

December, 2011

Working Together to Support Ohio Libraries in 2011

By Ashlee Clark, Executive Secretary to the State Librarian
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One of the unique aspects of working at the State Library of Ohio is that we serve all different types of communities: state government, Ohio's libraries, and Ohio's residents. Additionally, the State Library serves different types of libraries: academic, public, school, and special libraries. These library types differ in the communities they serve, the way they are governed, the way they are funded, and their professional associations. Yet State Librarian Beverly Cain found out when she called representatives of the academic, public, and school libraries together in September 2010 that these libraries have several problems in common: funding, staffing, branding, identity, space, increases in usage, and demands with decreases in hours, staff, space, and materials. These representatives agreed that they could work together to help address these common issues.

Throughout 2011, the group met four times (March, July, September, and December) to continue these discussions about what could be done. Initial discussions focused on creating a statewide information literacy initiative similar to Pennsylvania's Libraries and 21st Century Literacies initiative and a statewide multi-library type snapshot day to increase awareness of the value of Ohio's libraries to residents.

In July of 2011, the group focused on the problem of the loss of certified school librarians. They determined that not only are students and teachers affected by this, but that public and academic libraries are affected as well. Public libraries are seeing an increased demand in serving students while they are dealing with decreases in staff and hours and increased demands from their communities. Academic libraries are seeing students who lack the basic research and search skills needed for college and are spending more time and resources on getting them up to speed, all while dealing with frozen or decreased staffing and funding. This increased the scope of the group and more members were added as interest increased.

The group identified possible ways to address these problems. One of the ways identified was to gather data showing not only the loss in certified school librarians but also the effect this has on student achievement. A sub-committee of this group is currently working towards this goal.

Additionally, State Librarian Beverly Cain, INFOhio Executive Director Terri Fredericka, and Bruce Hawkins, Chief Executive Officer, Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network met with State Superintendent Stan Heffner in November to discuss the problem and talk about ways to address it.

At the group's September meeting they decided to host a statewide multi-library type snapshot day in the fall to show the urgency of increasing awareness of the importance of Ohio's libraries and to also allow promotion at upcoming library conferences for school, public, and academic libraries. State Library staff worked with a committee of library organization staff to host Snapshot Day: A Day in the Life of Ohio Libraries. Over 100 libraries submitted 1,737 pictures and over 200 libraries submitted data through the online survey. Many libraries collected and shared patron comments. The committee will work



together to develop advocacy and promotional materials for each library type and for all libraries. Plans for a 2012 Snapshot Day are already in the works.

The group continues to explore ways to work together to support all of Ohio's libraries. They want to ensure that the work libraries do is highlighted to show that they are continually working together to share services and resources in order to provide the best library service to all Ohio residents for life.

Working Together to Support Ohio's Libraries Group Members

1. Beverly Cain – State Library of Ohio
2. Missy Lodge – State Library of Ohio
3. Ashlee Clark – State Library of Ohio
4. Janet Ingraham Dwyer – State Library
5. Bill Morris – State Library of Ohio
6. Shannon Kupfer – State Library of Ohio
7. John Myles – State Library Board Member
8. Bruce Hawkins – Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network
9. Doug Evans – Ohio Library Council
10. Molly Carver – Ohio Library Council
11. Terri Fredericka – INFOhio
12. Sue Subel – Ohio Educational Library Media Association
13. Krista Taracuk – Ohio Educational Library Media Association
14. Deb Logan – Ohio Educational Library Media Association
15. Alison Ricker – Academic Library Association of Ohio
16. Deidra Herring – Ohio State University Libraries
17. Don Wicks - Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
18. Carolyn Brodie – Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
19. Meghan Harper – Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
20. Jennifer Schwelik – INFOhio
21. M.E. Steele Pierce - West Clermont Local Schools
22. Amy Ensore, SWON Libraries
23. Margaret Groeschen, Xavier University Library
24. Stephanie Bange, Wright State University Educational Resource Center