope nourished.

The sum of these experiences, for individuals and our communities, schools, and state, offers opportunity, benefit, and betterment for one and for the whole. Libraries are organic creations of our will and ambition, of our compassion and commitment to one another and the greater good. In fact, it is impossible to overstate the resonance between the American ideal of individual enterprise and equal opportunity and the institution

of libraries. Libraries are not so much structures of "government" as they are structures of citizens' collective investment and belief in themselves.

Such a grand thing, such an important vision and achievement, cannot be abandoned. We must hold accountable anyone whose view fails to encompass the full breadth of library services.

The proposed budget has, if nothing more, given us the imperative to look broadly at our institutions. If passed, the ramifications of this budget are not just confined to the allocation of dollars or even the reshaping of library services. This budget speaks to a broader framework – one where fiscal expediency overrides long-term advancement, where dollars cap dreams, and where a high bar of measure is replaced with a low one.

We must rally as never before, and we must engage our community and mobilize others to let our voices be heard. Please, I ask you all to commit yourselves as never before – to take initiative to write, email, phone, and communicate with elected officials and the public throughout the session. One email or letter is not enough. We must engage on multiple levels and in multiple ways. Join the campaign to save Texas libraries. ★

GET INVOLVED

- Send a Message: <http://capwiz.com/ala/tx/home/>
- Take Action: www.txla.org/take-action
- Save Texas Libraries Petition: www.ipetitions.com/petition/texas_libraries/
- Save Texas Libraries Cause Page: www.causes.com/causes/584917
- TLA Facebook: www.facebook.com/TexasLibraryAssociation

Succession Planning & Management: A Key Leadership Responsibility Emerges

BY PAT HAWTHORNE

Changes in demographics of the library workforce have been well documented in the library literature for a number of years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts an average growth rate of 8 percent and favorable job opportunities, noting that large numbers of retirements are expected in the coming decade (*Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-2011*). While it is unknown if future retirement patterns will change due to economic circumstances, it is clear more than 40 percent of librarians are in their 50s as of 2005 and quickly moving into the “retirement-eligible” range, according to data compiled for the American Library Association (*Planning for 2015, 2009*). This ALA report also indicates the profession may not see massive declines in total numbers of librarians (approximately 105,000 credentialed librarians nationwide) due to retirements because the number of young librarians is increasing and library school enrollments are surging. No matter how the demographics are viewed, the combination of pending retirements and the influx of new professionals will drive demand for both managers and technical experts making a strong case for libraries to begin focusing on succession planning and management in a more deliberate and mindful manner over the next decade.

In the 1950s, the private sector initiated succession planning developing formal, rigid, lock-step, often confidential written plans with the primary goal of identifying “replacements” for key executives who might leave the organization due to retirement or death. In the 1980s, major shifts in succession planning and management occurred as a shortage of executive leadership and talent hit many organizations. The “outsider CEO” became the norm for the first time, and executive search firms emerged as a key player in brokering talent. The increased mobility of executives coupled with high CEO failure rates in private and publicly held corporations coincided with more Gen Xers in key roles. (And we should note that Gen Xers and other young workers do not view organizations or the employment contract in the same way as previous generations.) All this led to what might be considered a new generation of succession planning and management (SPM) initiatives that have moved beyond the corporation and into other environments. Libraries of various types and their parent organizations (higher education institutions, city and county governments, school districts, and

other public entities) have begun to adopt a number of SPM initiatives to meet existing and emerging needs for managerial and technical talent.

Succession Planning and Management (SPM)

Throughout its evolution, SPM has always been a “proactive attempt to ensure continuity of leadership by cultivating talent from within the organization through planned development activities,” according to William J. Rothwell, one of the leading experts in the area (Rothwell, 2005). SPM is about developing talent and building sufficient bench strength to ensure the organization’s future.

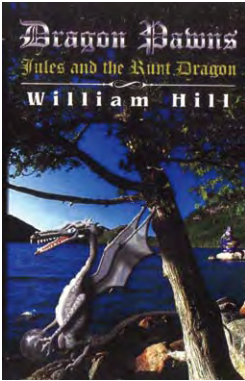
Succession planning and succession management are not the same thing. Succession planning is active planning that ensures an organization will have the *right people* in the *right place* at the *right time* for the *right job*. Succession management is managing implementation of the plan and the internal processes. When successfully paired, SPM initiatives anticipate changes in environment and organizational needs and provide the necessary intellectual capital.

Today, SPM initiatives are not just found in private and public corporations or family-owned businesses but in government agencies and public sector organizations as well. SPM is less formal and rigid and more open and less confidential. Many initiatives are designed to develop a pool of talent that becomes a pipeline for future workforce instead of training individuals for a specific job. This new SPM model can work well for libraries, most of which are public sector organizations that adhere to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action laws.

It is also important to distinguish succession planning from replacement planning, workforce planning, and talent management. Replacement planning is a form of risk management that focuses on how to replace key leaders in catastrophic circumstances such as 9/11. Workforce planning is a broader and more comprehensive approach to planning for overall workforce needs, not just for leadership or specific skills and knowledge, and it may involve extraordinary growth in workforce needs or significant downsizing. Talent management is related to the several human resources processes that involve recruiting, on-boarding, and development. It is not uncommon to refer to SPM initiatives and activities as workforce planning or talent management or to embed SPM initiatives into broader workforce planning and talent management programs.

In recent years, the focus for SPM has been “development” oriented and seeks to develop and retain talent. Such initiatives have moved from identifying and grooming a specific individual for a specific job or role to an emphasis on the identifying the potential of individuals for multiple roles that may be available in the future. Supported by the Center for Creative Leadership’s research in the 1980s, one of the keys to this shift has been the recognition that *jobs* and *bosses* are the best tools to developing individuals (Fulmer and Conger, 2004). Jobs that

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require an individual to develop new knowledge, skills, and competencies coupled with bosses that mentor properly are the keys to developing talent that has depth and breadth as well as a sophisticated set of skills and competencies to deal with the unknown.

Types of Succession Planning & Management

Two key types of SPM exist – managerial and technical. Both of these have relevance in the library profession.

Managerial SPM focuses on the *vertical level* of the organization and emphasizes *who*. The primary purpose is to develop knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies for positions up the organizational chart and in individuals likely to move up within the organization. This type of SPM is not just for the highest level of job, but for all levels of leadership in the organization. In libraries, leadership development or managerial training programs often fall into this category.

Building on the definition of succession planning above, managerial SPM not only seeks the *right people* in the *right place* at the *right time* for the *right job* but wants them to achieve the *right objectives* for the organization. Keep in mind the right objectives are strategic ones.

The challenges in this arena of SPM are to ensure your program does not seek to produce clones of incumbents when future

conditions and circumstances may require a different set of skills and competencies. It is important to remember successful performance at one organizational level does NOT guarantee success at a different level. One of the most critical components of managerial SPM initiatives is to make sure managers are held accountable for developing talent in their staff and not just for day-to-day or operational results.

Technical SPM focuses on the *horizontal level* of the organization and emphasizes *what*. The primary purpose is to develop knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies for positions and functions across the organizational chart. Technical SPM initiatives in libraries create a pipeline that ensures functional and operational needs can be met. In libraries, many career development programs that support the move of paraprofessionals into the professional librarian ranks fall into the technical SPM category.

In technical SPM, the ultimate goal is to isolate, distill, transmit the *right information* to people at the *right time* to ensure continuity of operations and provide foundation for future improvements. The emphasis is on the transfer of knowledge among and between individuals and on how implicit and explicit experiences of running a process or operations results in tacit knowledge that represents the technical know-how the organization is seeking to transfer.

Rothwell writes that the first step in planning a technical SPM initiative is to clarify what work processes are key to organizational mission. With that information, you can then identify who possesses the specialized knowledge about those processes and how the processes are performed as next steps in developing the plan. The next logical step is to determine how to transfer that information to other employees to ensure efficient and effective continuity of operations. Monitoring gaps in knowledge is achieved by continuous evaluation of results.

Best SPM Practices for Libraries

Effective SPM initiatives are built, implemented, and managed with best practices in mind. The key practices outlined below can get a library started on developing its own SPM initiative.

Keep it simple. Understanding what you are trying to accomplish is critical. You need to know if your initiative is focused on developing a managerial or technical plan. Once you know your goal, develop the program to be simple, easy to use, and make sure that all who use the system have easy access and that it is not bureaucratic or complicated. Find out if your parent institution has resources to help you or has a SPM initiative in place that you can use.

Secure the commitment and involvement of upper level management and any board involved with your organization. Involve all the key players, not just the leader. Seek input from key players on how a programmatic initiative should be developed and the purpose, what components it should have,

and who should be involved. Keep them updated on progress. No SPM program can succeed without the support of all of top management. While programs and initiatives are often driven by top management's interest, a truly effective program needs to have support from all the key leaders and their active participation in development of the program, planning, implementation, and assessment.

Analyze where your organization is in terms of workforce – develop a demographic profile of your staff. Ideally, the demographic profile should be done by the human resources professional or department to ensure this is not handled in a discriminatory manner. The demographic profile will provide a clear picture of the present and help to get a handle on the future. Specifically, you want to list leadership and line management positions and identify the critical ones. Profile your workforce in terms of age ranges of incumbents with an emphasis on determining who is retirement-eligible. Organizations often identify “retirement-eligible” as those who are at the minimum retirement age who have vested in the retirement program and have a specific number of years of service; this does not mean you will lose those individuals to retirement, but it does expose your vulnerability if a retirement incentive program is launched. You can define these parameters based on your organization's retirement program and your experience with retirement patterns. Outline projections for retirements and possible resignations to the extent that you can *without talking* with individual employees as this can be viewed as discriminatory. Your projections should be based on your experience with retirement patterns and turnover rates. Document what you can about specifics for individuals – their tenure, background, expertise, etc., and other factors that relate to the job they are in with an emphasis on what you need to plan to replace. One medium-sized academic library in the West once did this exercise and was surprised to learn 9 of its 10 department heads were retirement eligible and all of those left within two years. The demographic profile gave the library two years to do some planning and training and put assistant department heads in place to avoid catastrophic consequences due to the loss of key people and institutional knowledge.

Using the demographic profile of your workforce and your organizational charts, identify the critical/key positions you will need to have candidates for in the future. Outline why they are critical. For technical positions, you might identify “best-in-class” performers and analyze their performance to see why the job is critical. Look at job descriptions and identify critical knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies your organization needs going forward. Project potential changes in organizational structure such as growth, downsizing, or restructuring. Define the future in intervals – 1, 3, 5, or 10 years out. This step is a risk assessment of sorts and helps you identify risks if you lose key people.

Determine if your organization needs managerial or technical succession planning and management or both. For managerial, identify the leadership competencies you currently have and those you are likely to need in the future. For technical planning, identify the specific expert knowledge and skills needed and likely to be needed, particularly emerging needs.

Identify potential gaps. This might relate to positions you have been unable to fill in recent recruitments or critical positions where you may not have potential candidates, particularly not internal candidates. Determine if the external market will be able to meet your needs. If not, determine other options for filling these gaps short-term and long-term.

Identify individuals currently in your organization who might make up the talent pool or pipeline. Seek nominations from supervisors. Encourage self nominations. Make any initiative or program open to participation by the widest possible group of individuals. This ensures that your program does not discriminate or violate EEO/AA and will foster diversity. Develop knowledge and understanding of career goals and aspirations of those who are involved in your initiative.

Involve the employees you have identified and selected for participation in the initiative. Talk to them about the goals and the critical needs for managerial and technical succession that you have identified. Discuss how they may help to fill those needs. Outline career paths to facilitate career planning and development so that individuals can prepare themselves for multiple positions that may be open in the future and be able to successfully compete for such opportunities. Investing in developing the managerial skills of an assistant department head in acquisitions may position the individual to be department head in access services in a few years.

Keep in mind that you are not grooming specific individuals for specific jobs, but providing potential candidates with what is needed to prepare them for future opportunities. This is often referred to as “creating the pipeline,” and libraries have been doing this particularly well in “grow your own” initiatives designed to mentor paraprofessionals into the professional ranks. Keep the program developmentally oriented instead of focused on replacement. It is not possible to know what the future holds. If your program focuses on continual growth and development

of talent within your organization, you are more likely to reap the benefits than if the program focuses on specific job titles and responsibilities. You can accomplish your goals by identifying educational opportunities, providing professional development and continuing education funding and opportunities, offering job-specific training, coaching and mentoring, creating special or “stretch” assignments that help an individual build new skills, and investing in staff by sending them to leadership development programs such as the TALL Texans Leadership Development Institute.

Monitor progress and evaluate results. Ask individuals who have participated in and benefitted from the program to self assess progress, learning, results, success, and experiences. Seek assessments from supervisors of program participants. Build assessment into the annual performance appraisal process and into your overall performance management system. Analyze that impact on recruitment and the ability to fill vacancies. Discuss progress with key players and boards annually.

Successful SPM initiatives are linked to organizational strategy, have sponsors and owners, can identify talent and talent pools within the organization, are linked to individual development and organizational learning, and are continually assessed and calibrated based on the changing and emerging needs of the organization.

Pat Hawthorne is director of research & learning services for the Albert B. Alkek Library at Texas State University – San Marcos.

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Leadership: *Some Personal Thoughts*

BY DANA C. ROOKS

Leadership is a topic that abounds in the literature and is the subject of innumerable conferences, workshops, seminars, webinars, and week-long university institutes. From self-help books and motivational speeches on how to be a leader in 10 easy steps to the hefty scholarly treatise, leadership is a perennial hot topic. However, being neither a self-help guru nor a sage academician, I offer only random observations and disparate thoughts in this article. So read on at your own peril.



The first question I'll ask is: why would you **not** want to develop as a leader? Leadership is not about management or administration. Leaders exist at all levels, in all organizations. Leadership is about vision and the ability to inspire others to share that vision. It is about the larger group and not you as an individual. It is about trust and credibility. Leadership is about relationships. It is about influence, not command. The test of a true leader is whether those being led are following orders or following a leader. Your skill as a leader is measured by the willingness of those around you to follow.

Leadership is not a negative; it's a positive force and vital to the success of any group. How many of us have been a part of a group where there is an ineffective designated leader or no leader at all? It is a very negative experience. The group tends to drift without any real focus and without establishing or achieving beneficial goals and outcomes. The leader brings focus and direction, gains commitment or buy-in from the group, establishes strategies, monitors progress, and ensures the positive outcome.

Key Traits of a Leader

Leadership is often defined by individual qualities or traits. These are subjective and dependent on evaluation and interpretation by those you may be trying to lead. Most leadership treatises will list anywhere from three to 10 or more qualities, and there is clearly no universally accepted definitive list. So I'll take the liberty of listing some of the qualities I most seek in a leader.

First, and perhaps, foremost is the "honest broker." I want a leader who does not manipulate or play games. Someone who doesn't try to slide something past me, or worse yet, lie to me. If the leader can't promise something, then don't do so to placate me. If a mistake is made, a leader accepts responsibility, apologizes if necessary, and begins the process of correcting the mistake or if necessary or appropriate, moving on to a new plan. As the clichés go, if you've never made a mistake, you've never tried anything new. A failure is a success if you learn from it and move forward. There is no progress without risk and no success without failure. But enough of the quaint but true platitudes. A leader's job is to effect change, to try new approaches and new ideas, and to be the honest broker in the process.

The second quality I look for in a leader is someone who has a vision of where they want to take the group. They need to be able to communicate that vision so that the group understands and shares the vision. Too many times individuals focus on the issues, problems, and frustrations of the immediate. Leaders look ahead. They see what could be. They take time to think strategically and to plan. Their vision is very clear to them, and they are passionate about it. They effectively and honestly articulate and communicate their vision to others. They inspire others to see and to believe. Truly effective leaders recognize that their role is more to lead and inspire others than to do the tasks themselves. Leaders may need experts to carry out their vision, but they don't need to possess a level of expertise themselves.

The willingness to give credit to the group rather than the individual is another quality I seek in a leader. A leader recognizes that if the group succeeds, the leader will receive the credit without having to lay claim to that credit. A group rarely succeeds without a leader, and a leader will never succeed without the support of the group.

I also want a leader to lead, not command. I want to follow because I believe in the leader, not because I'm obligated. Controlling micro-managers are not leaders. This behavior is typically a result of a lack of confidence, insecurity, or incompetence. Leaders are confident but exhibit humility. They are secure in their own abilities and help others develop their skills, abilities, and talents. Leaders demonstrate competency. They provide guidance and direction, not control. There is no need to take credit for the contributions of others. Leaders recognize and celebrate achievements of the individual and the team.

The test of a true leader is whether those being led are following orders or following a leader.

Your skill as a leader is measured by the willingness of those around you to follow.

Leadership Styles

Just as there is no single quality that defines a leader, there is no single style of leadership. Leadership manifests itself through many diverse styles. There is the quiet leader. This person is not the first to speak; she is not the loudest, or the most dynamic speaker. Yet when this individual speaks, people listen, her views have influence and credibility with the group, and people tend to follow her lead.

At the other end of the continuum is the dynamic charismatic leader. The person speaks with a commanding presence. These leaders inspire people to achieve great things. They elevate people and organizations to aspirational goals. Their words are confident and assured but not disparaging of other views. This leader will often have a loyal and enthusiastic following in a wide-range of venues.

Most of us fall somewhere between these two extremes. However, that does not mean we are any less effective as leaders or that we will have less impact on the success of the groups we lead. Leadership can be effective in many different styles. Effective leaders adapt their style to the people they are leading and the mandates of the situation they are confronting. Leading a large complex organization as an appointed CEO dictates a different leadership style than leading a small volunteer organization.

Setting a new direction to transform a failed organization requires a different approach than leading the annual rummage sale for your church. However, ineffective leadership will assure failure in each instance.

Leadership Skills and Capabilities

As with leadership traits, I do not believe there is a definitive and guaranteed list of skills or capabilities one must possess to be a leader. There are certainly some skills that help us succeed but, as in all endeavors, leaders will vary in their strengths and weaknesses. I do believe there are some broad constants for successful leaders. They must possess the willingness to learn continuously, to adapt constantly, to be open to others, and to tolerate risk.

The world around us is changing at an unparalleled pace. New generations don't think, respond, or expect the same things as previous generations. A leader must understand, respect, and learn to adapt to these changing values and expectations if they expect this new generation to follow. While leaders must not betray their own values, they have to respect the different values of other generations and other cultures by adapting their own leadership skills. The leader is catalyst and facilitator, encouraging the team, merging and blending various talents and expectations to a final perfect mix for success.

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To lead you have to know where you want to go. The leader is at the front. The leader must see the path clearly, or the group may wander aimlessly or become lost. This does not mean that the leader determines the path alone. But it is the leader's job to keep the group on the path.

Leaders must be willing to accept risk and accountability. Success will come with praise and recognition for the leader. However, the leader must be willing to accept responsibility when the outcome is less than a success. More importantly, the leader must bring the group back to a path toward success.

Leadership is also about relationships. Building relationships with key stakeholders and individuals in positions to help you achieve goals, to get tasks completed, or offer advice and counsel is invaluable to effective leadership. However, the relationship must be mutually beneficial. You have to be willing to go out of your way to assist the person if you expect the same response from them. It is much harder to say no to someone with whom you have established such a relationship. If you ask someone to follow your lead, to take on an extra task when they don't have time, to change their schedule because you need them to be some place, or to take a risk because you asked, you must be willing to reciprocate and follow their lead in other instances.

A leader must be aware of the environment. They must be politically astute. You can't lead in the dark. As leader, your job is often to assess reality. It is to identify roadblocks, scout the landscape, recognize the key players, and determine a strategy. The leader enlists a team to achieve the vision and guides the group to the successful conclusion.

A leader is visible but not dominating. Talent and initiative are encouraged, not disparaged. Risk is rewarded not penalized. Credit is shared. Praise is abundant. A true leader will receive credit; they don't have to take it. A leader who identifies outstanding individuals and recruits them to a team or group will receive credit for everything that group achieves without ever claiming credit.

Final Thoughts

Leadership is incredibly rewarding. To recognize something that needs to be achieved, to get a group of individuals to come together as a team, and to develop a strategy and make a difference is an unmatched feeling. I don't believe leaders are born; they are made. I hope each of you will decide to develop your skills as leaders, in your library, your profession, your community. You won't find yourself in the lead on everything, but each of you has talents, skills, ideas, and passion which can benefit all of us under your leadership at the right moment, in the right situation.

Look around you. Whose leadership do you follow? Why? What do they do? What can you learn from them to enhance your own leadership effectiveness? Take advantage of exemplary opportunities to learn or improve your leadership skills such as TLA's TALL Texans Institute. Volunteer for service opportunities within TLA and its divisions and round tables. Observe, learn, and practice your own leadership skills.

Leaders change the world in large and small ways every day. Whether transforming a failed organization, leading a new initiative, influencing a better way to complete an old task, or convincing others to serve or volunteer in their communities, leaders make a difference. I will end as I began; why would you **not** want to develop as a leader? ★

Dana C. Rooks is dean of libraries and the Elizabeth D. Rockwell Chair at the University of Houston Libraries.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES WEBINAR SERIES

Dana Rooks (above) will continue her discussion with Rhoda Goldberg (near right), director of Harris County Public Library, and Maribel Castro (far right), current TLA President and librarian for Coronado High School, Lubbock, in a FREE webinar on April 6. They will explore leadership for all types of libraries in a time when every type of library seems to be under siege. Learn how to develop your skills and discover your opportunities. One hour of CE credit will be offered.



Visit www.txla.org/CE for registration and listings for other webinars.

Leading Instruction: *Collaborating for Success*

BY SHARON SWARNER & KATHY SHAW

The eternal question of the chicken or the egg surprisingly has application within the confines of the school library. Which does come first, collaboration or good library instruction? True on-going collaboration is the Holy Grail of the school library world. All school librarians can discuss the virtues of working with teachers to plan lessons, and some have even on occasion been able to live the dream by being included on the development of curriculum from the ground up. We preach collaboration to each other with the fervor of the newly converted. And yet, most of us know that given the state-mandated TEKS, the district-imposed pacing calendars, and the building-level directives for student success, finding teachers with time for and interest in the collaborative process is increasingly difficult.



Sharon Swarner

While we should continue to talk about and advocate for collaboration, it's time for us to step back and reflect on what we, in the library, have to offer. Talk of collaboration is not enough. We must have significant substance in our library instruction to keep bringing teachers to the library. Is our library instruction relevant and robust enough to convince teachers and students alike that we have something to offer once we get the students into the library? Is the library instruction we're offering really worth all the extra commitment required of a collaborative relationship? When we focus on both the curricular needs of the faculty and the instructional needs of the students, our fellow teachers begin to recognize the potential of collaboration as we become true partners in student success. Good library instruction is the key to creating high levels of sustained collaboration. Collaborative opportunities and good library instruction are really the same topic – two sides of the same library coin.

The understanding of collaboration and good instruction as integral parts of the same concepts is not new territory. However, given the ever increasing pressure on schools, teachers, students, and librarians, it may be time for us to review and revitalize our attitudes, practices, and skills in order to polish up our two-sided coin.

COLLABORATION

Attitudes

Attitudes are the foundation for all our work with teachers and students and are especially important as we foster collaborative relationships. First and foremost, we have to proactively be

open to opportunities to contribute and build relationships with our colleagues. This includes a palpable willingness to work with and learn from others. We can't wait for teachers to come to us; we must bring our skills and enthusiasm to their needs. We have to foster relationships so that when the opportunities arise, we are a natural part of the conversation and process. Once we begin to operate from

the frame of reference that collegial relationships build opportunities, we can see successively greater levels of collaboration. Below are some of the practices that embody these attitudes.

Practices

Librarians sometimes have suggested that we turn away those teachers with whom they have not fully collaborated during the lesson planning process.



Kathy Shaw

In contrast to that practice, we see collaboration as a spectrum of opportunity. For example, at the highest levels, librarians in our district have worked with curriculum planners and writers to help build research skills into the framework of both new courses and those with revised TEKS. Being involved with building the framework of a course is one of the most powerful and effective forms of collaboration, because it naturally incorporates library skills into the content. This, in turn, opens the door for librarians at the campus level to seamlessly work with teachers in implementing the course and planning specific lessons. In our district, librarians worked directly with curriculum writers to create Advanced Contemporary Literacy, a middle school course that integrates reading, research, and project-based learning. Because of our foundational collaboration, with curriculum planners, campus librarians were invited to participate in professional development days dedicated to further development of the curriculum. In fact, not only were we welcomed, but curriculum planners saw librarians as essential to this continued process.

District librarians were again invited to the table when the new English Language Arts TEKS were released. Ground level input on the research strand of the new TEKS has been particularly helpful. We worked with specialists and teachers to build research skills into lessons and to create a pacing calendar to spread research evenly throughout the year, thus ensuring that teachers were not cramming research projects into those few precious weeks remaining after the administration of the TAKS tests. As a result at the campus level, librarians can attend department meetings knowing when research units

are being planned and can assist in creating lessons in which the library and research skills are a seamless part of a unit of instruction. As with all spectrums, where there's a high level, there is inevitably a lower level. We often find out about curricular changes when teachers show up at our doorstep with a poorly conceived research assignment. This is the other end of the opportunity spectrum. While we may be frustrated with the quality of the assignment and the lack of input, it does provide an opening for a collegial conversation about the teacher's needs and what the library can offer to enhance learning. If done with sensitivity and then backed up with good instruction, even these minimal opportunities move the collaborative relationship further up the spectrum with the cumulative effect of successes building on itself.

Skills

Once the programmatic practices are in place, specific library instructional skills and tools breathe life into these practices. Librarians need to have the most flexible of skill sets when it comes to collaborating. Ideally, collaboration is best if done prior to the development of the lesson. Realistically, most librarians are looking at the lesson after it's been written, but this does not mean that a librarian and teacher cannot collaborate after the lesson is planned. Just as our goal is to create student success, we should employ that same attitude with teachers. This is the best time for the phrases "Let's try this..." or "What if we" Our best skill is our ability to think fast and to be able to tailor suggestions and resources to the teacher's needs. We find that an instructional, planning worksheet greatly facilitates this work. The worksheet is a form that each librarian creates to meet the needs of his/her particular needs. Most of us find that the planning sheet is a work in progress that we change from year to year as both we and our teachers move along the collaborative spectrum. The worksheet guides the conversation between the teacher and the librarian through the types of library skills and services. Having the skills and strategies pre-planned and on a form lessens any sense of defensiveness, because they can see that these are the types of instruction we offer all teachers.

INSTRUCTION

Attitudes

As collaborative opportunities become an embedded practice, an instructional focus must simultaneously be a top priority. In order to maintain the momentum for collaboration, teachers must see evidence that meaningful instruction is taking place. We must think of ourselves as teachers first. It may mean that we have to move out of our comfort zones challenging ourselves to model best instructional practices, fully embracing our roles as instructional leaders as envisioned in *Information Power*.

Practices

Many of us became librarians because of our love of great books and the sense of satisfaction that comes from putting the right book into the hands of the right student at the right time. While reader's advisory is still important and certainly still satisfying, it may well not be enough to solidify the position of the librarian in this time of educational budgetary restraints. Nor will it be enough to send students off to college or the work place prepared with solid research and analytical skills.

Without the constraints of seven teaching periods a day, librarians can become the other set of eyes on the newly minted lesson plan. We can offer timely and pedagogically sound ideas that enhance learning. While this may seem scary to those of us who have not been in the classroom for several years or even

several decades, we must train or retrain ourselves to be strong instructional leaders who are well grounded in TEKS, college readiness skills, and our local scope and sequence. One way to do this is to participate in the same training, workshops, and book studies as other teachers.

Another way that we've found to be helpful is to share lessons and ideas with each other. In our district, we created a lesson plan database of collaborative lessons. Early on in this project, we had librarians provide feedback to their colleagues about the submitted lesson. Both the reviewers and the lesson plan writers were anonymous, and it was done with a spirit of generosity and helpfulness. It was quickly apparent who among us could create engaging, high-level lessons that integrated content, technology, and the library. Those lessons became our exemplars as we challenged ourselves to improve our own lessons. It was a truly powerful collaborative learning exercise. Another dynamic avenue for learning is to watch and emulate the best teachers on your campus. There is no shame in using another teacher's practices as springboards for our own professional development, and librarians have the good fortune to witness master teachers from across the curriculum as they come through the library

Skills

If collaboration is about success with teachers, then instruction is about ensuring success for students. It is the librarian's responsibility to have the skills and knowledge needed to provide relevant instruction. Awareness of the course requirements, TEKS, and the scope and sequence of the course associated with the assignment furnish the librarian with a "heads up" on the required instructional outcomes. Armed with that information, the librarian must thoroughly know the library's collection of print and electronic resources, so the most appropriate and efficient materials are available for the assignment.

Just as our goal is to create student success, we should employ that same attitude with teachers.

Another invaluable set of skills that build great partnerships with teachers and provide excellent instruction for students is staying abreast of new technology and Web 2.0 tools. By providing safe and supportive environments, librarians can help integrate technology in new and creative ways and keep our technology-dependent students engaged.

Additionally, in NEISD we've created several tools to target specific aspects of the research process. Over the years, we've developed a research organizer, a digital note-taking form, as well as Web evaluation tools, all in response to local needs of students and teachers with whom we worked. Ultimately, the function of each tool is to help make the abstract concept of "the research process" more concrete for our learners. Gaps in lessons and student products serve as opportunities for us to fine-tune both our instruction and our tools. By internalizing explicit attitudes manifested through practice and put into action through targeted skills, we can provide robust library

instruction through the collaborative process that is then not just "something more;" it becomes "something better." ★

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Sharon Swarner is librarian at Robert E. Lee High School. Both are with North East ISD (San Antonio).

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES WEBINAR SERIES

Shaw and Swarner will take further develop their ideas in a free webinar on May 12 (3:30 to 4:30 pm CST) providing more details on how collaboration and stronger student achievement can be better promoted and attained. One hour of CE credit will be offered. One hour of CE credit will be offered. Visit www.txla.org/CE for registration and listings for other webinars.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SERIES: *Leadership*

Teen Homework Centers – *Minimum Resources for Most Budgets*

BY SIAN BRANNON AND
WYLAINA HILDRETH

All photos provided by the authors.



Sian Brannon



Wylaina Hildreth

Introduction

There are many factors that go into planning for and instituting a homework help center for teens in a public library. A major component of the planning process should be what referential materials resources your library will offer. When making this determination, you must first consider a few things:

- To what age-levels, or grade-levels, will your center cater?
- With what subject areas of homework will the center help?
- Do you have physical space for many materials? Or should you select electronic resources?
- Did you remember all of the miscellaneous things that help finish homework?
- Will you have staff available for bibliographic instruction?
- What can you afford?

For the purpose of this article, we will consider the scope of the average public library homework center to encompass grades 6-12 (junior high and high school), and we will recommend resources for basic subject areas: math, science, writing, history, and languages. Outlined in this article are minimum resources recommended for these subjects, depending on your budget. The idea is that while you are not necessarily able to afford double-purchases of reference materials, you can pull frequently used items from your reference collection to place in your designated homework center.

If you are unsure of where to start, consider talking to your teens, their teachers, home-schooling parents, and other libraries about suggestions and ideas. Budgets vary from library to library, so also included are suggestions for locating funding for your homework center. Don't forget about emerging technologies; you could create a virtual homework center. A large budget is not needed, just some preparation.



Planning

In *Interior Design for Libraries*, Carol Brown recommends involving teens in the planning process from the beginning to ensure the success of your teen space. Teachers, school librarians, and parents are also excellent resources to help you start your homework center. Begin by talking to these groups of people about what homework they assign or have seen assigned to students. Surveys are a great way to find out information on exactly what your library needs to start. They will need to assess what types of materials your homework center will hold and how it will be used. Be sure to ask what subjects they take or teach, and what type of homework they are used to being assigned. Examples of surveys are available on the TLA website (*see endnotes*). There are free online programs and websites, such as www.surveymonkey.com and www.my3q.com, that can help you create a survey and collect responses electronically.

Space is another very important issue for which to plan ahead when developing a homework center. In some libraries, using one shelf is enough to display the resources students will need. In other libraries, more shelving, space, or tables may need to be allocated in order to make it a productive center. When looking into what space is needed, ask yourself and your staff some questions:

- How will this space be used?
- Will you want to encourage students to study quietly, or use the space to do creative projects, such as posters, review lines for drama class, or make art work?
- If there are more students than anticipated, is there room for expansion?
- Will there be tutoring going on?
- Will you provide space for computers dedicated to homework help?

After you determine how the space will be used, you can identify how much space will be dedicated to this service. Library space planning guides are available in print and online to help you estimate how much space is needed for any piece of equipment you are thinking of purchasing or moving into an area. According to Brawner and Beck in *Determining Your Public Library's Future Size*, you will need approximately one linear foot of shelf space for every eight volumes of general hardback books. Considering that reference materials are generally larger than the average hardback book, plan on using that one linear foot for about five reference volumes. They also recommend that you allocate about 110 square feet of floor space for a table with four chairs, and about 45 square feet for each computer station you elect to provide.

It's easy to see how this can add up quickly. Most libraries will not be able to carve more than one four-seat table out of their current floor plans to a homework help center. There *is* a way to have a homework center without a large dedicated space. We will cover ideas for a mobile center shortly.

Reference Materials

After gathering information on the types of homework assigned and the subjects covered in these homework assignments, it is time to compile the resources that will make up the main focus of a homework help center. At the very least, every homework help center should include recent copies of the following for general help:

- *World Almanac* (replaced annually)
- *World Book Encyclopedia* (or similar product, replaced biennially)
- *Rand McNally Road Atlas* (replaced annually)
- Unabridged dictionary of your choice (replaced biennially)
- State almanac and/or directory (replaced biennially)

With those basics covered, consider adding a few more general-purpose titles:

- *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*
- A thesaurus
- *Guinness World Records* (replaced annually)
- A world atlas
- *United States Government Manual* (replaced biennially)
- *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (replaced biennially)
- The Central Intelligence Agency's *World Factbook*

When creating an area for math and science, please do not include any books that hint at less-than-stellar performance on your students' parts. Stay away from titles with words like "dummy" or "idiot." A student coming to get help with homework does not need this kind of negative reinforcement. Instead, try some of the following:

- Barron's "*The Easy Way*" series
- McGraw Hill's "*Demystified*" series





common school-taught languages would help students working on language assignments. Consider Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Arabic. Basic grammar guides would be a healthy addition here, if space allows. Consult the course offerings at your local junior-high and high schools to find out what languages are taken the most. Start by buying a dictionary for those, then as your budget allows, expand your collection.

Another option for resources in your homework center is to attempt to get your local school district to contribute a set of textbooks. While it would be difficult to house a copy of every single textbook for each and every grade and class inside your public library, it would behoove you to obtain the basic ones: language arts, basic math, algebra, geometry, basic science, biology, chemistry, and a few of the history textbooks. Not only will this be a referential resource for those looking for problem-solving techniques and solutions, but often-times students do not have their textbooks at home. Perhaps they forgot them at school, but in these days it's also likely that they are not permitted to bring them home. Having a set in the public library will be a good gesture towards those students who want or need to study a bit more at home to supplement their learning.

There are also very specific uses for resources in your homework center. Perhaps a large portion of your users is made up of high-school students. They might use a college-preparatory section to research degree plans, find vocational schools, look for financial aid, and discover distance-learning opportunities. Try to incorporate:

- College/university resources (such as Barron's or Peterson's)
- Junior college/vocational school/career college resources
- Scholarship directories
- SAT, ACT, AP, and CLEP test study guides

An established model to use when instituting a college-preparatory focus in your homework center is the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's "GO Centers," which are established in high schools and public universities across the state of Texas. These centers provide a meeting space (both physically and mentally) for parents, students, and educators to gain information about college preparation and admission requirements.

Homework help is not just for those that are enrolled in school. There are home-schooling parents and students across the country that would benefit from a dedicated research area in their local libraries. Home-school students lack the resources at home that many public and private school students have at their schools. Libraries are a great place for them to look at the latest encyclopedias, look for new documentaries that have been released, and discover other information and resources to supplement their education. Home-school groups look to libraries to provide classic literature, basic reference materials, and computer access. If you have the space and appropriate

- Field guides to trees, flowers, butterflies, insects, planets, and reptiles
- *Ultimate Visual Dictionary of Science*
- An atlas of anatomy

A large focus of many homework help centers is on writing. There are writing labs in a number of libraries, colleges, and even comic-book stores! Novelist Dave Eggers started a creative-writing lab in a pirate-supply store that eventually led to partnerships with a library in Brooklyn (*School Library Journal* 2006, 39). They offer workshops, typewriters, and newspaper editing software. While most of us can't provide all of that, a homework help center with a writing focus needs to include:

- *MLA Handbook for Writers*
- Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers*
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*
- *Elements of Style*
- Other preferred local style manuals
- Resumé writing books
- Research paper guides
- Handbooks for writing zines, newsletters, email etiquette
- *American Dictionary of Slang and Colloquial Expressions*
- *Fowler's Modern English Usage*

Another subject area in which many high-school students will have homework is history. There are very general historical guides that you can include in your homework center to jumpstart research papers, help with timelines, and provide basic facts for questions.

- *On This Day in American History*
- *Atlas of World History*
- *Facts About the Presidents*
- Local and state histories
- *New York Public Library American History Desk Reference*
- *Encyclopedia of World History*

Don't forget that more and more students are taking foreign languages these days. Keeping on-hand a basic dictionary for the

funds, you may want to look at purchasing materials specifically for this group. Many home-school parents and students ask for the library to have a copy of the curriculum for the classes they are taking. If this is something you are thinking of doing, be sure to survey the home-school parents in your area to see what types of materials to which they need access.

An additional purpose is that it could serve as a GED-training center as well. The idea of a homework center is to help students complete homework. Why not also let it be there to help students complete high-school equivalency exams? If you are able, try to include some GED study guides in addition to your basic math and language arts resources.

Although some specific titles are mentioned above, alternatives are available. Use your community's preferred dictionary, encyclopedia, writing guides, and resources.



Space Problems? Go Virtual

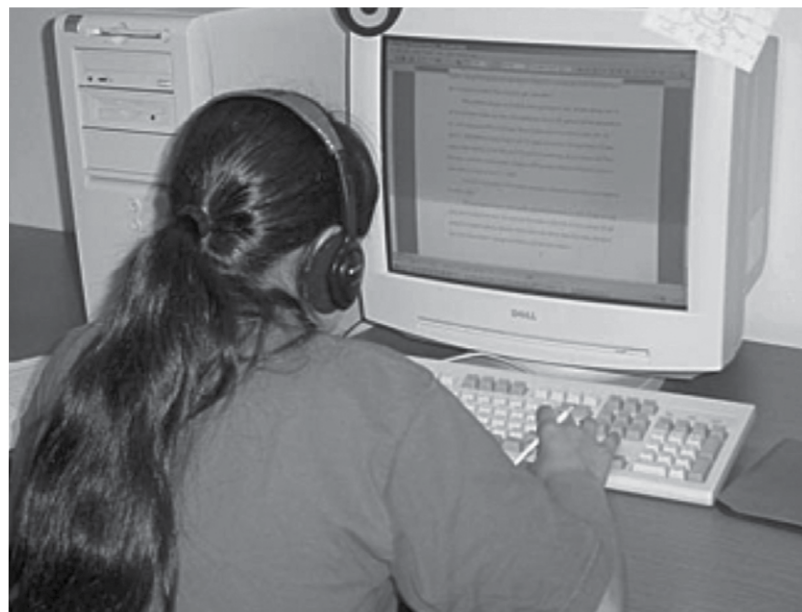
If space is a concern at your library, perhaps you should consider a homework help computer station stocked with electronic resources. This is also viable for those libraries with a bit more in the budget. With multiple electronic resources, a teen might not set foot in the library for their homework help, but rather contact you virtually for reference assistance. If you can provide email reference, great. If you can provide chat reference, even better. If you can afford to hire out your homework help electronic needs, then consider subscribing to an online tutoring service. The entire states of Alaska, Colorado, and Ohio have access to the Tutor.com Internet-based homework help program (*Library Journal* 2004, 22).

Some states and consortia participate in electronic resource sharing plans that can significantly reduce the costs of database subscriptions for libraries. The selections through these resource conglomerations will generally cover homework-related materials, including periodical databases, literary criticism sources, historical information, and basic science sources. A great example of this type of cooperative program is the TexShare database program offerings from the Texas State Library.

There are many different homework-related electronic resources available for students. All of the major library database vendors provide a web-based product. Check with EBSCO, ProQuest, Thomson-Gale, Facts-on-File, Grolier, and H.W. Wilson for their product offerings and pricing based on your service area population and whether or not you plan to offer remote access. Be sure to look for databases that offer a good portion of their materials in full-text format. It can come in PDF or HTML, but

citations to periodicals you don't carry in-house will not do your teens much good in a homework situation.

For some libraries, such as the Multnomah County Library in Oregon, a webpage is dedicated on the library's website to be a homework help center of sorts. Librarians gather and evaluate websites for inclusion on their subject-classified page and include standard topics like news and current events, health and nutrition, animals, and science. They also include, however, interesting subjects, like mysterious and unexplained, costumes and clothing, and what makes a community. Each link goes to a



page of websites and includes a brief description of what a teen can expect from that source.

When creating an online homework help resource page for the teens, don't forget to include some resources (perhaps an entire page) for parents and educators. This page could include information on how to use the library, how to get a library card, hints for evaluating sources, links to an "Ask a Librarian" service, and a place where teachers can submit assignments.

In addition to the traditional database or webpage models for resources, consider using more Library 2.0 technology to provide a virtual teen homework help center. There are many free online programs that can be easily installed to provide homework help to your teens that are not physically present in your library. It might even help some inside your library that are too shy to ask for help! Yahoo Messenger, AOL Instant Messenger, Google Talk, and more can all be combined through Meebo (www.meebo.com), a free universal instant messaging platform that can be embedded on your webpage. It lets librarians IM with patrons without having to worry about downloading programs (because it is web-based), and it can even work on cell phones (*Library Technology Reports* 2008, 23). With this kind of availability, your teen homework center has just become virtual!

When selecting any electronic product for your library, do not forget to evaluate its cost, ease of use, the extent of its coverage, and the retrieval methods. Customers will want to email and print the information they find. Keep in mind that teens are computer savvy but not necessarily trained in formulating good searches. Make sure that searches can be broadened or narrowed.

Other Materials

If you are going to start a homework center, you want to plan for the things that will help finish the job. Homework isn't done as soon as an answer is discovered. Also, just as a patron might not have access to reference sources at home, they also might not

have access to the office supplies that are necessary to complete the assignment.

As a gesture of good faith and as a measure to get more patrons into your library, try to designate an area in your homework center for basic free office supplies useful for completing homework. These should include pens and pencils, a stapler, scissors, some markers, and maybe a three-hole-punch. Don't forget about math homework needs like rulers, protractors, and compasses. These are things that can be stored at the Reference Desk, perhaps in a plastic tub that can be brought out during peak homework center traffic hours. Aside from these free resources that are a minimum requirement, you should consider getting your Friends group or local high-school booster club to sell report covers, paper, folders, envelopes, and posterboard.

Libraries could even go so far as to check out calculators (regular and graphing) for math homework, and sell computer storage devices (diskettes, CD-RWs, and flash drives) for saving projects for future adjustments. This is a specific project that could benefit from targeted solicitation of area businesses.

No Space at All?

You can put a teen homework center anywhere in your library... with a booktruck! Set aside one of your booktrucks to be a permanent center-on-wheels. On booktrucks with three-to-six shelves, you can house 20 or so reference materials, and still provide a shelf dedicated to general supplies that will help patrons finish assignments. Push this out from behind the Reference Desk to a table during after school hours and it's an instant homework center! Your users might get a kick out of decorating it, and responsible teens can be trusted with rolling it out and back each day.

Staffing

Staffing is an important part of any homework center. Library staff should always be available to help students. This does not imply that a library staff member should be in the homework center but that one should be on hand to answer questions at the reference desk or accessible in the building. Tutors, volunteers, and others can be scheduled during hours when the homework center is used most.

When planning to staff your homework center, you will need to find out when the center will be used the most. You can be sure that the homework center will not be used during school hours, but after school hours, it will be used. To determine when your center will be used the most, start observing when teens come into your library. Knowing when your library is used and by whom can be helpful when planning staff for your homework center.

- Do you see a majority of them after school?
- Are most of them there later at night before closing?
- Do you see many on the weekend?





You will also need to make sure the homework center staff and tutors understand how to use the books and print resources. There are many different types of dictionaries, almanacs, and other materials that many patrons are unfamiliar with and have not used in the past. Tutors and staff members should be comfortable using these materials and showing students how to use them.

Funding

Funding is a big issue with any new project at your library. Where will you get the money to purchase the new materials you need to make your homework center successful? There are several different ways to approach this situation. Local and national grants are available to non-profit organizations, such as libraries, to fund education. Check with your local Target, Wal-Mart, or other national chains in your area to see what requirements they have for grants. Local area businesses are also happy to help support education initiatives in their area. Talk to the owners of local restaurants, shops, and other private businesses to see if they would be willing to help. Regional library systems are also great resources for grant information and grants themselves. There may even be someone on their staff to help in writing or polishing your proposal.

When approaching businesses with the target of soliciting funds for your center, bring a letter of intent with you. This letter summarizes what you are doing, why you are doing it, and how much money you will need to accomplish your goals. Try to get your library director to sign it, and promote it through their own connections as well. Prepare a budget listing all the items you will need. Have this budget on hand when approaching businesses. This budget does not need to be included in the letter, but does need to be available if the proprietor asks for it. An example of this type of letter is also provided on TLA's website. Be aware that when you ask for assistance, businesses may want you to include their logo on advertising and in the library as a library supporter. Check with your library administration about any related policy issues before starting your search.

Conclusion

Don't forget to include other libraries in your preparation phase for implementing or revamping this part of your library. Learning through their mistakes and good-fortune will aid you in making time- and money-saving decisions. Also, don't be afraid to make changes if things aren't working. If the area you selected in your library is not favorable to quiet study, change it! If some of the volunteer tutors you have don't make the grade, use them in another capacity.

Planning, developing, and implementing a homework center can be done on limited budgets, with limited space. Libraries can utilize resources they already have to make a space that is inviting and conducive to working on homework. Decide your focus (age and subjects), and start your development there. Build on

Tutors can be other students, college students, parents, or others who have an expertise in a specific subject. Students who are making good grades in their classes are great candidates for tutors. These students also know and understand the assignments teachers are currently requiring in their classes. College students often need volunteer hours and can be utilized in tutoring middle school and high school students. Many college organizations, such as Greek organizations, are happy to help out non-profits, like libraries, for these purposes. Many libraries currently have volunteers. Many times these volunteers have an area of expertise that could be utilized. People who work as engineers, for example, would be excellent at helping with algebra, calculus, and geometry. Parents can also be used in the homework center. Parents interested in their teen's education can help tutor other students or help their own teen study.

Applicants for the position of tutor need to go through an interview process to determine what subjects they would be best suited for and if tutoring would be right for them. Please be sure to review your libraries policies and procedures for volunteers. With such close proximity to youth, a background check is recommended (if not already required by your city or county). Your tutors and staff need to adhere to the same rules and regulations as any other volunteer in your library. Just like any job, you want to make sure you get the right person to achieve maximum success. A sample interview is available on the TLA website.

The volunteers selected will need to have training on all of the resources in the homework center. Many volunteers will not know how to access the electronic databases, or how to use them. There are several ways to train them on how to do this. Some options are making a presentation for them to view, coordinating a tutor-training day before the school year begins, making a database scavenger hunt for them so they can utilize the databases for themselves, and spending some one-on-one time with the volunteers and tutors to answer any questions they have.

existing resources, and don't be afraid to create a temporary, or mobile, center to meet your needs while you expand.

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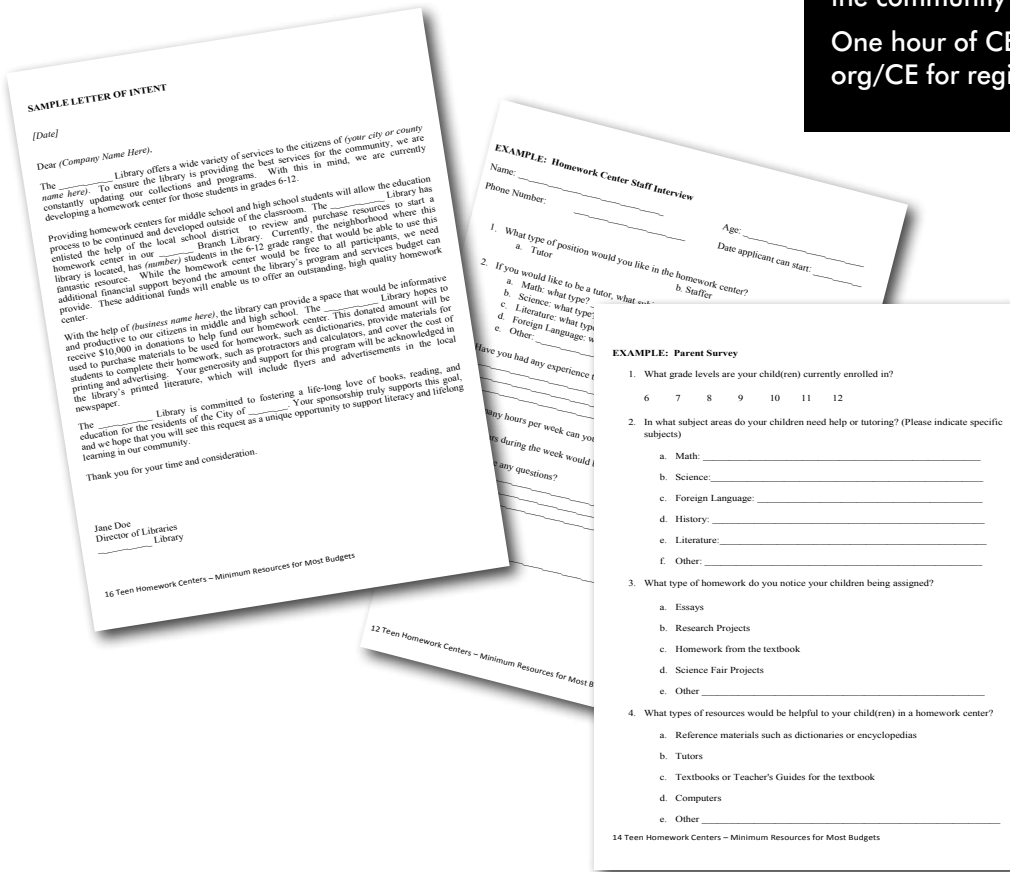
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- www.grants.gov
- www.librarysurveys.org
- www.lowes.com (see About Lowe's and Community)
- www.meebo.com
- www.multcolib.org/homework (Multnomah County Library)
- www.my3q.com (online surveys)
- www.surveymonkey.com (online surveys)
- www.tsl.state.tx.us (Texas State Library)
- www.tutor.com
- www.usairways.com (see About US and Corporate Giving)
- www.walmartstores.com (see Community Giving) ★

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES WEBINAR SERIES

Teens invading your public library? Need help to help them? Brannon and Hildreth will continue their discussion in a FREE webinar (May 3, 2-3 pm CST) and will include information on planning, including space and surveys, materials, virtual options, staffing, funding, and sources for more information. Learn the advantages and pitfalls of this measurable service that the community understands as a valuable resource.

One hour of CE credit will be offered. Visit www.txla.org/CE for registration and listings for other webinars.



Supplemental Resources on the TLA Website

Sample forms provided by the authors of this article can be accessed at www.txla.org/TLJ/more.

- Homework Center Staff Interview
- Teacher Survey
- Student Survey
- Parent Survey
- Letter of Intent (sponsor solicitation)

Changing Lives, One Story at a Time

The Austin Public Library's Literature LIVE! Builds Community in Austin

BY KATHLEEN HOULIHAN

Literature LIVE! is the outreach programming arm for the Austin Public Library, and the team is hard at work on new ways to connect with our customers through art, raise awareness of the importance of story, and increase participation, partners, and visibility for the library throughout Austin. In the past few years, the team has seen a substantial increase in community awareness of library offerings. We see this awareness by:

- capacity crowds attending library performances;
- “groupies” following their favorite shows to other branches;
- social service organizations filling our early literacy training classes;
- partner agencies lining up to serve as a platform for library services;
- volunteers sharing library storytimes with childcare centers as part of Storytime Connection;
- incarcerated teens reading record-breaking numbers of books through Second Chance Books; and
- requests for the Bibliofiles Book Cart Drill Team to appear at community events and parades.

But how do you justify this nontraditional service? In 2010, nearly 7,000 people attended our library puppet shows, including over 400 attending special performances at the Bob Bullock State History Museum, the Austin Museum of Art, and the Dell Children’s Medical Center of Texas. We trained over 100 volunteers and caregivers in early literacy storytime techniques, preparing them to extend storytime services through their own agencies. Through our partnerships with SafePlace, Avance, American YouthWorks, the Austin Children’s Shelter, and Manos de Cristo,

our outreach storytimes and puppet shows reached over 1,500 children. Our longstanding partnership with Travis County at the Gardner Betts Juvenile Justice Center is thriving, with two bustling satellite libraries for incarcerated youth, where reluctant teen readers devour an average of 11 books per person every month. The Bibliofiles connected with thousands through the First Night Austin and the Austin Pride Parades, and our YouTube videos received over 32,000 views.

Then there’s the impact we can’t measure – the stories we hear from the children we serve; adults who became puppeteers and librarians because of the performances they saw here as children; reluctant teen readers who proudly tell us they finished their first book while in detention; and the little boy who yelled, “YAY!,” when told by our puppeteers before a show that they were going to “change your life!” We use art as a living, breathing, feeling vehicle to transport stories from our collective imagination to the imagination of a living, breathing, feeling audience, seeking fulfillment of our mission to change lives, one story at a time.

We believe in the importance of interactive storytelling, and write our show scripts to include as many interactive elements as possible. We train our volunteers to include children in the telling of the story through interactive participation, and teach youth to develop a personal relationship with every story they encounter – to interact with it during storytime, and as they grow, encouraging participation through bookclubs, literary programming, writing workshops, and author visits. Our partners in the community allow us to connect even the most vulnerable in our population with interactive storytelling, helping us build community in memorable and highly visible ways.

In difficult times, it would be easy to say that there are not enough resources for a program like ours, but we’ve found a way

Austin Public Library youth specialist Devona Carpenter is shown front and center with participants in the American Youthworks Teen Parent Program.



PHOTOS used by permission Austin Public Library

to do more with less – by increasing our visibility we can reach more people with existing resources. Figuring out the logistics of this amplification is critical, and for us, it meant connecting with our customers through nontraditional models of service. Failure to connect makes us invisible to many in our community, with missed opportunities for customers’ meaningful interaction with information. Our best and most visible advocates would be lost by ignoring an important resource for educating, enlightening, and empowering our customers, and serving youth at critical times in their lives. We would be remiss in not making use of this powerful tool for connecting people throughout our community with information and with each other.

How did we get here?

It didn’t happen overnight! Literature LIVE! has been honing its game for the past three decades. Over time, the library continued to invest in the team, forming a vibrant connection between the library and our customers. Thirty-three years ago, the Austin Public Library hired its first professional artist-in-residence, and today, we have a team of six artists. The team is committed to serving the library’s customers through the medium of art – a model that sometimes requires taking a leap of faith. We are fortunate to have the support of our administration in our quest to find the best way to serve the library’s customers, whoever they are. Our diverse team members practice their arts not only at the library but also in the greater artistic community of Austin, facilitating opportunities for collaboration and innovation. Literature LIVE! operates within the Youth Services Division and is managed by the program coordinator, who serves as the artistic director for the team and distributes the workload. Our team includes Anita Rizley, Karen Carlson, Devo Carpenter, Ambray Gonzales, Ellen Scott, and Kathleen Houlihan. This group includes professional puppeteers, storytellers, clowns, dancers, actors, painters, sculptors, costume and set designers, singers, and songwriters. That’s a lot of talent in one office, and as you can see, the sum is larger than individual players – every one of them is a multi-talented artist.

Process

Having professional artists on staff is a phenomenal way to connect customers to literature through the mediums of art, but it is not the only way! Many library employees are artistically inclined, and you can utilize and nurture this resource. When hiring new staff, find out what artistic skills they bring with them and remember that cross training can include the performing arts. Just as librarians continue their education, puppeteers and

artists continue to improve by attending puppetry conventions, observing other performers and troupes for inspiration, and trying new ideas in a supportive environment.

Performances

Performance is critical to bringing families from the community into the library, and our annual schedule includes over 100 performances of up to seven different shows, with one brand-new production yearly. When you first begin, three shows a year is a reasonable goal. Team members must develop ideas for new shows (often inspired by children’s books), pitching them to the group, and leading the creation of new shows. All shows need a script, music, props, puppets, casting, staging, promotion, scheduling, lighting, and an introduction, so you can see why we try to limit new shows to once a year! Once these details are finalized, work may begin in earnest. We typically allow for a month of bi-weekly rehearsals before the first performance, with more rehearsals the final week if needed.

If built from the ground up, puppet shows can be labor intensive, but it is possible to use commercial puppets if your budget allows. Storytelling shows can come together more quickly but care must be taken to weave stories into a cohesive whole, that is age-appropriate for your intended audience.

The Literature LIVE! team’s most nationally visible duty is leading the Bibliofiles Book Cart Drill Team, including recruiting and training new members, scheduling team

AT RIGHT: Puppets in the works
BELOW: Puppets (and puppeteers)
ready to work their magic.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Karen Carlson and Ellen Scott (youth specialists), Anita Joye Rizley (youth program coordinator), Devona Carpenter (youth specialist), Kathleen Houlihan (program librarian), and Ambray Gonzales (youth specialist)

practices, securing rehearsal space, determining artistic direction, and selecting music, costuming, and choreography, as well as coordinating public appearances.

Programs

Besides performances, the team also provides many outreach storytimes for the library. Team members may provide a season of storytimes at a partner agency, enabling them to share information about library programs and services during these storytimes, often with a very vulnerable and unreachable population, such as a shelter.

The team also includes the Youth Program Librarian, who leads the Storytime Connection and Second Chance Books programs. Storytime Connection, a volunteer program, trains volunteers from the community to conduct early literacy storytimes, provides them with themed storytime kits, and places them with childcare centers for weekly storytimes. These volunteers help the library reach over 7,500 children annually. We ensure the quality of presentations through the use of librarian-selected materials and specialized training and coaching.

Second Chance Books provides library services and programs to incarcerated teens at the Gardner Betts Juvenile Justice Center, where a team of our librarians provide monthly service through reader's advisory, bookclubs, author visits, and other programs. These librarians have a goal of turning reluctant readers into voracious ones, and in the past year of the program, we've seen record-breaking success in the number of books read at the facility, and the teen's interest in reading, discussing books, and interacting with their literary heroes.

Partnerships

Community partnerships are integral to Literature LIVE!'s programming. They enable us to reach groups of individuals who are cut off from library services, and ensure our programs reach capacity attendance, helping us efficiently use our limited resources. Our current partners include those serving youth on a variety of different levels, including early literacy, at-risk, and crisis service organizations, as well as city and state government, and a plethora of specialized organizations serving the education, healthcare, cultural arts, nature and science, and faith-based communities of Austin.

All partnerships start with the identification of a need in our community – either a need that we identify or one presented to us by a potential partner. Once we determine whether our mission and services are a good match, we assess our team to see who might start the pilot program.

Nearly all our partnerships begin with a trial run of services, which lasts anywhere from three to six months, which enables us to try out different ideas for service before committing to a long-term partnership.

Our long-term partners are those who enable us to further the mission of the library effectively, either by reaching an otherwise inaccessible segment of customers or by reaching large numbers of customers in a compelling way. One of our primary objectives is linking our customers with the library and librarians, who connect them to the information they need. Partnerships enable us to create a seamless synergy between the community and the library.

Public

Our most important partners are the customers we serve every day. They include the children and parents at our puppet shows, the caregivers who learn from us and take our service model out to their own patrons, the other artists who inspire and advise us, and the volunteers and interns who commit to building their community in a meaningful way. These relationships are built through years of consistent service, long-standing relationships, and the high expectations our audiences have for each of our artistic endeavors. We would not be so successful if it were not for the amazing feedback and input we receive from our customers, who have taken ownership of Literature LIVE! and push us to even further success.

Planning for the Future

Where will Literature LIVE! go from here? We'll continue experimenting to incorporate new models of serving our community in our quest to find the best means to inspire our customers. We'll keep reaching out to community partners and plan to use the Web to serve more people in our community with performances and trainings. Ultimately, we hope to inspire other libraries to reap the rewards of artistically diverse storytelling and thereby connect to the development of their own communities through art and story. ★

Kathleen Houlihan is the Youth Program Librarian at Austin Public Library.



Austin Public Library's popular and award-winning book cart drill team, The Bibliofiles, shown here after a performance at TLA's 2008 annual conference.

“Are You Searching for A New Job?”

Texas Public Libraries Provide Services for Job Seekers

BY LORIE ROY,
BONNIE BRZOZOWSKI,
SARA ARNOLD-GARZA,
AND KRISTI BEAUCHEMIN



Career Resources
Center of the library.⁶

Libraries have also expanded access to commercial online products such as ResuméMaker, LearningExpressLibrary, Brainfuse, Career Insider, JOBview, and Cengage databases such as Testing and Education Reference Center and Career Transitions.

Libraries nationwide are responding to patrons’ needs in the midst of the deepest recession since the 1930s. In 2007, 44% of libraries reported to the American Library Association (ALA) that assistance to job seekers was a “critical use”; now, three years later, nearly two-thirds (66%) of libraries classified services for job seekers as critical.¹ In June 2010, OCLC and WebJunction received a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services to support a project, “Built to Skill: Delivering 21st Century Library Service to the Unemployed,” that will create a curriculum to assist nearly 2,000 library workers in high unemployment areas to develop and deliver library services to the unemployed or underemployed.² In this article we examine how Texas public libraries are serving these communities of need. We reviewed active public library websites linked through directory information from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC).³ We identified four categories of services offered to job seekers: (1) access to resources; (2) customized websites; (3) collaborative websites; and (4) customized classes.

Texas Public Libraries Providing Access to Job Seeking Resources

ALA’s 2009 “Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study” found that 88% of public libraries provided patrons with access to resources including job databases.⁴ Nearly 70% (68.9%) of public libraries had resources including software that assisted patrons in creating employment application materials such as resumés.

Texas public libraries offer a variety of resources targeted for job seekers. Libraries continue to add print career resources to their collections. For example, the Alexander Memorial Library in Cotulla received a Tocker Foundation grant of \$2500 to refresh its collection including adding study guides for college entrance examinations and career testing.⁵ Libraries, such as the Wells Branch Community Library, house the resources in a designated

Starting in spring 2010, several Texas Public Library Systems including Alamo Area Library System (AALS), Big Country Library System (BCLS), Central Texas Library System (CTLS), Northeast Texas Library System (NETLS), and South Texas Library System (STLS) have offered subscriptions to ResuméMaker to some or all of their library members. After creating a free account, members can either upload and edit an existing resumé or allow the Resumé Wizard to guide them through the process of creating their professional resumé from beginning to end. ResuméMaker also offers sample resumés, cover letters, interview tips, and a job search database that allows members to save job listings of interest.

Other libraries, including the Sergeant Fernando de la Rosa Memorial Library in Alamo, Llano County Library System, and the Robert J. Kleberg Public Library in Kingsville, subscribe to LearningExpressLibrary.com. LearningExpressLibrary provides practice tests and tutorials on academic and job-related skills for children and adults, including professional exams for a variety of occupations. A module entitled “Job Search and Workplace Skills” offers assistance on job searching and the application process.⁷

Farmers Branch Manske Library links to Brainfuse.⁸ Through Brainfuse’s HelpNow adult education center, “adults can receive live online help ... in areas such as US Citizenship testing, resumé and cover letter writing assistance and core subject education.”⁹ Brainfuse also has a new service called JobNow that focuses on job seeking, resumé writing, and interviewing.

Round Rock Public Library provides cardholders access to Career Insider – a database of career information.¹⁰ Ideal for individuals looking to change careers or start a new career as well as those preparing for interviews, Career Insider offers ebooks, employer profiles and company rankings, industry and profession profiles, and career advice articles and discussion boards.¹¹

JOBview kiosks are available at several Austin Public Library locations and some libraries, such as Austin Public Libraries¹² and Cedar Park Public Library,¹³ subscribe to the database accessible by cardholders from home. JOBview includes job ads for local areas and features an easy-to-use interface. The kiosks are like ATMs with a touch screen and a small printer to print out job ads of interest making them ideal for less computer savvy users.¹⁴

Bay City Public Library provides a link to Cengage's "Testing & Education Reference Center," an online database that helps high school and adult students to prepare for academic and professional tests and to set goals for their education. The database's Career Search module includes a career assessment test, which matches skills and personality traits to potential careers, a resumé builder, and a virtual careers library with information on the job seeking and application process.¹⁵ Andrews County Library offers patrons Cengage's "Career Transitions," which guides them through the process of discovering their aptitudes and interests, matching these discoveries to potential career paths and current job openings, and creating materials for a strong application.¹⁶

Texas Public Libraries Providing Customized Websites for Job Seekers

Many public library websites provide links to employment websites.

- The Alamo Area Library System provides a website on "Employment & Job Seeking" for its member libraries with over 70 links to sources ranging from local colleges to Texas Workforce Resources.¹⁷
- Groves Public Library's "Job Hunting Help and Helpful Contacts for Those Laid Off" provides links on subjects such as "Got Laid Off? Now What?," "Food/Financial Assistance," "Housing Assistance," "Special Needs/Disability Services," "Health Assistance," and "Workplace Skills."¹⁸
- Bay City Public Library's "Job Information" links cover "information on all aspects of finding a job" from unemployment insurance to job search strategies and job listings.¹⁹
- Boerne Public Library's "The BPL Job Shop" provides links to over 20 sources.²⁰
- Harris County Public Library provides links to outside websites organized into a range of categories from local resources, to national job listing sites, to general careers and advice.²¹
- Quitman Public Library's employment resources page provides information on getting employment help in person from library staff, as well as over 20 links to national job search sites, Texas employment sites, and more general employment advice sites.²²
- Irving Public Library's job center provides abundant content for seekers at all stages of employment including ways to find a career, attend local job fairs, brush up on skills, network

with others at the library, or cope with unemployment.²³

- Huntsville Public Library's job center directs patrons to employment materials at the library as well as links to finding employment, guidance on the job hunt, and unemployment resources.²⁴
- Hurst Public Library integrates career and educational resources by combining links for GED and ESL resources with job search sites and ResuméMaker Pro on a single page.²⁵
- Jacksonville Public Library provides a job center on its main website that links to websites on career information, job hunting skills, and local and national job sites as well as books and ebooks available through the library.²⁶
- Lake Cities Library links to places to search for jobs online such as local classifieds and organizations that can provide further assistance to job seekers.²⁷
- New Braunfels Public Library has a direct link to job search Resources from their homepage for people who recently lost their jobs, people looking for new jobs, and people re-accessing their career options.²⁸
- Austin Public Library provides a guide to job postings on the Internet, using social networking sites to find jobs, resumé tips, links to local organizations that can provide further assistance, and much more.²⁹
- Paris Public Library provides links to job search sites and employment listings at all levels including local and area newspapers, state websites, and federal and national job sites.³⁰
- Round Rock Public Library offers an employment resources page with links to 16 job sites for surrounding cities and counties, in addition to state and national sites.³¹
- Cedar Park Library links to an extensive set of employment and job-seeking resources available at the Central Texas Library System, Inc. website.³²
- The Colony Public Library's job search information page provides links to job search sites, sites with information on choosing a career, and videos and information on all stages of the application process.³³
- Unger Memorial Library provides links to several job search websites and to the homepages of the Texas Workforce Commission and the United States Department of Labor.³⁴

Texas Public Libraries Collaborating on New Services

The Texas Workskills Development for Libraries project, or TWDL is a product of collaboration among Big Country Library System, Houston Area Library System, North Texas Library Partners, Northeast Texas Library System, Texas Trans-Pecos Library System, and West Texas Library System, funded by a grant from TSLAC. At twdl.org visitors can find national and local online resources for every type of job seeker: those laid off, those new to or re-entering the workforce, those needing a change, and those looking for ways to network. The schedules

for employment-related and general computer skills workshops at local libraries are posted and live job assistance is provided through Brainfuse.

Texas Public Libraries Hosting Classes on Job Seeking and Related Topics

ALA's 2009 study found that nearly one out of four (24.5%) of public libraries provided classes for job seekers on topics such as interviewing.³⁵ Texas public libraries have long offered or hosted English as a second language (ESL), GED preparation, literacy, or computer classes. But now libraries are customizing computer classes for job seekers by reformatting current classes or adding new ones. Frisco Public Library offered a "Creating a Resumé in Word" 90-minute evening class.³⁶ Denton Public Library provided a two hour course for adults covering "resumés, cover letters, and interviewing tips."³⁷ The Fort Worth Public Library offered career workshops in a computer lab at the Central Library, including two two-hour classes: "Creating the Perfect Resumé" and "Using the Internet for Your Job Search."³⁸ Wells Branch Community Library provided computer workshops for adults on Saturday mornings covering such basics as email, searching the Web, word processing and training in the use of software such as Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint as well as courses for job seekers on topics including applying for jobs online, Internet safety, and use of specific products such as JobView and ResuméMaker.³⁹ The Round Rock Public Library's "Great Resumé – Great First Impression at your Library" was a two-hour evening course.⁴⁰

Some libraries develop their classes with the assistance of outside organizations, agencies, or educational institutions. The Palestine Public Library collaborates with Workforce Solutions East Texas and Workco Staffing Services, an employment agency, on computer classes to assist job seekers in expanding their skills in using software such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint.⁴¹

Austin Public Library's downtown location, the Faulk Central Library, offers a weekly job searching computer lab where patrons may work one-on-one with a librarian as well as computer classes that repeat each month ranging in topic from basic computer skills to Web 2.0 programs (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, blogs). A demand for additional classes to assist job seekers and an overextended staff prompted collaboration with the University of Texas iSchool's Library Instruction and Information Literacy Class, in which students designed and taught classes to library patrons on aspects of the job seeking process as one of their class assignments.

Conclusion

Texas public libraries have recognized a demand for services to job seekers and are responding by adding subscription-based databases and print resources, providing guides to information and resources on the Internet, and designing and teaching classes

and workshops. The addition of such services surely indicates a response to the recent economic recession and unemployment rates (9.5% in the United States⁴² and 8.3% in the state of Texas⁴³), but may also reflect a greater demand for these types of services from patrons. Public libraries themselves have been hit with the recession in the form of significant budget cuts making it difficult for some to add new services,⁴⁴ but in these cases, many are turning to grants, collaborative efforts, and volunteers to meet the demand.

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CONFERENCE 2011

LIBRARIES

crossing boundaries

BIBLIOTECAS

cruzando fronteras

BY GLORIA MERAZ

Think music, 6th Street, the technology center of the state, fabulous museums and restaurants, and a Rally at the Capitol for the history books!

The Texas Library Association's annual conference will once again take place in Austin. The Live Music Capitol of the World (as the city modestly bills itself) will welcome about 8,000 of your friends and colleagues between April 12 and 15.

SPEAKERS. This year's general session speakers include actress, children's advocate, and best-selling children's author Jamie Lee Curtis and *The New York Times* best-selling author and humanitarian Greg Mortenson (co-founder of Pennies for Peace, a program to build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan). Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket) and Maira Kalman will close out the conference on Friday, April 15. Authors Diane Mott Davidson, Richard Peck, and Jacqueline Winspear will be the opening luncheon speakers. Other speakers include epatiant Dave Bronkhardt, Alan Sitomer, Ed Spicer, Lee LeFever, Jessamyn West, Steven Bell, and Megan Oakleaf.



Jamie Lee Curtis speaks Wednesday morning at 8:30 AM. Several TLA Awards will be presented at this session.



Greg Mortenson addresses General Session II on Thursday afternoon at 4 PM.

SOME PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS. TLA's conference always features a large and rich array of programs. Everything from the latest hands-on techniques for library functions to insightful discussions about fundamental issues in the profession is covered in this year's slate of programs and sessions. A few highlights include mitigating the "disintermediation" of the librarian, creating unique and memorable user experiences in academic libraries, dealing with difficult patrons, promoting e-readers and digital content, improving the use and look of your blog and social media, providing rigorous high-tech instructional design for school libraries, using evidence-based practice to improve library instruction, doing more with less in small public libraries, making a seat for everyone (diversity and inclusion), assessing the role of the academic library through SACS and the QEP, fundraising on the front lines, planning an Anime and Manga convention for teens, combatting cyberbullying, and transforming the library experience from the user's experience.



RALLY. Be sure to bring your favorite red outfit to conference as, once again, the library community gathers to **RALLY FOR TEXAS LIBRARIES**. We'll have drummers, elected officials, hundreds of signs, and – best of all – thousands of cheering supporters speaking out for libraries. The future of statewide library programming is at stake. We will not be silent as we unite to protest

the devastating cuts being proposed. Feel free to bring your own school or library banner if you'd like. Let's show elected officials the names and faces of those who will be hurt by a failure to support libraries!

ONE BOOK ONE CONFERENCE. Grab a cup of coffee, bring a friend, and share in TLA's "book club." This year's One Book One Conference selection is *The Night Bookmobile* by Audrey Niffenegger. A graphic novel selected by popular vote by our membership, the work sets the stage for a lively forum and great opportunity to make new friends. Read the selection before conference and lend your thoughts to a stimulating discussion with your fellow librarians. Robert Weiner and panel will lead our conference conversation on this year's intriguing selection. (Friday, April 15, 10:00 - 11:50 AM)

1001 GREAT IDEAS. Interact with colleagues as you discover new ideas and innovative techniques to take back to your workplace. In this dynamic and informal session, participants will move among tabletop presentations showcasing best practices in diversity, library operations, and other services representing all library types. Refreshments and cash bar provided. (Tuesday, April 12, 4:00 - 5:30 PM)

EXPANDED PLACEMENT CENTER. The Placement Center will be hosting several new programs for job seekers.

- Wednesday April 13, 10:15-12:15 PM: Resume Critique Session
- Thursday April 14, 10:30-12:30 PM: Interview Skills Workshop
- Thursday April 14, 1:00-4:00 PM: The Job Search Packet with Julie Todaro. Please come for the entire program, or an individual segment

BOOK CART DRILL TEAM. Calling all you book cart fans out there: It's time to spruce up your ride, don unique bibliographic garb, and rev up your engines for our Annual Book Cart Drill Team Competition. The winner of the event will be invited to participate at the national championships this summer at ALA. (Thursday, April 14, 5:40 - 6:20 PM)

SOCIAL MEDIA. TLA is offering a round of dynamic opportunities for librarians to showcase their talents and enthusiasm.

Tune in to TLA's **YouTube channel** and view all the entries in our first-ever video contest. The contest, which was open to all TLA members and reflects the 2011 conference theme, will award a \$250 cash prize to the winning entry. The entries will be aired – and the winner announced – following General Session II as the assembly space is being reconfigured for the Book cart Drill Team Competition.

We'll also feature TLA's **Roving Reporters** again this year. They will travel the conference halls to get feedback from attendees and capture a taste of conference life. Become a star!

Tweets will be displayed on the **Twitter Fountain** in the Internet Room. Photographers will be able to post their conference photos to Flickr using the #txla11 and thus be displayed throughout conference on the Twitter Foundation.

CONFERENCE MOBILE APP. We are pleased to offer a conference schedule application with increased functionality that will be available as an app on multiple mobile platforms. This application will enable attendees with a web-enabled phone or other mobile device to access their schedules while on the go and receive real-time updates to sessions and author events. It will also offer Twitter and Flickr stream for conference related events. And **QR codes** will be displayed at conference this year for handouts and mobile apps.

STRONG LIBRARIES, STRONG SCORES. This Texas mini-conference for school administrators and trustees helps raise awareness of the school library's role in increasing student achievement. School librarians are encouraged to nominate their school administrators and trustees to attend this important conference within a conference. State Commissioner of Education Robert Scott has accepted TLA's invitation to attend this year. The event will be held at the Austin Hilton on Wednesday, April 13, and participants may attend any or all of

The Job Search Packet

All of us have been through successful and unsuccessful interviews for jobs, promotions, and a variety of other opportunities. Although being successful or "getting what you want" isn't always about "you," it is important that you perfect – as much as possible – the process of approaching others about employment opportunities. This could be your first or your fifth job, a change in your position or its responsibilities, a promotion, or even an office or library association leadership appointment. Join Dr. Julie Todaro, dean of Austin Community College Library Services, in the TLA Placement Center on Thursday afternoon, April 14 and attend sessions designed to assist you in seeking new or different paths. Stay with us for all the sessions or choose to attend the one that most interests you.

1:00 - 1:30 PM: *Preparing for Your Application Process*

1:45 - 2:15 PM: *Crafting Your Cover Letter*

2:30 - 3:00 PM: *The Application Form*

3:15 - 3:45 PM: *To Supplement or Not to Supplement Post Interviewing – That is the Question*

3:45 PM: *Q & A*

Please **RVSP** at <http://tinyurl.com/TLAplacement-confirmation>. Please indicate if you would like to attend the entire program or only some of the sessions. There will be reserved seating for those attending all sessions.

the TLA Annual Conference.

LIBRARIANS SAVING LIVES. In TLA's campaign to give back to our communities, we will be hosting a blood drive at conference. The Central Texas Blood and Tissue Center will set up a special area in the convention center on Thursday, April 14, for volunteers who want to offer hope and a chance for life to others in need. Additional information, including a sign-up sheet, are posted on the TLA conference website.

EXHIBITS. The TLA tradeshow offers a national caliber (and size!) experience for conference attendees. With almost 500 companies exhibiting in hundreds of booths, you have unrivaled state access to industry products, services, and representatives who can help you compare and find the wares you need for your library. And as always, visiting the TLA exhibits area offers opportunities for giveaways, raffles, and fun ways of receiving discounts. This year's Passport to Win lets you get discounts as you visit your industry partners. Just stop by participating exhibitors, get a stamp, and be eligible for all sorts of goodies!

Keep in mind that you can shop the TLA 2011 Exhibitors 24/7! Go to www.txla.org and click on **Exhibits/Buyers Guide** on the left "quick links" menu.

TLA 2011 EXHIBITORS

As of 3/7/11

TLA BUYERS GUIDE offers you a complete listing of all TLA exhibitors. Features include: Search by company name, category, city/state or booth number. Find contact information, descriptions and links to company websites.

The TLA map of the 2011 exhibit hall is available online via a link from the Buyers Guide. You can search by company name, booth number or category. When you search by category, all exhibitor booths under the category you select will be highlighted in red on the map. This is a great way to find those exhibitors you are seeking as you plan your visit to the exhibits.

DISASTER RELIEF RAFFLE. This year's raffle masterpiece is *Space Age*, an original illustration donated by author and illustrator Melanie Hope Greenberg. The panel was created for the picture book *Supermarket* by Kathleen Krull (Holiday House, 2001). The annual art raffle – held this year on April 14 during General Session II on Thursday afternoon – benefits the Texas Library Disaster Relief Fund, created to assist libraries in our state as they recover from natural disasters. See page 40 of this issue for more information and an image of the artwork.

CORPORATE SPONSORS. The Texas Library Association offers its deep thanks to our corporate sponsors whose generous support help underwrite the TLA conference and other critical library events, such as TLA's advocacy program. The 2011 sponsors are listed on page 2 of this publication.

The *Pocket Program*, distributed onsite at registration, provides room numbers and locations for programs and events.

The *Exhibits Directory & Buyers Guide* will be available at all exhibit hall entrances.



TLA Commercial Members

TLA's corporate members help champion advocacy for funding and better policies for libraries, support broad public marketing of libraries and their critical services, and support continuing education to make Texas libraries vibrant and forward-reaching.

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| Baker & Taylor | Library Interiors of Texas |
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- Albert Whitman & Company
- Alexandria by Companion Corporation
- Altarama Information Systems
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- America Reads Spanish
- Amicus
- Amigos Library Services
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- Carolrhoda Books
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- Carpets for Kids
- Carranza Puppets
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- CBAY Books
- CCS
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- Changeable Sign Systems
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- Charlesbridge
- Chaucer to Go
- Chelsea House
- Cherry Lake Publishing
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Friend, Ronda - children's author/ storyteller/ musician/ entertainer
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Garland, Sherry, Author
Garrett Book Company
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Graphic Novel Library
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Greenhaven Press
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Greg Escue & Associates
Greg Rodgers, Choctaw author
Grey House Publishing
Griot/Storyteller
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Gumdrop Books
Hachette Book Group
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Kennebec Large Print
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KidHaven Press
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Kingfisher
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LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

Save Texas Libraries

Elected officials and decision-makers need to hear from the public. TLA is offering several ways to help us get the word out. We need to mobilize our communities to take action for libraries and librarians at the state and local level.

We have initiated the Save Texas Libraries campaign. The goal is to make the public aware of the damaging cuts to library programs and to give people an easy way to advocate for libraries at the state and local level. We ask TLA members to participate in these efforts by taking action themselves *AND* by forwarding the information to all their circles of friends, stakeholders, and public groups.

We need everyone to take the following three (1 - 2 - 3) actions:

1. **SEND** email, make a phone call, or write a letter to state legislators. This can be accomplished by visiting **TAKE ACTION NOW!** (*see links below*) to find contact info for state legislators and ready text for emailing them messages.
2. **SIGN** the free Save Texas Libraries Petition.
3. **SPEAK UP** locally: contact local officials (council members, school board members, PTAs, or county commissioners) and write/email letters to the editor of the local paper expressing your concern and support for your library and librarians.



The Save Texas Libraries icon on TLA's homepage leads to advocacy resources for both state & local levels.



Budget Update

At the time of printing, the House Appropriations adopted recommendations that included \$2.5 million over the biennium for TexShare; \$212,000 over the biennium for leasing archival storage space; funding for capital hardware items; a contingency rider for funding for the K-12 databases (this item is contingent upon an appropriations for the databases in the Texas Education Agency budget); and the elimination of several riders, including language directing the agency to close out library development programs. While no state funding was allocated for that purpose, the agency may use existing resources to maintain some level of statewide library development. Other House Appropriations decisions regarding the State Law Library and TEA are still pending. Initial discussions on the State Law Library suggest that House committee members are trying to find funding to keep the agency operating.

The Senate Finance Committee is still working on its version of the budget. Once both committees finalize their respective versions of the budget, the drafts will be brought before the full chambers for consideration, and then the two versions will be finalized through a conference committee, where differences in the bill proposals are negotiated.

The budget process is far from over, and library supporters are urged to continue contacting elected officials about the need to restore library funding. No allocation has been made in the House version for Loan Star Libraries. While we are grateful to the committee for its consideration of TexShare, we hope that additional funding can be allocated to key library programs.

Bill Update

TLA Platform Bills (Support)

SB 773 (Zaffirini): Relating to telecommunications service discounts for educational institutions, libraries, hospitals, and telemedicine centers. This measure amends all sections of relevant statute to extend the discount program through 2024.

TLA extends its deep thanks to Senator Zaffirini for her leadership and commitment to supporting libraries and the education community.

Bills Supported by TLA

TLA extends its thanks to Representative Dutton, Representative Muñoz, Representative Castro, and Senator Hinojosa for their support of school libraries and librarians.

HB 493 (Dutton): Relating to evaluation under the public school accountability system of the delivery of library resources. The measure would give the Commissioner of Education the option of including the delivery of library resources as a criterion for district accreditation.

SB 784 (Hinojosa)/ **HB 1505** by Muñoz: Relating to librarians employed by school districts. The measure outlines that districts may employ a certified school librarian for campuses of over 500 students.

HB 1394 (Castro): Relating to reports concerning the number of full-time librarians, counselors, and school nurses who are employed at a public school. The measure would require that campuses and districts report the number of listed full-time employees and include student ratio information.

For the most current news on library-related bills and budget updates, see our [Textline e-newsletter at www.txla.org/textline-updates](http://www.txla.org/textline-updates).

LEGISLATIVE DAY

TLA's Legislative Day was held on February 16 in Austin. Almost 350 library supporters assembled at the Capitol to visit with legislative offices and make the case for library funding and programs. TLA delegates visited the offices of all state representatives and senators and were welcomed with commemorative resolutions by Reps. Anchía and Huberty in the House and by Sen. Nelson in the Senate. The day was capped by a legislative reception sponsored by TLA at the State Library.

TLA received over 2,000 postcards and messages from constituents statewide participating in the "What My Library Means to Me" campaign. These messages were included in the packages hand-delivered to legislative offices. The online surveys (through which people can submit comments about their libraries) will remain posted through annual conference. At that time, we hope to deliver another round of messages to legislative offices in conjunction with the TLA Rally to be held on April 13 on the steps of the Capitol.

TLA extends its deep thanks to our Legislative Day sponsors: Britannica Digital Learning, EBSCO Information Services, Highsmith, Inc. and Polaris Library Systems.

Take a Chance on Art!



Author/illustrator Melanie Hope Greenberg chose this gouache painting for her raffle donation to correspond with the 2011 conference theme of "Libraries Crossing Boundaries; Bibliotecas cruzando fronteras." The fanciful scene centers on a supermarket from the year 3000. Incidentally, this Supermarket is now celebrating its 10th year in print!

The annual art raffle benefiting the Texas Library Disaster Relief Fund will be held on Thursday, April 14 during the second general session of the TLA Annual Conference in Austin. A ticket form is available on the TLA website for the convenience of those who will not be at conference this spring (mail by Monday, April 4): \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

CONTINUING corner EDUCATION

Texas Library Association continues the Strategic Initiatives webinar series with a trio of programs centered on leadership in academic, public, and school libraries. Julie Todaro will also present her premium webinar series on measuring and justifying library services. Visit www.txla.org/CE for registration and listings for even more premium webinars to come.

April 6, 2pm: *Leadership, Some Personal Thoughts* (strategic)

by Dana Rooks with Rhoda Goldberg and Maribel Castro

Dana Rooks, dean of the University of Houston Libraries and Past President of TLA (2004-05), share her thoughts on the questions, qualities, and quintessential skills of leadership in this issue of *TLJ*. She continues her discussion with Rhoda Goldberg, director of Harris County Public Library, and Maribel Castro, current TLA President and librarian for Coronado High School, Lubbock, in a free webinar on April 6. They will explore leadership for all types of libraries in a time when every type of library seems to be under siege. Learn how to develop your skills and discover your opportunities. One hour of CE credit will be offered.

April 21, 2-3pm: *Assessing Your Library* (premium)

by Julie Todaro

Since the days of libraries getting money and more money automatically or "just because we are there" or "because we are the heart of the organization" are over, we need to know how to make our case on our worth and value. While some of our worth and value content and justification comes from articulation of our intrinsic value and long-standing successful performance, much of it must now come from gathering and reporting out usage and impact. Join the webinar audience

to find out what you can do immediately - no matter what data you gather - and what you can plan to do in the future, given unique situations you may be facing including cutbacks, need for major changes, and more. One hour of CE credit will be offered with this premium webinar. See below for registration fees – invoice available upon request. Julie Todaro is a nationally known speaker with experience in all types of libraries, the author of several books, and a Past President of both TLA (2000-01) and ACRL (2006-07).

May 3, 2-3pm: *Teen Homework Centers, Minimum Resources for Most Budgets* (strategic)

by Sian Brannon and WyLaina Hildreth

Teens invading your public library? Need help to help them? Make a Homework Center! This free webinar will include information on planning, including space and surveys, materials, virtual options, staffing, funding, and sources for more information. Learn the advantages and pitfalls of this measurable service that the community understands as a valuable resource. One hour of CE credit will be offered.

May 5, 2-3pm: *Strategic Planning* (premium) by Julie Todaro

With spring comes new growth, bird's nests and eggs, blooming flowers and the dreaded strategic plan. Not intended to be crystal balls or long-term speculation, older planning processes used to include intricate processes with extensive involvement by diverse individuals as well as timelines that spanned five-or-more years. The more contemporary plan is based on sound research principles and practices with data gathering strategies that include input by targeted populations, a variety of aggregated data reports as well as scenarios that tell "stories" of future activities. The plan - required for reportage related to funding in many library settings - provides general vision and mission, assessment strategies and outcomes with projected and actual progress. Webinar discussion will introduce plan elements as well as provide

examples of a variety of plan elements. One hour of CE credit will be offered with this premium webinar. See below for registration fees; invoice available upon request.

May 11, 2-3pm: *Using Annual Reports to Make Your Case* (premium) by Julie Todaro

One communication technique used to assist managers in reporting out, justifying, articulating need, identifying issues and activities is the annual report. Recommended as a tool that tells a monthly or quarterly story or the mid-year and final report, the annual report had become an even more valuable tool that describes library performance and specifically library value and worth. Tune in to learn about report techniques and best practices. One hour of CE credit will be offered with this premium webinar. See below for registration fees – invoice available upon request.

May 12, 3:30-4:30pm: *Leading Instruction, Collaborating for Success* (strategic)

by Kathy Shaw and Sharon Swarner

In the article in this issue, two school librarians discuss the relationship between two perennial hot topics for the profession: integrated library instruction and teacher-librarian collaboration. They suggest that these two practices are in fact one whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, and that librarians can be true leaders in their schools if they seize the opportunities presented. Shaw and Swarner will take their ideas further in a free webinar on May 12, providing more details on how such collaboration can be better achieved. Kathy Shaw is a librarian at Bannwolf School & Public Library, Ronald Reagan High School. Sharon Swarner is librarian at Robert E. Lee High School. Both are with North East ISD (San Antonio). One hour of CE credit will be offered.



■ **Registration fees for premium webinars:** Premium webinars carry a fee of \$45 for TLA members, \$55 for non-members, and \$35 per person in groups of five or more. The premium webinars above are also part of a series on assessing and justifying your library services during this time of severe budget cuts – sign up for all three webinars and pay the group rate of \$35 per program even if you are attending by yourself! ★

What My Library Means to Me Campaign:

Excerpts from Letters Received

Patron, Arlington Public Library on the benefit of the library: *The library saves my family literally thousands of dollars each year - money that we can otherwise channel into our local businesses in terms of non-library sales: live entertainment, clothing, and dining out. . . We would be brokenhearted and depressed about the state of our collective culture if funding to the libraries is cut. The library serves those who MOST need it - nothing is ever wasted at the library. How often can a government institution say that?*

Student, Cigarroa Middle School Library, Laredo ISD: *Please don't close the library. I don't want to flunk."*

Teacher who uses the Galloway Library at Mesquite: *Our librarian is FULL of good ideas and is a master teacher herself! Also, the weekly library lessons give me a conference time when I normally wouldn't have one.*

Faculty member, Lee College: *The library is the heartbeat of an educational facility. It's health determines the health of an institution as well as the intellectual health of a community.*

Teacher, Memorial Middle School Library, Laredo ISD: *Some students don't have the transportation or the chance to go to the public library so the school library will be the only place they could go. In our city the only bookstore that existed is closed.*

Patron, Harris County Public Library Freeman Branch: *I would be completely lost without my library. I could not afford to support my habit without it. I guess I would have to find a Reader's Anonymous 12-step group or something.* ★