

Marketing and Public Relations Fall 2012

Prepared for the December 2012 Commission meeting
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Goal One – Content: *Montana State Library (MSL) acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library partners and patrons.*

Library Outreach – We are once again working on creating the very popular “Legislative Snapshot” that will be distributed to each legislator the first week of the session. The “Snapshot” highlights the value of the Montana State Library by providing information from each district that is relevant to the topics most likely to be addressed by the convening legislature. Fifty different versions of the snapshot (one for each legislative district) are being produced. We will print a copy for each legislator and the online version is available to anyone who may be interested.

Library Legislative Day – I am the co-chair of the 2013 Library Day and am working closely with a committee of great folks to ensure that the event is a success. The event is scheduled for January 16, 2013.

I attended the Montana Reading Conference in Great Falls and presented an overview on the Ready 2 Read program. This conference reached out to both early childhood educators and reading specialists in the schools and was a new audience for us. My session was well-attended. I brought the Ready 2 Read materials and they were the hit of the conference give-aways.

Because we were very short-staffed, we provided materials about library programs to the Montana Historical Society to distribute at their table at the Montana Festival of the Book in Missoula in late September.

Alice Meister and I represented Montana at the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C. This year’s theme was early literacy. We gave away Ready 2 Read bookmarks and magnets. It’s a great event and the number of people who attend is truly amazing. We literally often had people standing 9 – 10 deep at our booth clamoring for information on Montana and the Ready 2 Read project.

Best Beginnings Advisory Council – I attended the BBAC meeting. This group is working on doing a needs assessment of Montana children from birth – five years old to see what is currently happening to support this population in the state and what can be done to further support this population. Libraries and their programming and outreach to families with young children will be included in the needs assessment.

Montana After School Network – Montana is one of eleven states in the nation that does not have a statewide afterschool network. C.S. Mott, who funds programs in 39 states, has approached Montana to see if they are interested in establishing a statewide network and to ask Montana to apply for funding from them. I was asked to participate in this group based on connections I have made at the Best Beginnings Advisory Council. The organizer of the group understands that libraries across the state are often providing quality after-school programming for school-age kiddos and sees libraries as an integral part of the proposed statewide network because of the unique tie-in we have with lifelong learning, from birth through adulthood.

Ready 2 Read – We held the second annual “Ready 2 Read Rendezvous” in Helena at the Lewis & Clark Library from October 5 – 7. Fifty librarians attended. Through the First Interstate Bank grant, complemented by LSTA funding, we paid for all of the meals and lodging as well as travel costs; this seems to be an imperative part of the Rendezvous’ success as it enables many small libraries without a budget for conferences and travel to take part.

I didn’t think we could match the energy or excitement that the first Rendezvous generated, but we did it again! Attendees left and were inspired to go home and integrate what they had learned in their libraries. In the weeks following the Rendezvous, I received emails and phone calls from attendees who were excited to share how they had implemented what they had learned and how it was helping them perform their jobs more effectively. A sample email, from Melanie Roberts in Livingston, is below:

The 2012, “Ready-2-Read Rendezvous” was once again very personally inspiring. Since the Helena workshop, I have collaborated with several people in the community. First, I spoke with Chip Reese, who owns the Livingston Kite Shop. He has donated three kites to the Easy and Junior libraries. The two for the easy library are very colorful. One is of a cat and the other a dog; these will be placed on the ceiling over the PlaySpace. The third kite is a huge sunburst with a 35 foot tail that will drape across the ceiling of the junior library. He also has the same line of puppets that are used in the “Growing Up Wild Trunks” and will let me borrow them as needed. I am putting together a wish list for the holidays and hoping that some of my parents, friends, and the board, will get some of the items for our PlaySpace.

Second, I have visited with Cathy Jackson, the Head Start director for Park County and have set a schedule for story time once a month at the center and the students will also visit the library once a month. Third, I got in touch with Ted Madden and asked to be placed on the list and to participate with the early beginnings meetings, here in Park County to collaborate about early childhood literacy. And the most recent activity that I was able to implement was a family read “Block Party”. Using the unit blocks and the materials, the families were able to construct buildings using the blueprints and free building. The party was a huge success. The ideas that I obtained from the workshop and collaborating with other children’s librarians were priceless. Again thank you for all you put into the Ready-2-Read and us.

Our speakers included internationally-renowned experts on their topics, many of whom have written “THE” textbook on the subject that they covered. We offered the following workshops:

The Pyramid Model: Supporting Young Children’s Social Emotional Development

The Pyramid Model is designed to promote social emotional competence in young children, prevent challenging behaviors and provide positive behavior supports to improve outcomes for children. In this session, participants will define challenging behavior, become familiar with the Pyramid Model, and strategize ways to use the Pyramid Model as a framework for addressing challenging behaviors exhibited by young children in a library setting.

Toys are Tools for Learning

Amy, owner of Lasso the Moon Toy Store – a Helena institution, will talk about play, human interaction (as opposed to screen or audio only), sequencing and patterning, imaginative storytelling, game play for young children, pretend play, puppets, and more! Come prepared to share what your specific needs are in your public spaces and Amy will help you address them.

Creating Play Spaces in Libraries

This workshop will focus on creating play spaces in children’s libraries. We will explore how play spaces can enhance the mission of a children’s library and the challenges and rewards in creating these spaces. We will also examine how to design even small play spaces to be effective, interactive, and aesthetic.

Every Child Ready to Learn Through Play

Research now proves that play is a child’s work. In this workshop, you’ll learn about the importance of pretend play, how to integrate play into your library’s setting, and how to share this information with parents and childcare providers. This hands-on workshop will provide each of us opportunities to work in small groups and learn about resources and books to use in story times. Dorothy and Connie will also share ideas from the incredibly successful play and learn areas in Carroll County, MD libraries.

The Science of Children’s Behaviors

Gwen Dewar is a biological anthropologist who has a website (<http://www.parentingscience.com/>) dedicated to families and educators who want information based on scientific evidence. We will look at several common behaviors—crying and tantrums—as well as the importance of friendship and self-control by reading short research-based articles, then discussing them in light of what we see in public libraries. We’ll also talk about how we can best share this information with parents and caregivers.

As part of the evaluation, attendees were required to submit a project idea that they would work on for the next year with the final goal that they were somehow serving the needs of their community's children more effectively through that project. Cindy Christin and I are going to serve as mentors on the projects to help libraries achieve their many varied goals. We will work with libraries via phone and webinars to help them stay on task and complete the projects as necessary.

One of our speakers serves on the American Library Association's "Every Child Ready to Read" committee. She liked the materials that we had created for the MT project so much that she brought them back to the committee and now Montana's "Ready 2 Read" materials are being used as a national model on how to customize the project to meet your users' needs. She also encouraged me to submit our materials for the John Cotton Dana award, which is the most prestigious award from the American Library Association, and I will look into doing that. Materials for that award are due February 1, 2013.

Ready 2 Read Goes Wild – With money from the First Interstate Bank grant, we were able to develop trunks that are focused on Montana's "Indian education for all" mandate and will be housed in libraries on Montana's reservations. These trunks will circulate just like the existing "Ready 2 Read Goes Wild" trunks and will be available for check-out by schools, child care centers, Head Start programs, and library patrons in good standing. I worked with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the MT Office of Public Instruction's Indian Education program staff to develop a list of materials that complement 1) the Growing Up Wild curriculum and the 2) Indian education for all mandate while helping children to develop early literacy skills and an interest in Montana animals and nature. The trunks will include about 30 books that range in topics from Montana's tribes to Montana's native animals and habitats. They will also include ten different puppets that support the books, and animal parts such as skull replicas.

Kurt Cunningham, of MT FWP, and I will present the trunks and how to make the most use of what is in them to support the Growing Up Wild curriculum to Montana Head Start tribal teachers on December 6. The Head Start teachers will bring the trunks back with them to give to their local library to catalog and begin circulating.