

Memo

To: Montana State Library Network Advisory Council

From: Sara Groves, MSL Marketing Coordinator

Date: October 30, 2014

Re: Early Literacy and Marketing Update

Training

The third Ready 2 Read Rendezvous was rescheduled for April 25 – 27, 2014 in Bozeman, MT from our original October date (the original Rendezvous was cancelled because of the federal government shutdown). We were able to secure our major speaker, Saroj Ghoting, a nationally-renowned early literacy expert. However, we had to make some adjustments to the schedule because one of our original October speakers could not attend in April. We also lost some attendees because of rescheduling. In October, we had 50 people signed up to attend, including representatives from each of Montana's reservations. Our April event was smaller with 37 attendees. Unfortunately, we also only had one tribal library represented.

In spite of having to reschedule and the conflicts that ensued, we still had a great Rendezvous. We conducted a pre- and post evaluation to determine how learners advanced their skills and knowledge on how to 1. use play effectively to promote emerging learning and literacy, 2. how to engage strategies for managing multi-age learners at Story Time and 2. how to achieve effective community engagement. Of the more than three dozen attendees, more than ½ completed the pre- and post- evaluation forms successfully and improvement was observed in all three designed outcomes.

Additionally, the attendees all rated the Rendezvous as one of the best education experiences of their professional lives. Comments received included:

"The Rendezvous is far and away the most informative training I've ever attended – and has been so every year that I've come. I always leave the Rendezvous feeling re-energized about my job and excited to return to work to immediately put into practice everything I've learned."

"I've attended the Rendezvous all three years and it has changed my life – personally and professionally. In a field where we are not financially compensated very well and which can often be draining, I was on the verge of leaving and doing something else. However, the Rendezvous helped me to understand that what I'm doing is important for these kids and for our community. I have left every year feeling invigorated about my job, my new professional network, and ready again to serve."

Outreach

After months of negotiating with partners including MontanaPBS, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and the Montana Head Start Collaborative – not to mention all of the writing, research, filming, and editing – we now have a complete set of videos that support the "Ready 2 Read Goes Wild" program. Each of the six videos support the Growing Up Wild curriculum and the Ready 2 Read Goes Wild! trunks that are available through MT libraries. These six short training videos are now a permanent part of MT PBS'

Learning Media site and are available to parents, teachers, and whoever else may be interested in accessing these materials. The videos feature Montana experts on the trunk themes, which are ungulates, owls, bears, tracks, creepy-crawlies, and fish. Educators, librarians, and other interested individuals can access the videos to discover basic information on the subject matter, learn how experts explain scientific material to children, and access data on the subject that can promote learning in the library or in classrooms. The MT Head Start Collaboration Office paid for development and editing of the videos.

Summer Reading

I attended the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) Conference in Biloxi, MS to represent Montana this year, along with Cindy Christin of the Bozeman Public Library. To further support the summer reading program, I partnered with AWE to have Montana participate in a beta project to try to capture more information about our summer reading program. I recruited a number of libraries to participate our Montana libraries represented some of the most rural libraries that participated, so we added an important voice. The MT libraries that participated represented a wide range of libraries, including very rural, large libraries and east and west libraries. AWE is still generating data based on the project, and I will report back on that at a later time. Additionally, I am working with Cindy Christin to do an online evaluation of summer reading programs in Montana, including the value of our participation in CSLP and how the State Library might better support summer reading.

Share Your Story

I have been working with Cara Orban, Lauren McMullen, and Pam Henley on the new Share Your Story project. I worked closely with a designer, Luke Duran, to coordinate a new branding image for this project. Additionally, I am working with Cara and Luke to develop a web site that will be geared to the public so that they can find out how to participate in this project. Finally, I am working with a videographer who will shoot two PSAs for us (a 30-second and a 60-second) that we will use to promote the videos. These will be distributed to television stations in the areas in which the Share Your Story kits are available. Additionally, I have put together a media plan with which we will launch the project this fall.