

## LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – June/July, 2011

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### **Budget and Appropriation**

We have held spending to a very conservative level and pursued grant funding and sponsorships proactively to help support programs, collection development, and reduce budget costs overall. Our fiscal year-end budget reflects this commitment and the thoughtful planning of the management team. I am pleased to note that this key goal has been met. The working budget and levy in development will reflect what we expect to expend in FY 2011/12. The appropriation document gives us the authority to spend and allows for the possibility of expenses that may occur.

We will complete a final review with the complete fiscal year end financials and make any adjustments as necessary to the appropriation. If there are any changes an adjusted copy will be forwarded to you before the August meeting. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> there will be a 7 p.m. special meeting preceding the regular board meeting for a public appropriation hearing and then it will be adopted at the regular meeting that follows.

### **Library Use**

Libraries offer resources for all ages to improve their quality of life and are the heart of a community. With the current economic downturn library usage has increased dramatically. People go to libraries to borrow books, socialize, learn the latest technology, get questions answered, improve skills or learn something new, help grow small businesses, seek new careers with tools and information needed to reenter the workplace, bring their families to enjoy shared activities, programs, classes, and more. ALA statistics note that 68% of Americans now have a library card; the highest percent noted in the past two decades. Every day 300,000 Americans get job-seeking help at their public library. Every day 2.1 million DVDs are borrowed from public libraries. Every day U.S. public libraries circulate as many materials as FedEx ships packages worldwide: 8 million. And two-thirds of Americans have a library card in their wallet.

Homer Library has seen increasing use and is facing the challenges that this brings. Record attendance at our programs; demand for more programs, need for updated computers, requests for increased resources and assistance with finding the tools people need for work, careers and health have come forward. We have responded by almost doubling our program offerings, adding duplicate popular programs to meet increasing need, and adjusting staff schedules to support community use. Issues we face include an escalating noise level, increased stress on our budget and staffing, and demand for more materials. With long range planning we proactively will address the concerns generated by strong and active resident use. It is a high priority that we continue to assess how customers use the library and plan long-range to remain a vital community center of information and lifelong learning. An updated strategic plan will help guide us into the future and build upon the past quarter century of first-rate library services to Homer residents.

### **Per Capita & Annual Report**

The Illinois State Library (ISL) will send the per capita grant application to us in July. Every public library in Illinois is required by law (ILCS) 5/4-10 to file an annual report with the State Library. The purpose of this report is to obtain and publish data on the resources and services of all Illinois public libraries. Our annual report will be completed when fiscal year-end statistics (after June 30<sup>th</sup>) are in. The ISL has requirements each year which must be met to receive funding. Last year we updated our Technology Plan, formalized our "Green" document and reviewed the required Standards.

## **Programs + Events**

We have distributed the summer edition of the library newsletter as an insert piece via the Homer Horizon local newspaper.

Upcoming library events and programs include:

- ◆ Through Aug. Teen Summer Volunteer Program
- ◆ June 7 Bookmobile presents Medieval Menagerie
- ◆ June 10 Touch a Truck Day with Bookmobile
- ◆ June 13 SUMMER READING CLUB BEGINS
- ◆ June 13 SLAMMER mascot from Joliet Slammers @ the library
- ◆ June 21 Bookmobile presents Renaissance Faire @ Culver Park with appearance by Thunderbolts mascot BOOMER
- ◆ June 25 Bookmobile @ Homer Independence Day Parade
- ◆ July 2 Renaissance Family Day
- ◆ July 19 Wizard's Apprentice (held at Hadley School)
- ◆ July 23 Summer Reading Club ends
- ◆ July 25-30 Catch A Reader Photo Contest
- ◆ August 12-15 Used Book Sale!
- ◆ August 27 Library Booth & Bookmobile @ Chamber Expo Event
- ◆ September Literacy Month and Library Card Sign Up Month
- ◆ October Halloween Costume Swap???
- ◆ September 1 Fall newsletter
- ◆ September 11 Sunday hours resume
- ◆ September 12 Fall program sign-up
- ◆ September 19 Author Fair
- ◆ Sept 24-Oct 1 Banned Books Week: Celebrating the Freedom to Read
- ◆ September 30 Fun Fitness Fair @ Homer Jr. High
- ◆ October Illinois Arts Month
- ◆ October 13-15 ABOS (Bookmobile) Conference; Cleveland, OH
- ◆ October 16-22 Teen Read Week
- ◆ October 18-20 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference; Chicago (*Kitty Mitchell will be an award recipient*)
- ◆ October 18 Teen Open House
- ◆ November Food for Fines
- ◆ November 12 National Game Day
- ◆ November 15 Family Reading Night

## **Book Sale**

The library book sale is being planned for August. Last year we had 34 teens volunteer to assist with the preparation, including sorting and working each sale day. In 2009 the library netted approximately \$1,200 to supplement future materials purchasing and we received \$1,600 in 2008. Last year we netted \$2,092. In times of a tax-capped budget these extra funds are very welcome and we hope to undertake another successful sale day this year.

### **Teen Volunteers**

Community based service can help a person acquire new life skills, understand their responsibility as a citizen, and provides an occasion to take on a new challenge or leadership activity. Community service promotes the positive experience of helping others and creates a learning experience in a non-school setting. We have an active and helpful group of young adult volunteers again this year. I would like to commend Reference Librarian Heather Colby for coordinating our 77 summer teen intern volunteers. We have closed registration for additional summer teen interns, but have plans to continue to offer community service hours each quarter. We value volunteer assistance and commend Homer Teens for their volunteer efforts. The Summer Reading Club, book sale, and other activities working with library staff is an excellent opportunity for the teens to earn community service hours, as well as provide a valuable service to the Library and our community

### **ILEBP**

Illinois Employee Benefit Plan (ILEBP) is our health insurance provider. I currently serve our members as a trustee and President on the ILEBP board. The ILEBP Board has reviewed plan usage for the past year and has set the rates for the next fiscal year. We are pleased to note for the 2011-12 year there will be **no** increases for vision, dental and life insurance rates. There will be a modest 7% increase in health care costs. Year-to-date ILEBP financials show a positive picture and our plan currently holds net assets (reserves) of approximately \$450,000. ILEBP had no increase in years 2009, 2008, and 2007 respectively and has averaged a 4% annual increase over the past six years. The national average is 12-14% for annual health care increases, so the plan is well below that.

### **FREE HEALTH SCREENING & WELLNESS SUPPORT**

- ILEBP provides an annual FREE Biometric Health Screening to covered employees and encourages members to take advantage of this valuable benefit. More information will be distributed later this summer on the available dates and locations as well as how to schedule an appointment.
- ILEBP supports members with a Wellness Program that includes Life Coaching and Health Support.

ILEBP is pleased to provide quality healthcare in a flexible program that supports libraries and their employees and family members.

### **Employee Focus**

We have an excellent staff, as you know. They contribute their talents on a daily basis and we offer many programs, services and a collection that exceeds what most small libraries undertake. Managers are conscientious and assist in seeking sponsors and outside funding, including grants that help support our budget. We are well known for our quality customer service and leadership in what we provide to this community. I am proud of how much we continue to accomplish and of our excellent reputation in the community, in the System, and statewide.

Some examples of leadership and of being fiscally responsible and cognizant of budget:

- This year once again we solicited 55 *Summer Reading Program* sponsors and 2 *Winter Reading Program* sponsors to support the program incentives and costs.
- Staff initiated an annual *Used Book Sale*, which has generated several thousand dollars over the past three years. This is a huge undertaking for staff to coordinate and is run by library staff (not our Friends Group).
- Staff has undertaken local business and restaurant partnerships to raise collection funds.

- We have initiated fundraising *Dine Days* with local restaurants (Chesdans, Mimi's Café, Cold Stone Creamery, etc.) where a percent of purchases and sales is donated back to us.
- *Donate a DVD* was marketed by staff widely and brought in 846 DVDs to help jump start our newest collection. (846 DVDs @ average cost of \$22 = \$18,612 savings) We now have approximately 1,667 DVDs in the collection, of which almost 50% were donated.
- *Lincolns for Libraries* (while providing nominal monetary support) was a wide goodwill/awareness success with our preschool children and parents who would bring in their pennies to the Youth Department.
- *Grant Funding* this year provided funds for collections, programs and a wide range of literacy activities that could not have all been undertaken without this monetary support.
- *Teen Volunteer Program* has 77 teens doing a variety of jobs that assist us each year.
- *Specialty Raffles* include donated gift baskets, afghans, quilts, and paintings (solicited by us, that are donated to the library specifically to raffle) to bring in extra funding.
- *Home Depot Remodel* (although several years ago) essentially rehabbed an aging community room. We are in consideration for a teen floor and possibly to update the kitchen.
- *Bookmobile Savings* include establishing a relationship with Homer Township for reduced gas costs (we buy fuel from them); and reduced maintenance expense by having SD 33C bus barn staff and mechanics undertake general maintenance and repairs at reduced costs.

### **Spotlight on Staff**

- ★ Youth Services Director Kitty Mitchell has received the 2011 Golden Ticket award from ILA, denoting outstanding service to children.
- ★ Sara McCambridge has taken the lead role as Project Manager for three recent literacy grants: Penny Severns and the ALA Dream Grant. She is coordinating with our partner agency (Joliet Junior College) and with other departments regarding grant budgets, including collection purchases, supplies, and programming timelines. I thank her for oversight of these grants. She also was formally recognized by PALS for her Librarians Advisory Committee contributions.
- ★ We extend our congratulations to Alexandra Annen, Adult Services Director on the birth of her son Joshua on June 12. Dawn Fox has a new grandson, James William Ross (aka Jamie) who was born July 20. Jody Olivieri's daughter Abby was married June 25<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to all.
- ★ I now serve as President for the Illinois Library Employee Benefit Plan (ILEBP).

I appreciate all staff for their excellent work effort and willingness to attend educational training and provide the best to the Homer community. Our staff has received much acclaim and I consider them the "best of the best!" We have a full schedule of events that staff throw their heart and energy into. I want to take this opportunity to give them credit for being such a positive and excellent group.

### **VIP Rolling Library**

The VIP outreach service is in its sixth year. Bookmobile staff provides materials every other week to each Senior Village, promoting use of our collections and creating personalized service to seniors who may be unable to visit the library. The bookmobile is in attendance at these visits and is well received by these members in our community. This month the bookmobile is having certified work done on the inverter/generator system. In preparation for the Safety Lane inspection which will be undertaken in August, we will conduct routine maintenance on the chassis engine. We continue to proactively monitor the bookmobile equipment and service needs.

## **Summer Reading Program**

This year we are presenting the theme: *A Midsummer Knight's Read* at the main and on the bookmobile. A steady stream of children, teens, and adults has registered for this year's summer reading club. We thank local organizations and businesses for their ongoing generosity. Once again we approached area schools to donate a prize basket so that students can proudly recognize their schools' partnership and reading tie-in with the library. Donations were received from **55** sponsors including: local restaurant gift certificates, books, admission passes, and prize baskets. We also received monetary donations from our Lincolns for the Library patron donation program. The additional prizes (free kids meal certificates, 1000 bowling passes, hundreds of McDonalds, White Castle, and Sonic free meal certificates, and more) all provide wonderful encouragement for summer reading in a fun way. Attached is the complete sponsor and donation list. The generosity of these sponsors has been a wonderful cost savings for our tax-capped budget. Many thanks go to Administrative Assistant Patti Nakutis for doing such a wonderful job this year in coordinating so many sponsors and incentives. Sponsors are being showcased in library PR and on our web site.

Below is the updated sponsor list. We extend our appreciation to them for outstanding support:

- 1. Applebee's (kids meal coupons)**
- 2. Barnes & Noble (free book for participating in summer reading)**
- 3. BI Rental (discount for jump rental for BM program)**
- 4. Books-A-Million (gift card)**
- 5. Borders (free book for participating in summer reading)**
- 6. Build-a- Bear (gift card)**
- 7. Burger King (unlimited Isee & French fries coupons for 12 and under)**
- 8. Butler School (basket donation)**
- 9. Challenge Park Extreme (20 tickets)**
- 10. Champps America (unlimited kids meal coupons and \$10 meal vouchers for adults/teens)**
- 11. Chicago Bears (signed photo)**
- 12. Chicago Blackhawks (signed photo)**
- 13. Chicago Bulls (program & photo)**
- 14. Chicago White Sox (8 tickets)**
- 15. Chili's (kids meal & teen coupons for chips)**
- 16. Classic Cinema (50 passes)**
- 17. Cold Stone Creamery (Buy One Get One coupons)**
- 18. Dairy Queen (ice cream coupons)**
- 19. DuPage Children's Museum (unlimited coupons)**
- 20. Fannie May (free chocolate bar coupon)**
- 21. Fox's (gift cards)**
- 22. Functional Therapy & Rehab (monetary donation)**
- 23. Goodings Grove School (basket donation)**
- 24. Hadley Middle School (basket donation)**
- 25. Half Price Books (free book for participation)**
- 26. Haunted Trails (coupons and pizza party)**
- 27. Homer Jr. High (basket donation)**
- 28. Homer Jr. Woman's Club (basket donation)**
- 29. Joliet Slammers (baseball tickets)**
- 30. Joyce March (anonymous monetary donation in her memory)**
- 31. Jump Zone (2 for 1 and pizza coupons)**
- 32. Lou Malnati's (gift card)**
- 33. Ludwig School (basket donation)**
- 34. Magique (coupons)**

35. McDonald's (hamburger coupons for kids)
36. Medieval Times (coupons)
37. Morton Arboretum (8 passes)
38. Museum of S&I (family pass)
39. Nick's BBQ (10-\$5 coupons)
40. Noodles & Company (coloring page & coupon)
41. Orland Bowl (1,000 coupons)
42. Petals & Twigs (basket donation)
43. Play It Again Sports (gift card)
44. Reed School (basket donation)
45. Rockford Ice Hogs (tickets)
46. Schilling School (basket donation)
47. Shedd Aquarium (5 passes)
48. Sonic (ice cream coupons)
49. State Bank of Countryside (\$100 savings bond)
50. Texas Roadhouse (kids meal coupons)
51. ThunderBowl (100 coupons)
52. USA Skate (free admission coupons)
53. Walsh School (basket donation)
54. White Castle (100 free meal coupons)
55. Windy City Thunderbolts (800 tickets)
56. Young School (basket donation)

### **Public Relations**

Positive press coverage continues from the local newspapers. The director's and other blogs are posted regularly. The library calendar is accessible from the Library Web page.

### **Conclusion**

My priorities for the coming months are budget and appropriation, levy work, and long range planning. Statistics will begin to be compiled for the annual IPLAR report.

These monthly reports are intended to give you a detailed overview and provide pertinent information on local, regional and state issues. If you need anything in my reports detailed more fully, please let me know.

*Sherree Kozel-La Ha*  
SHEREE KOZEL-LA HA

Library Director  
July 24, 2011