

Cooperative Efforts Extend Resources: Three Approaches

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Expanding the Skills of Librarians Who Work with Youth: One Goal of Continuing Education Programs in ALSA 2 Martha Gardin

Librarians in the ALSA 2 area of north-central Indiana have been concerned about the nation-wide need for trained Children's Librarians. They have recognized that many libraries, regardless of size, are heading their library services efforts for children with staff who are not professionally trained as children's librarians. Rather than deplore this situation, they have used the opportunity of the cooperative library services offered by ALSA 2 to expand and extend the knowledge and experience of those serving children in ALSA 2-area libraries. Programs have been carried out in the following ways:

The children's services round table meets four times each year, bringing

together children's services staff from more than 15 public libraries. At these meetings they share information and ideas about summer reading programs, after school programs for older children, toddler and pre-school story hours, young adult reading programs, craft programs, book selection concerns, trends in service, policies about "latch-key children," and other topics of mutual interest. Everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

Continuing education programs are of special interest to those who work with youth. Some of those in recent years have been: Arts Experiences in the Library (art, music, drama, puppetry); Storytelling workshops with Marcia Lane and Kathleen Zmuda; presentations by nationally known speakers who promote the excitement to be found in books: Caroline Feller Bauer and Nancy Polette; puppetry workshops with local librarians and Robin Hartzler, puppeteer;

Working with Those Who Work with Children—Presenting Information about Children's Literature to Child Care-givers.

Programs that focus on children's and young adult literature have been of great interest to local library staff. The first literature series presented was a "Brush-up Course in Young Adult Literature," in four sessions, taught by Ann Raymer; that was followed by a four-part series about children's literature: Easy Readers, Humorous and Realistic Fiction for Grades 3 - 6, Booktalks for Elementary Grades, and an exercise in choosing the best in children's literature, a Newbery Award Exercise. This last program was at the request of those who have attended the annual "Unofficial, Simulated Caldecott Award" Program, now in its fourth year. An extensive book exhibit and discussion of excellence in picture books is followed by the groups campaigning for and voting on their choices of the outstanding picture book of the year.

A collection of Flannel Board stories created by members of the Children's Services Round Table is housed at the ALSA 2 Office and is available for loan to libraries wishing to use them for story programs.

The strength of working through the network is the element of cooperation—meeting counterparts from area libraries with similar concerns and sharing the many different imaginative ways they have developed to fulfill their commitments to services for children. ALSA 2 is proud to be able to facilitate this growth and provide these opportunities.

Cooperative (Ad) Ventures in CIALSA

Marti Mosemiller

Program Sharing Notebook

Several years ago, the Central Indiana ALSA Children's Services Committee realized that any time two or more children's librarians were together, the conversation nearly always came around to what new programs each had developed and presented. Obviously there were a lot of great ideas out there, but they weren't being shared with everyone. From this realization developed the Program Sharing Notebook.

To get the project started, each librarian on the Committee was asked to submit a description for at least one program which had proved successful in his or her library. Forms were designed for this by a sub-committee; included were the program title, the intended age range, the length of the program, materials needed, and a description of the program. The forms were to have the librarians' names and libraries. Sample nametags, handouts, and crafts could be included. Programs were divided into broad areas: Toddlers, Pre-School, School-Age, Library Instruction, etc.

Description sheets were duplicated and two identical notebooks were prepared; a third, master notebook, containing all the original materials stays in the CIALSA Professional Collection. The two notebooks circulate on two separate routes which allow each public library in CIALSA to receive one of them about once a year for a week or so. Children's librarians may copy any of the materials, may duplicate the programs described, and have a resource person to contact if there are questions. The Committee has requested only that each librarian using the notebook add a least one

new program.

To date the notebooks have made nearly three circuits. At the end of each round, materials which were added during that route have been duplicated for the other notebook; older materials have been weeded, although the master notebook still contains all materials ever turned in.

As a result of this project, newly-appointed children's librarians have a ready resource of proven programs using readily-available materials. Experienced librarians can add to their repertoire of programs while sharing their ideas with their colleagues. The Program Sharing Notebook has helped provide for a broader range of quality programs for the children of Central Indiana.

CIALSA Program Caravan

You've got a terrific program all planned. You present it at your library—the kids love it. You present it at area schools and day care centers. The youngsters there agree—it's a winner. But . . . now you've exhausted your potential audience locally. What do you do?

Or, you'd like to have the youngsters at your library experience programs different than those you usually present and you'd love to have a guest presenter. But . . . you don't have the funds to pay for these guests. What do you do now?

Librarians from several Central Indiana ALSA libraries solved both these problems by going "on the road" in the summer of 1987 with the first CIALSA Program caravan.

The caravan evolved when the Children's Services Committee learned of a Storytelling Caravan which Stone Hills ALSA had organized one year. For a fee, participating libraries had two guest storytellers

visit their libraries. The Committee decided that the logistics of finding and scheduling storytellers and libraries and dates was more than they wanted to undertake, discovered the expense involved would be more than many libraries could afford, and realized that the Committee members each had favorite programs which they had done in the past and which they would be willing to present elsewhere. The Program Caravan was born.

Registration forms were sent to all CIALSA public libraries explaining the Caravan concept: Participants would be required to present one program in each of two other libraries, but, in exchange, would receive two different programs in their library. Programs could be for either preschoolers or school-age youngsters. Mileage would be the performer's responsibility; any needed supplies would be provided by the host library.

Several libraries indicated an interest in the project but because of staff shortages, children's librarians taking classes, or lack of time weren't willing to participate in 1987—maybe later. Eight participants were found and assignments were made. Then, in Summer 1987, the Program Caravan became a reality.

Programs included a storyhour about pigs, an origami workshop, a bathtime storyhour, a readers' theatre presentation, a "going on a bear hunt" storytime, a "stuck on silliness" storytelling session complete with a giraffe-and-a-half puppet, and more.

We would love to report that everything went smoothly—but it didn't. Visitors got lost, facilities were not always as they had been envisioned, props were forgotten or fell apart, and doing a program at another library just is not the same as doing one in a familiar location with children you

know.

But all 16 programs were presented and were well-received, both by the host libraries and by the 466 children in the audiences. The eight participants indicated a willingness to be part of the Program Caravan again and plans for Program Caravan '88 were made.

During the second summer, two more libraries joined the circuit and one library had two children's librarians who each planned and presented two programs; their library, therefore, received four visiting programs. Participants were encouraged to arrive early (to avoid being late), to double-check all their materials, and to talk to their hosts in detail about what facilities were available and what special items they would need.

A storytime about teddy bears; a creative dramatics workshop; a session of folk stories, songs, and activities; a storyhour featuring monkeys and gorillas; a workshop on making wood and nail pictures; plus more puppets, storytelling, and readers' theatre programs were among the 19 programs presented to nearly 700 children. The comments and evaluations were very positive and every participant indicated she would like to participate in the future. Program Caravan '89 is expected to be larger—and even better.

Children's librarians in Central Indiana have discovered a way to share their programs—and talents—and the children in their libraries have benefitted. For more information on how your ALSA (or any group of children's librarians) can start your own cooperative (ad)venture, contact the CIALSA Children's Services Committee.

Exchanging Ideas in Northwest Indiana Denise J. Swineheart

Lake County Children's Counterparts

The children's services people of Northwest Indiana have been meeting to exchange ideas for many years. There are seven library districts in Lake County: Lake County, Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, Crown Point, Lowell, and Whiting. All of these have participated in varying degrees over the past years. Our main framework is "PR-7", the joint public relations committee of the seven districts. Out of this body grew "counterpart" groups, which are the various types of workers and their counterparts in the other systems; i.e. Technical Services, Audio-visual, Reference, Circulation, and Children's Services. Each group meets approximately once a year; plus all staff members of all the libraries meet once a year for a major workshop (attending either a morning or afternoon session).

The Children's Services personnel (both MLS professionals and paraprofessionals) found they got so many ideas from each other that in recent years the Children's Services Counterparts have met both spring and fall. This allows most people to attend at least one of the sessions per year, and still keep desks staffed and storyhours continuing. The hosting responsibilities are rotated among the systems with the host library being responsible for choosing the theme and doing the publicity. Meetings are usually held from 9 a.m. until noon with the first half of the meeting being a discussion of the predetermined theme and the second half being an inspiring conglomeration of "show and tell" of the most successful program ideas of each

library's recent activities. The themes for discussion have included preschool storyhours, toddlers storytimes, holiday programming, summer programs, using records and tapes, merchandising books, puppets, storytelling, latchkey children, etc. When invitations are sent out, all are encouraged to think about their work in this area and to bring handouts, bibliographies, samples, patterns, etc. On the day of the Counterpart Meeting, staff members from other systems or other branches get to briefly tour the hosting facility and meet the other staff members on duty. Announcements of general interest can be made; invitations to special programs, etc. can be extended. The predetermined topic is then introduced.

For example, at the Fall 1988 meeting hosted by the Gary Public Library, holiday programs were discussed. Members of the Gary staff had already volunteered for certain holidays. Beginning with Halloween, we continued through the calendar with pre-selected storytellers relating tales for each holiday. The stories were followed by other attendees volunteering program and craft ideas. At the same time, the meeting room stage was filled with recent and attractive holiday books. Persons demonstrating a craft either passed around the finished product for examination or distributed duplicated hand-outs with pattern directions. Those of us who attended could then take these ideas back to our own Children's Services meetings. One clever example shown was a reindeer Christmas ornament made from a dog biscuit, demonstrated by the staff of the Hammond Public Library. Our staff took this back to our own meeting and made more patterns. This Christmas, there were dog biscuit reindeer all over Lake County.

While these meetings are really a

high point of the year, the major problem is keeping them scheduled in an orderly fashion. Having no officers or other hierarchy, it is always important to have some library ready to issue an invitation for the next meeting with a general idea in which month they would be able to host. We try to clear the intended date, so that we are not calling a Children's Counterpart Meeting on the same day as one of the other systems' staff meetings, etc. We have begun to put our mailing list on computer so that we can keep up with personnel changes in the various systems. We also keep a record of those from outside our county who would like to be invited. We have never charged any type of registration fee, so the main cost involved is the time of the participants. Mailing costs are paid by the hosting library, so this cost is also rotated.

NIALSA Children's and Young Adult Committee

Northwest Indiana Area Library Service Authority has also been active in sponsoring events and in-service workshops that have helped us meet and exchange ideas with our Children's Services peers in the area. In 1983, the Executive Committee of NIALSA formed the Children's and Young Adult Committee composed of seven members representing both public and school libraries.

The first workshop, March 23, 1984, entitled "A Look at School Visits" was a panel discussion concerning school visits and other interaction between school and public libraries. Jeannine Furukawa, another branch librarian from Lake County, and I told of our great triumphs and failures from years of school visits. Jeannine demonstrated her outstanding storytelling techniques. I remember telling the audience that, although it is

extremely tiring and confusing giving my little talk starting with "Hello, my name is Denise Swinehart, and I'm from the Lake County Public Library" to more than twenty classes in a school; it all seemed worthwhile when a second grader beat me back to my library and said, "Could I read that book you said was your favorite book?" We paired our observations with comments from school media specialists. The most memorable result of that meeting was that Bill Crowley, the NIALSA director at that time, was shocked that 60 plus children's librarians would sign up to attend this kind of a workshop just discussing mutual concerns. At that first workshop, a survey was distributed asking what type of continuing education workshops would be most beneficial. In total, ninety-seven surveys were returned (forty-nine from public librarians and forty-eight from school librarians.) The most requested topics included: computer applications, preschool and toddler storyhour ideas, storytelling, programming ideas for school age children, training of student aides, cable TV and video production, book talking, puppetry, and censorship.

In 1984, the committee published a *Request for Proposal to Enhance Area Expertise In Young Adult Services*. Marcia Miller Trent, of the Hammond Public Library, was hired as consultant to conduct a series of workshops for library directors, children's services directors, school media directors, and other library staff dealing with young adults. Seven workshops were presented in May and June of 1985.

On April 25, 1986, the committee sponsored a very rousing presentation by Caroline Feller Bauer. One hundred-fifty school and public librarians attended her lecture and demonstration of ideas and props to promote reading.

The committee sponsored a Fall 1986 Storytelling Workshop with the intention of possibly beginning a Storytelling Guild. Simultaneous sessions featured traditional storytelling, book talking, and toddler storytimes (all ideas requested on the 1984 survey). At that time those interested in a storytelling guild responded, and the meeting culminated in the formation of the NIALSA Storytelling Guild. This group began in January 1987 under the leadership of the newly appointed NIALSA director, Deanna Snowden, and continues to meet monthly. The Guild provides storytellers to several area park and library festivals plus referrals to individuals seeking to employ storytellers for private parties, banquets, etc. The Guild presently consists of about 10 active storytellers plus another 50 semi-active interested persons.

An April 13, 1987 presentation on censorship and book selection policies, sponsored jointly by the Children and Young Adult Services Committee and the Intellectual Freedom Committee, featured Professor Edward B. Jenkinson, Professor of English Education at Indiana University, Bloomington.

In October 1987, a one-day Puppetry Workshop was presented by "No Strings Attached," the South Bend based team of Robin Hartzler and Phyllis Wezeman. This presentation included a vast display of puppets of varying types and cultures and a slide presentation of a variety of puppet uses.

The Children and Young Adult Committee has changed members and chairpersons several times over the past 6 years. Workshops have been conducted in many of NIALSA's member schools and public libraries. The workshops are given in accordance with guidelines for continuing education credits, and usually involve

a \$5.00 to \$15.00 per person fee for an all-day session.

The committee itself is a great resource for exchanging ideas. Public librarians find out about many of the activities of AIME (Association of Indiana Media Educators); and school media specialists learn of the ILA sponsored district meetings and state conferences. We are able to recommend speakers or authors we have heard to our school/public library counterparts, and are able to alert each other to current trends in our field.

At the workshops, we all get to meet and renew acquaintances with children's personnel in other jobs. Frequently, one remembers someone telling about a program idea or resource from another library, and at that point the best "ready reference" is a phone call to that person.

Local meetings of children's services workers cost primarily the salaries paid, provide a wealth of practical information for newer staff members, and are a source of revitalization for more experienced personnel.