

Introduction

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1989—the Year of the Young Reader is almost over, but for youth librarians every year is the Year of the Young Reader. We are always concerned, as are all thoughtful adults, with fostering the growth and well-being of our children. This commitment is translated into the services and collections of large and small libraries across the state.

In this issue Indiana librarians actively involved with young people express some of their views and opinions and share creative ideas about library services for children. Thank you to all these librarians who answered the call for papers and took the time to speak up.

A major theme that emerges is an emphasis on programming and activities to draw children into the library and to create life-long readers and library users. This issue begins with a group of articles which describe individual programs or overall programming approaches in particular libraries. These are followed by writings which focus on services and programs to targeted groups: toddlers, special education students, children at risk, latchkey and unattended children in the library, and parents and

caregivers of preschool children.

After these examinations of outreach activities and programs, Jean Ann Young's "Musing Upon the Year of the Young Reader" is especially thought provoking. She suggests that youth librarians need to shift their attention from group activity back to the individual reader and to pause and consider what it is that makes reading so "uniquely human" and "exceedingly personal."

At times it seems that children's librarians are expected to be experts in every arena—story telling, reference, management, literacy development, computers, public speaking, children's literature—the list stretches on and on. Sharing ideas and resources is one smart way to increase efficiency, utilize special talents, and, ultimately, provide more and better services. Three librarians write about cooperative efforts in this direction.

This issue includes several articles on library materials and collections: a bibliography of Indiana materials, a fascinating look at the Elisabeth Ball Collection of Historical Children's Materials, one of the premier research collections in this country, and last,

information on toys as learning materials for early literacy skills. Valuable guidance for establishing this kind of collection is included.

One facet of library service for young people is the question of school-public library cooperation (or the lack of it). This is an area that has been slow to develop despite occasional flurries of activity. Danny Callison reports the results of a research study conducted on this topic in Indiana in 1986 and updated nationally in 1989. The findings are not encouraging. This report is followed by a bibliography useful for identifying follow-up reading. The progressive cooperative efforts taking place in Hammond, Indiana are then described in some detail. Ann Herold-Short tells us that small public libraries can cooperate too.

The issue ends on a positive note with suggestions for "Establishing an Atmosphere for Success," a consideration of physical facilities. This is followed by a youth librarian's reflections on her personal philosophy of service. After five years on the firing line she has not lost her idealism and sense of mission, or her sense of humor.

The articles in this special issue reflect that sense of mission and express a positive concern for meeting the information needs of young people. The content is heavily oriented toward programming, which is a vital part of children's services. Future issues might focus on management topics such as planning for services, establishing a political base in the library and in the community, and evaluating the effectiveness of services.



"Dino" the dinosaur promotes the Gary Public Library 1988 summer reading program, "Dino-Soar to Better Reading."