ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Highlights from 2008

Library Activity:

- **Usage**
  - County libraries (exclusive of CLP) circulated 6.96 million items (6% increase above 2007). Nonresident use represented 28% of total activity.
  - There were 329,031 card holders in county libraries.
  - There were 1,166,834 computer uses.

- **Building Improvements & Construction**
  Major building improvements &/or renovations:
    - Crafton Public Library expanded to incorporate a larger children's area with renovations to existing space
    - Jefferson Hills Library conducted renovations (including windows, new shelving, carpeting)
    - Lauri Ann West Memorial Library is renovating a building for its Sharpsburg Branch
    - Pleasant Hills Library installed new carpeting
  Two libraries received Keystone grants for construction projects:
    - Bridgeville Public Library will be building a new facility
    - Western Allegheny Community Library also has plans for a new facility

- **Formula Development**
  ACLA engaged the services of Olszak Management Consulting, Inc. to develop a funding formula to be implemented in January 2010. This process was approved by and is being paid for by the Members and the RAD. In the first phases of the work, Olszak consultants assisted the Members in identifying critical organizational issues and establishing criteria and factors for the distribution of RAD funding. ACLA as a whole will address the critical issues in 2009, while Olszak focuses on completing the formula development specifically.

System Services:

- **Continuing Education and Professional Development**
  ACLA sponsored numerous continuing education opportunities for both library staff and trustees, including:
    - Library Director Leadership Training retreat (15 CE hours)
    - On-going Leadership Skills Training, 3 sessions (8 CE hours/session)
    - How To Deal with Difficult Customers and Co-workers (6 CE hours)
    - Beyond Information to Transformation (3.5 CE hours)
    - Futures Seminar (5.5 CE hours)
  The Futures Seminar featured nationally known futurist Thomas Frey, of the DaVinci Institute, and Michael Stephens, equally well-known in the world of Library 2.0.

- **Grant Activity**
  ACLA received a total of $237,250 in outside grants in 2008, including:
  For *One Book, One Community*
  - ✓ $10,000 from Allegheny County for *One Book, One Community*
  - ✓ $7,000 from Dollar Bank for *One Book, One Community*
  - ✓ $500 from the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council

  For Leadership Development
  - ✓ $50,000 from an anonymous foundation

  For Summer Reading Club
  - ✓ $5,000 from Verizon

  For lifelong learning initiatives
  - ✓ $8,000 from the Americans for Libraries Council
  - ✓ $2,000 from Highmark PALS program
  - ✓ $750 from Poets for Humanity

  For Mobile Services outreach
  - ✓ $20,000 from Allegheny County
  - ✓ $7,000 from the Laurel Foundation

  For Knowledge Connections
  - ✓ $125,000 from The Grable
  - ✓ $2,000 from Allegheny County

  Incentive Grants through State funds were awarded to member libraries to promote increased local government support, collaborative programs and services, and compliance with State standards. These included:
  - *Shared training in software programs (East Region libraries)*
  - *Shared technical services staffing (West Region and small libraries)*
  - *Shared children's services specialist (Braddock, Edgewood, and Swissvale)*
  - *Intergenerational gaming programming (Andrew Bayne and Avalon)*
  - *Family literacy programming (Hampton and Shaler)*
  - *Local government investment incentive (Homestead)*
  - *Tuition reimbursement for directors to achieve an MLS (Scott)*

- **Marketing and Advocacy**
  ACLA hosted its annual Awards Reception in October. Honorees included:
  - *State Elected Official – Senator Jay Costa*
  - *Local Elected Official – Whitehall Council*
  - *Local Trustee – Greer Mulholland (C.C. Mellor Memorial Library)*
  - *Volunteer – Jan McGrath (Springdale Free Public Library)*
  - *Friends Group – Andrew Bayne Memorial Library*
  - *Corporate Partner – Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield*

- **Programming**
  ACLA coordinated 763 programs for adults delivered at local libraries. Program offerings included literary events such as PALS Book Clubs, Poetry Readings, and Conversation Salons. Many were co-sponsored by partnering organizations in the arts (*Unlocking the Classics, Aeolian Winds, Opera Trunks,* etc.) or community health (*Wise Walks, LifeLinks for Caregivers, 10 Keys to Healthy Aging*, etc.). Special events included the PALS Book Club Author Luncheon, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute genre series (5 programs), Mystery Authors Tea, and Fast Break for Fathers and Families. We also sponsored a 6-week

intergenerational art program in collaboration with the Brew House Association, a local arts organization. This series brought older adults and youth together in exploring a variety of media (comics, collage, photography, narrative art, acrylic painting, watercolor painting, and mixed media). Over 125 pieces of artwork created by participants were then exhibited at the Brew House Gallery.

Other programming partners include:
- AARP
- Aeolian Winds of Pittsburgh
- Alzheimer's Association
- August Wilson Center for African American Culture
- Americans for Libraries Council, Lifelong Learning Initiative
- Barnes & Noble Booksellers
- Beginning with Books, READ 365!
- Brew House Association
- Center for Healthy Aging (University of Pittsburgh)
- Eastern Area Adult Services
- Generations Together
- Homeless Children's Education Fund
- Highmark PALS (People Able to Lend Support) Program
- Jewish Healthcare Foundation
- LifeSpan
- Mystery Lovers Bookshop
- National Fatherhood Initiative
- OASIS
- Penn State Extension
- Pittsburgh Opera
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- Retired and Senior Volunteers of Pittsburgh (RSVP) of Allegheny County
- University of Pittsburgh's Institute on Aging
- University of Pittsburgh's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
- University of Pittsburgh's Sikov Elder Law Clinic

"One Book, One Community" was conducted for the sixth year with I'm Proud of You by Tim Madigan. This title was celebrated the author's relationship with Fred Rogers. Madigan gave several local author talks to launch the program. More than 120 programs were held in conjunction with this one-month event. The web site, www.onebookonecommunity.org, received 6,000 unique visits. Sponsors and partners included:
- *Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging*
- *Barnes & Noble Bookseller*
- *Carlow University*
- *Dollar Bank*
- *Duquesne University*
- *Highmark PALS Program*
- *Oasis*
- *Penn State Extension*
- *University of Pittsburgh*

- **Youth Services:**
  - ✓ 32,535 children and teens participated in the Summer Reading Club program countywide (approximately 9,750 at CLP).
  - ✓ Through a private grant ACLA launched an online Summer Reading registration program that Commonwealth Libraries has subsequently adopted Statewide.
  - ✓ ACLA worked with Beaver County to leverage impact of State training dollars.
  - ✓ Expanding on the Chess Tournaments held annually, ACLA launched countywide gaming initiatives that included traditional board games as well as online gaming opportunities. n. We provided electronic gaming "trunks" for local library use at 45 program events with 900+ participants.
  - ✓ ACLA partnered with Family Communications Inc. and Beginning with Books to sponsor "Won't You Be My Neighbor Days" at 26 libraries.
  - ✓ ACLA employed two interns from the PITT Partners program to assist with Youth Services planning and activities.

Outreach Services:

- **Mobile Services**
  - ✓ Bookmobiles made 912 stops in 2007:
    - 323 visits to preschool classrooms,
    - 234 visits to senior facilities, and
    - 355 community visits.
  - ✓ These stops served 106 locations:
    - 46 sites (preschool),
    - 51 sites (senior service), and
    - 9 sites (general service).
  - ✓ This represented 1,266 hours of service on site.

  - ✓ Two libraries purchased bookmobile service: Northern Tier and Northland.
  - ✓ Bookmobiles delivered service in 49 separate municipalities.
  - ✓ Mobile service circulation for 2007 was 81,275 items. 12,293 items from the Mobile
  - ✓ Services collection were lent to county libraries (an increase of 2,568 items over the 2007 number).
  - ✓ Bookmobiles traveled a combined 15,968 miles delivering service.

- **Robinson Township Library**
  In its first full year of operations, Robinson Township Library:
  - ✓ Circulated 48,880 items.
  - ✓ Hosted 138 programs (of which 91 were children's events) with total attendance of 1,648 individuals.

  The Library operates under a management services contract with ACLA, with all funding for operations supplied by Robinson Township tax revenue, Kennedy Township appropriation, and locally generated earned revenue. The contract continues through 2009, after which time the Library will begin operating independently.

- **Knowledge Connections**
  Based on an outside evaluation, the Knowledge Connection program was redesigned in 2008. The new model is a "plug-in" mobile program rather than site-based. As a result of this transition, ACLA closed 11 of 13 physical locations (the remaining two sites are on a "pay-as-you-go" reimbursement arrangement with local sponsors). Two mobile labs consisting of ten laptops each are moved from site to site, connecting wirelessly to the Internet and library resources. Preliminary focus is on providing hands-on computer training for at-risk students in public housing communities, with curriculum designed to support established public education outcomes. Additional applications will include adult-based job search and career development programming. The Grable Foundation has committed three years of underwriting support for this transition.

Technology Services:

Throughout 2008 there was comprehensive analysis of eiNetwork operations. In support of that work, eiNetwork staff developed and shared significant data and information with the libraries, the ACLA General Membership and the Library Committee of the RAD. eiNetwork management and staff were directly involved in the countywide discussion of this information, which included:

- A Technology Assessment Report prepared by Solutions4Networks that reviewed all eiNetwork functions and governance and developed four possible scenarios for the future.
- An FAQ informational document that addressed numerous questions that had been raised about the eiNetwork and the state of library technologies in Allegheny County.
- A series of recommendations about the future of eiNetwork operations developed by an ACLA Board-appointed Task Force representing the interests of county libraries.
- The development of pro forma technology cost allocations as a model for determining cost of service by library.

Additionally, the eiNetwork made significant changes and implemented further new technologies to assist the libraries to better serve the residents of Allegheny County.

- The hardware platforms for the Integrated Library System were upgraded and replaced.
- The ILS was reconfigured to support utilizing the local library's rules about loans and fines, resolving what had singularly been a complaint offered by the public regarding the County's libraries.
- The library cataloging procedures were completely re-engineered with the new processes delivering significant improvements to the libraries and cost efficiencies for the eiNetwork.
- More than 2,200 PC's and laptops were upgraded and replaced at all County library locations. This program also brought complete software upgrades for public computers. This is now the seventh year of operating eiNetwork's highly successful PC Replacement Program. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation specifically complimented the eiNetwork on the creative and successful operation of this program.
- Equipment and security upgrades were made to the network including the replacement of the network firewall, and implementation of a public wifi security appliance.
- Data communications bandwidth was increased at several sites as necessitated by usage, and bandwidth monitoring software was implemented to provide improved network monitoring capabilities.

- Staff began investigation of several outsourcing possibilities including the Help Desk, webhosting, network administration, and PC security administration.
- At the specific request of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, eiNetwork purchased and implemented an office phone system; and assumed designed, developed, and implemented payroll, benefits, and human resources functions for eiNetwork staff to replace the previous CLP shared services.