

Northern Lights Library Network

Director's Report August 15, 2009

Meetings/Events

- June 20 NLLN Governing Board meeting, Detroit Lakes
Jun 24-25 Multitype System Directors' Meeting – Mankato, MN
June 29 Conference call with Blandin Foundation/Bill Coleman regarding
Libraries and stimulus funding grant application possibilities
June 30 WebJunction Seminar: Bringing Web 2.0 into Academic Libraries
(webinar)
July 1 Visit to St Mary's Mission School, Red Lake, with Chris McArthur
Planning retrospective conversion project
July 2 Meeting with Lori Thompson and Chris McArthur regarding the
E2T2 grant evaluation process
July 3 4th of July Holiday observed
July 7 Deb Keena's performance review
July 8 Becker Co Early Childhood Initiative meeting – Detroit Lakes
July 13 Meeting with Mary Leff and Barb Fabre regarding White Earth
Early Childhood programs/Readmobile
July 14 LITA Top Technology panel presentation, streaming from ALA
July 15-16 Chris McArthur working in Red Lake on St Mary's Mission Retrospective
Conversion project
July 15 Todd Otis, Exec Dir Ready 4 K, discussed with me how libraries might
be involved in the McKnight early childhood-3rd grade initiative
July 16 Planning meeting for North Star Library Consortium with Gay Galles,
Mary Mehsikomer, Patricia Post – NLLN Office, DL
July 17 Aneesh Chopra presentation at National Civic Summit, streaming
July 21 MLA/MEMO Legislative Forum, St Cloud
July 23 Meeting with Lisa Ripplinger, Eide-Bailly, regarding 990 Tax form for
2009. (Phone)
July 27 MEMO Leadership Conference, St Benedict College, St Joseph

Aug 10 NLLN Audit field work begins
Aug 13 Spotlight on Books Conference Planning meeting, Detroit Lakes
Aug 14 MN Book Award Books give-away to regional public libraries,
NLLN Office, Detroit Lakes
Aug 15 NLLN Governing Board Meeting

The following is a recap of the activities in NLLN in FY 09 as they link to the Goals of the NLLN Strategic Plan, 2008-2010:

Goal 1: Facilitate educational opportunities in the NLLN region for NLLN member library staff, trustees, and Friends of the Library through continuing education and staff development activities.

Continuing Education events/activities

Continuing Education and staff development comprise the largest and most significant part of the Northern Lights Library Network activities and programs. Activities fall into several categories:

1. CE workshops and programs that NLLN directly sponsors;
2. Training sessions and events we provide to member library staff;
3. Workshops and programs we support/collaborate/participate in that often extend beyond the NLLN region;
4. The NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship program.

NLLN produced or participated in 30 events in FY 2009, attended by 755 people at a cost of \$11,746.71 (\$6289 of which was reimbursed from the E2T2 grant). Most of our activities are free of registration costs and have only minimal production costs associated with them. Major activities include these events:

- ❖ Teleconferences (5) from the College of DuPage (Soaring to Excellence series; Library Challenges and Opportunities Series). These teleconferences were available via streaming directly to desktop computers, or in-person viewing at Livingston Lord Library at MSUMoorhead. Archived versions are always available for later viewing and Minitex provides DVD copies for loan. The statewide subscription to these events has been provided by Minitex and registration/publicity has been done through NLLN.

Other teleconferences have been available through OPAL Conferencing and via WebJunction Minnesota. NLLN maintains an OPAL subscription and also promotes OPAL conferences available freely to all libraries over the Internet. WJ-Mn is supported by NLLN via 10 hours/month of service and again, we promote the teleconferences, webinars, and other online activities of this organization. We also publicize a wide range of other teleconferences, webinars, and conference proceedings that may be of interest to the NLLN library community.

- ❖ September 27, 2009, we held our re-scheduled 2008 NLLN Annual Meeting, at Thumper Pond in Ottertail, MN. Brenda Hough, national trainer for MaintainIT, presented a workshop entitled *Technofit: Technology and Learning to Transform Your Life*.
- ❖ NLLN sponsored 3 training workshops on the use of the *Electronic Library for Minnesota* (ELM) resources. These were facilitated by NLLN in partnership with Minitex and NLLN member libraries. Schools, public libraries, and academic libraries have participated in these training sessions.

- ❖ Much of our continuing education has been related to the *North Star Library Consortium*. We have done 12 full days of *Destiny* training for the new members of the Consortium as they have joined. We did one day of “just in time” training for new staff members in Consortium libraries in September 2008; and we did 2 all-day workshops for Consortium members: *Back to School: Creating Community. Supporting Collaboration* (Sept 08 – 41 attendees) and *Games and Gadgets/Meet Your Destiny* (Jan 09 – 52 attendees). Total expenses for all these events have been \$ 6289.00 which was reimbursed to NLLN through the Enhancing Education Through Technology (E2T2) grant.
- ❖ *23 Things on a Stick* (Round 2- summer 08 – 27 participants) and *More Things on a Stick* (Jan 20-June 20, 2009 – 51 participants) were highly successful statewide projects jointly sponsored by Minnesota’s 7 multitype library systems. These individual learning programs encouraged library staff in our region to explore, and use, a wide variety of social networking and Web 2.0 tools. The 2 years of projects were highly successful throughout the entire state and have increased the sense of mastery of new skills, a rise in use of new tools at work and in personal lives, and a confidence in being able to share these tools and skills with others.
- ❖ *The 21st Annual Spotlight on Books Conference* was held in April 2009 and was another well-received Conference. NLLN serves as the fiscal agent for this youth literature conference. Ruth Solie and Joan Larson were Conference Co-Chairs who worked with volunteers across the northern tier of Minnesota to produce a quality program for school librarians, teachers, public library staff, authors, illustrators, and supporters of youth literature. NLLN subsidized this Conference by direct and indirect means but it is an overall cost-neutral Conference held annually at Ruttger’s Sugar Lake Lodge near Grand Rapids, MN. A workshop was held on Friday which stressed how to keep kids reading, particularly boys; attendees were treated to a Minnesota Readers’ Theater featuring 4 well-known Minnesota children’s authors; and we were able to celebrate these same 4 authors at our main event on Saturday. The authors were John Coy, Marsha Wilson Chall, David LaRochelle, and Lynn Jonell. This year’s attendance was 74 and overall cost of the Conference was \$15,127.00. NLLN covered additional expenses of promotion and staffing at a cost of \$2540.65

In addition to these functions held in the NLLN region, we also participated in online webinars and in the Annual Conferences of the MEMO and MLA organizations.

- ❖ The “23 Things Online Summit” was an international live-webinar related to 23 Things projects around the country. Ruth Solie and Ann Walker Smalley (Metronet) presented the Minnesota projects: *23 Things on a Stick* and *More Things on a Stick*. There were several hundred people viewing and participating in this rather extraordinary event. The Minnesota Projects were exemplary in terms of participation and completion rates.
- ❖ I participated in an online webinar related to *Laptop Computer Labs* which was sponsored by MaintainIT at our request. This webinar allowed us to learn from the experience of others how to create a mobile laptop computer training lab. There was no cost to this and library staff from across the country contributed their experience. This was an important part of creating a mobile laptop lab for NLLN.

- ❖ Finally, NLLN participated in both the *Fall MEMO and MLA Conferences*. At both events, we had a panel presentation about “23 Things on a Stick” and the impact this project had on people’s personal and professional lives. We also had CyberCafe at the MEMO Conference, and a “Things on a Stick” party at the MLA Conference. Expenses for these 2 conferences came from the Multitype Library System joint fund.

In addition to events and activities sponsored by NLLN, we also provide the **NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship program** that makes it possible for any staff member of an NLLN member library to participate in continuing education activities of their choice. We allow up to \$500 in direct expenses, for up to 3 events, per individual each year. These are supplemental funds used to cover registration, travel, lodging and other expenses incurred directly by the recipient. They are not meant to replace travel or staff development funds in the member library, but rather to make those limited funds go further. Each participant applies for funds which are reviewed by the NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship committee. After the event, each recipient writes a report (posted on the NLLN webpage), and is reimbursed for their approved expenses. Universally, recipients express their appreciation for the opportunity the scholarship provided and indicate how participation in these events has had an impact on their work.

In FY2009 we awarded 28 scholarships for participation in a wide variety of events, such as collection development, state and national conferences, and specialized software training workshops. The cost of the scholarship program was \$9,523 and participants came from School libraries (11), Academic libraries (10), and Public Libraries (7).

In FY 2009 we created a **Mobile Laptop Computer Training Lab** to be used for training and workshop events in the NLLN region. These 10 laptop computers, with webcams, will enhance our ability to provide continuing education events in our region; they will also be available for use by member libraries and for use at Conferences.

[See attached tables for a complete list of Continuing Education events and for Continuing Education Scholarship recipients.]

Goal 2: Advocate on behalf of all libraries.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy for all libraries takes a variety of forms.

- ❖ NLLN’s Director participates in the MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee meetings, the Annual Legislative Forum, and supports/participates in the Minnesota Library Legislative Day and the National Library Legislative Day in Washington, DC.
- ❖ NLLN supports and promotes the MLA/MEMO Legislative platform; engages in direct contact with legislators and elected officials on behalf of member libraries and libraries in general; and communicates legislative developments to members on an on-going basis.

- ❖ As a member of the Board of Directors for Ready4K, the NLLN Director has represented libraries in that forum for the past 6 years and participated in the development of legislative policies and strategies that would promote greater support in Minnesota for early child care and education. This year we saw positive results in the legislature of a broad coalition of early childhood supporters. Early childhood education and early literacy are part of the MLA/MEMO legislative platform.
- ❖ This year NLLN began a new program to support library staff in the NLLN who participate in doing the work of the profession. Professional Engagement Funds are available for those librarians working with regional, state or national professional organizations, who represent libraries in non-library venues, and who work outside their particular organization to promote libraries. We awarded 3 grants in FY2009.
- ❖ NLLN supports libraries through active participation in MLA, MEMO, MALF, Mn Reading Association, Children's Literature Network, and Friends of the Library USA.

Goal #3: Facilitate sharing ideas, materials, expertise, and experience within the NLLN community through effective communication.

Communication:

Effective communication underlies all the programs and services of NLLN, and provides the means of supporting our libraries and providing advocacy. NLLN uses a growing number of communication and networking tools as the universe of possibilities increases. This is a fast-changing, and rapidly developing, area! We have not discontinued our traditional forms of communication (print/telephonic/in-person), but we are extending our reach through the use of electronic communication, networking and collaboration.

Electronic communication: includes our enhanced web site (<http://nlln.org>), 3 electronic discussion lists, a blog, an NLLN Flickr account, an electronic newsletter format, and a subscription to OPAL webconferencing software. In addition, in my work I use Twitter, Facebook, GoogleTalk, Google calendars, WebJunction, Picasaweb, FriendFeed, Skype, LinkedIn, Delicious, NING, Library Thing, and a host of other networking/communication tools. These tools help me link to NLLN members and to link our work to the rest of the library world far beyond our region. Electronic communication is our most important format for communication, and is relatively inexpensive.

Other forms of communication: we continue to produce print materials announcing events, and to inform about NLLN services and programs. Our telephone/fax, with toll-free access, continues to be of value for NLLN. And face-to-face meetings along with informal conversations in person happen all year long in all kinds of settings. These are an important way of giving a face to NLLN and its services and programs.

Goal #4: Strengthen cooperation among all type of libraries in the NLLN region through resource sharing.

Resource Sharing:

- ❖ We funded requests from all four of the regional public library systems in NLLN for Delivery Demonstration Projects. Kitchigami Regional Library, Lake Agassiz Regional Library, Northwest Regional Library, and Viking Library System each received \$5,000 to be used supplement the costs of delivery demands on their systems and to support their efforts to meet the needs of citizens in the NLLN region who request materials from libraries across the state.
- ❖ NLLN maintains an OCLC CatExpress group subscription for libraries in our region that do not have OCLC accounts. The purpose of this subscription is to provide high quality library records for the shared library catalogs of our region. NLLN underwrites the total cost of the subscription for those libraries that do not participate in a MnLINK Gateway server site, and serves as a facilitator for libraries on MnLink.
- ❖ NLLN continues to work with Region 1 to expand the North Star Library Consortium. In 2009, the Consortium grew from 73 member libraries to 150. It is now a statewide project, open to schools anywhere in Minnesota. Schools from five of the seven Minnesota multitype regions are now included in the North Star Consortium. NLLN along with Central Minnesota Libraries Exchange (CMLE) were partners with Region 1 this year in round 2 of the Enhancing Education Through Technology grant. NLLN and CMLE have been responsible for the staff development portion of this grant.
- ❖ NLLN supports our member libraries in the North Star Library Consortium by providing retrospective conversion assistance, help with managing the Destiny software, and support of media center programs. We do this primarily by contract with Chris McArthur, Media Specialist at the Waubun-Ogema-White Earth Schools. This has been a valuable service.
- ❖ NLLN participates in the Minnesota Book Awards. This year the Director helped with the planning, was a judge in the first round, and after the MBA gala, distributed about 1200 nominated books to the public library regions in NLLN.

2009 has been a full and productive year for the Northern Lights Library Network. The staff looks forward to the year 2010, and continued work with the library community of west central and northwest Minnesota.

Ruth Solie - August 15, 2009