

**Marketing and Public Relations**  
**Prepared by Sara Groves**  
**For December 2011 Commission Meeting**

**Goal One – Content** - *Montana State Library (MSL) acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library partners and patrons.*

**Ready 2 Read** – The Montana State Library hosted the Ready 2 Read Rendezvous at the Bozeman Public Library from Friday, October 7 – Sunday, October 9, 2011. A final agenda and speaker bio is attached for your information. A total of 43 librarians attended, representing 37 different libraries. Montana communities from different sizes and different parts of the state – from Libby to Fort Peck, from Billings to Darby – were all represented. We also had three tribal libraries represented and two of Montana’s school/community libraries as well.

The training was unique for a number of reasons, including:

- 1) Participants had to apply to attend; i.e. they were greatly invested in being there.
- 2) Participants were all children’s librarians and many had never attended a conference or training before. This was their first professional development experience they had ever had.
- 3) Participants spent every minute of the entire Rendezvous together. There weren’t competing speakers – everyone attended the same speakers. They ate all of their meals and snacks and took their breaks together. Additionally, they stayed in the same hotel. A great deal of bonding and networking took place because of this.
- 4) The content and speakers of the Rendezvous were designed to build on each other. We began the conference with an overview of information on early childhood development, for instance, that provided everyone with solid base knowledge to bring to the next trainings. We ended with a training on advocacy.

At the end of the conference, some attendees literally wept with gratitude about being able to attend. In the evaluation of the Ready 2 Read Rendezvous, one attendee said, “I always go to these trainings, come home, and then put everything away in a drawer. This conference has left me energized and excited to go home and put everything I learned into practice immediately!” Another comment, from an email I received after the Rendezvous, is below:

*I just had my 1st Books and Babies since the rendezvous and what an incredible experience! I was seeing all these different "stages of development" amongst the different ages, and noticing the skills they had to use for particular toys. I was looking at the toys we use with totally new eyes, and happily thinking we've got a great variety and bunch of toys for the kids to choose from. I used one of the new board books (the ten little fingers one) in the regular part of the program and the kids loved it. As soon as I can find something to play the tune on, I'll learn the song, and I'm sure it will become a regular on our list.*

*I put the blocks out and one Dad sat and built structures and the little ones would toddle over and knock them down, but none of the kids were drawn to the building part of the blocks. Then, when we were cleaning up, I accidentally spilled the "tip" cards from the bunch that came with our Ready to Read bin, and wouldn't you know that the one about blocks just fell out in front of me. I read the card to the Dad, and we both had a good laugh over it. It said, "Put some blocks out for children to play with at the end of storytime. Talk about the shapes and encourage children to explore what they can do with the blocks. Encourage the adults to do the same." He said, "Looks like we have to work on the kid part." I laughed, but said, "Oh no, for this age they did just what they were supposed to do. They'll start building with them if we just make them available." Before today, blocks had not been a choice for the kiddies. I made sure to tell them all that they came to us from the State Library and the grant from First Interstate Bank....hope that info was correct.*

*Anyway, I already had great enthusiasm for Books & Babies...it's one of my favorite days of the week...but I now have renewed enthusiasm and it all came from the Rendezvous! Thanks again and again and thanks SO MUCH!!!*

A few things were requested by the attendees to keep the group moving forward:

- a) A place to put ideas, materials, etc. To that end, we have submitted an ITPR for a wiki.
- b) An email list of people interested specifically in early childhood services (I am working on that).
- c) An interest group on early childhood services that meets regularly and provides direction to the State Library on next steps and direction for the Ready 2 Read program, similar to an early childhood Network Advisory Council. I have collected names of interested parties.

The additional money from the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation will be used to support the Ready 2 Read Goes Wild! trunk program that we have developed in partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks. Right now we are focusing on the development of the trunks for Montana's tribes. The Office of Public Instruction's Indian Education Division has provided us with contacts on each reservation for the tribal education coordinator. Because there are few books available that relate specifically to Montana tribes, we are working with the tribes to record the animal stories specific to their culture as a literary resource. These trunks will be placed in a reservation's tribal library for use in their community, but will also be shared among libraries in the state via interlibrary loan.

The new Ready 2 Read PlaySpace opened at the Bozeman Public Library in mid-September and it has been a tremendous hit. We will provide money to libraries across the state to develop PlaySpaces of their own and are currently working on a plan that includes an application process, and providing materials to communities based on the size of their library, etc. Our plan is to roll the application process out in January. The goal of each PlaySpace will be to offer high-quality toys and hands-on interactive tools with the goal of expanding the traditional role of children's services and increasing the capacity of libraries to recognize and realize their full potential as community hubs for healthy child and family development, parent and community involvement and lifelong learning beginning at birth. The PlaySpace is branded as part of the Ready 2 Read program through design, which was completed by the original Ready 2 Read designer. Our plan is to use funding from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation to expand the PlaySpace ideas into libraries across Montana. To further support the concept of play in libraries, we have offered a number of trainings on the value of play and will continue to do so.

We have received five new posters, five new bookmarks, and five new brochures to distribute to libraries to provide to families and caregivers. The new materials support the revised version of the American Library Association's Every Child Ready to Read program. The new materials are easy to understand (getting away from the technical names for early literacy skills like "phonological awareness") and instead focus on what parents and caregivers can actually do with their kids to build early literacy skills with an emphasis on "Read. Write. Sing. Play. Talk." All of the new materials were designed by Joanna Yardley, a children's book illustrator and graphic designer, and they are beautiful! They incorporate MT animals and feature mountain lions, elk, bison, bears, and wolves.

**Ready 2 Read Goes Wild!** – Over the last couple of months, I have been purchasing and receiving items to do additional Ready 2 Read Goes Wild! trunks. The goal will be to have a set of six trunks (ungulates, owls, tracks, bears, creepy-crawlies, and water) in each federation. The federation will own the trunks and distribute them in their areas. This is now a necessity because of the lack of a courier program, which made

moving the trunks much easier. The new Ready 2 Read Goes Wild! trunks will be delivered to libraries at the Montana Library Association meeting in April.

**BTOP** – The LibraryNext campaign rolled out and includes multiple print pieces as well as television, radio, a FB page, and a web site. I worked with Donci Bardash to do a training on the materials for non-BTOP libraries.

**Mymontanalibrary** – I am continuing to work with Tracy Cook and Sarah McHugh on the redesign of mymontanalibrary.com.

**EBSCO** – After getting the new discovery system web site, we reprinted t-shirts, magnets, and bookmarks with that new web address on them. These are being distributed at trainings and meetings. I am going to begin working closely with EBSCO to promote the new discovery service.

**Hunting Companion** – The Hunting Companion continues to receive a lot of press – from NPR to articles in hunting supplements in newspapers and magazines from around the state.

**NRIS and BMSC** – GIS Day was held on November 16 at the Capitol Rotunda. Stacy and I produced a huge number of materials for them, from all of the signage for the event to fliers, press releases, media advisories, press kits, and more. The event was well-attended and well-covered in the press.