

EMPOWERMENT

Newsletter of the American Library Association Office for Library Outreach Services

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Bell Atlantic and Cargill Foundation Join OLOS in Family Literacy Efforts

Library-based family literacy projects are flourishing, thanks to major gifts to the ALA from two partners: Cargill, a major international corporation, and the Bell Atlantic Foundation. The two projects differ in geographic, financial and chronological scope, but both stress partnership between corporate employees and librarians to encourage family literacy. Both projects are centrally administered in the OLOS office.

In January, at the ALA 1992 Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio, Cargill announced a \$100,000 gift to fund a family literacy partnership. Cargill, a merchandiser, processor and transporter of agricultural and other commodities, employs over 60,000 people in more than 800 offices in 56 countries, including the United States. The gift to the ALA is part of the Cargill Cares initiative which involves local offices in community service activities. Cargill's gift to the ALA follows the Cargill Cares tradition of emphasizing information and education to address major social problems.

A resource kit designed to encourage family literacy projects was mailed to all Cargill locations and their local library partners in April. These kits include materials and tips on how to develop family literacy activities. To date, over 135 Cargill-library partnerships in 26 states have registered family literacy programs. The Cargill/ALA Partners for Family Literacy program is designed to allow for differing levels of participation among large and small Cargill offices. Volunteer participation by Cargill employees is the key element linking all the local Cargill-library partnerships for family literacy.

Cargill employees in Minneapolis are working with the school library at the Four Winds School, which serves a predominantly Native American population in an inner city neighborhood. Cargill employees are involved in several fund-raising projects to buy books for the school library. The employees also donate their time as tutors in a summer reading program for Four Winds students and their parents.

In Amboy, California, another group of Cargill employees is working on a literacy volunteer program with the 29 Palms Library and the Morongo Basin Coalition for Adult Literacy. The Amboy employees and their library partners have designed a program to train literacy volunteers in teaching basic reading, writing and communication skills to adults. After participating in an intensive two-day training, volunteer tutors meet with parents and their pre-school children in a series of six workshops which emphasize the importance of shared family reading. The workshops teach parents how to select picture books and read-aloud books for their children, how to create inexpensive hand puppets to illustrate storytelling and how to use oral history as a teaching tool.

Cargill's grant to the ALA builds on the success of an earlier ALA partnership, the Bell Atlantic/ALA Family Literacy Project. The project has been funded by the Bell Atlantic Foundation since 1989. Since the partnership began, it has funded 50 family literacy projects in 38 communities. These projects are located in six states in the Mid-Atlantic region and the District of Columbia. The Foundation is the independent, non-profit vehicle for Bell Atlantic Corporation's philanthropic activities. Bell Atlantic Corporation is the parent company of Bell of Pennsylvania, Diamond State Telephone Company of Delaware, New Jersey Bell and the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Companies of Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia

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1992-93 Minority Fellowship Awarded

Tracey Joel Hunter has been selected ALA Minority Fellow for 1992-1993. Hunter, who serves on the ALA President's Committee on Cultural Diversity and the Social Responsibilities Round Table, he will research methods of expanding minority representation in librarianship. He will also serve as program officer in OLOS.



Hunter's other affiliations include Concerned Black Men, Inc., the Black Caucus of the ALA and the Philadelphia Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Homeless. A former children's librarian at the Free Library of Philadelphia, Hunter is currently special collections librarian at the Langston Hughes Memorial Library at Lincoln University in Lincoln, Pennsylvania. He is taking a leave of absence from this position in order to serve as Minority Fellow from October 1992 through October 1993. The next issue of *Empowerment* will feature an article on Hunter's activities as Minority Fellow. ■

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OLOS Director Discusses Agenda

Mattye Nelson, who assumed the helm of the Office for Library Outreach Services in July 1991, describes her office as "at the very center of what is happening in contemporary librarianship."

Nelson attributes OLOS' position at the hub of librarianship to the fact that "topics addressed in the news all the time--the fact that the U.S. is losing its world leadership status; the changing demographic trends in race, ethnicity, and age--are also the topics that determine OLOS priorities." She explains that "OLOS is the office at the ALA that ensures that librarianship will change and adapt and thereby continue to exist. OLOS is about change, about leadership into the new frontiers of librarianship. We are the coordinating center for the future of the profession."

Coordinating the meeting schedules of the OLOS Advisory Board, liaison groups and subcommittees is Nelson's immediate concern. This group comprises a long list: Black Caucus of the ALA, American Indian Library Association, Asian/Pacific Americans Librarians Association, Chinese-American Librarians Association, the National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking, the Committee on Minority Concerns, the Social Responsibilities Round Table (which includes the Civil Rights, Feminist, and Gay and Lesbian Task Forces), Ethnic Materials Information Exchange Round Table and the National Coalition for Literacy. Nelson wants to eliminate the overlaps and conflicts of schedule which currently prevent her from attending all the meetings of each group. She hopes that this streamlining of meeting schedules will also enable leaders of each group to attend the meetings of other groups. "The missions of all the groups are closely interrelated, and I think they could help each other by working together" she says. The first central meeting of all the OLOS groups is planned for the 1993 ALA Midwinter Meeting.

Increased funding for OLOS efforts in literacy and minority representation are also high on Nelson's list of con-

cerns. She hopes that the Minority Fellow program can soon be expanded to two fellowships per year and that the newly created literacy officer position (see story, page 4) will remain a permanent part of her department.

Nelson draws a direct connection between the administrative concerns of scheduling and funding and the larger

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OLOS mission. She describes her position as "an opportunity to accomplish something positive for the profession and the culmination of everything I have been doing in librarianship over the past 20 years. Outreach, literacy, and administration have been the three consistent features of my career as a librarian." An alumna of Grinnell College and the University of Chicago Graduate Library School, Nelson has provided library service to Chicago housing project resi-

dents and to the incarcerated. She sees her interest in literacy programs as a natural consequence of "long-term involvement in progressive Chicago politics... While working with the League of Women Voters, I realized that the thing hindering our efforts to empower people was that many of them couldn't read. I then worked with OLOS--which was then still OLSD, Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged-- to help found Literacy Volunteers of Illinois and Literacy Volunteers of Chicago. At the City Colleges of Chicago, I started the first literacy program for students who couldn't compete in regular academic programs."

Nelson believes that her appointment to lead OLOS came at precisely the right time both in her own career and in the current status of the profession: "There are still some librarians stuck in that old-fashioned kind of library attitude. L.A. proved that too many people in this country aren't getting what they need from this society. Librarians are on the front lines in providing service to these groups. I am glad that I'll be able to help make sure that libraries give people the kind of services they really need." ■

From The Director of OLOS

Dear Reader

This has been a very busy and exciting year for us at the Office for Library Outreach Services. It is our aim to continue the upswing in interest in outreach and to ensure that libraries and librarians get the accolades for their work in this nation's literacy efforts.

OLOS had an exciting program at the annual conference (see article on page 3) to kick off a new OLOS subcommittee the advocates for library outreach. The response was very enthusiastic. It is our belief that there is a strong constituent



Mattye Nelson

group that supports the efforts of this office.

We do need to hear from you if you are interested in being an Advocate for library outreach. There is no money involved, only a commitment to Library Outreach. Please write me at 50 East Huron or send a postcard with your name, address, library af-

filiation and phone num-

ber. We will add your name to the growing list of Advocates for Library Outreach. ■

Mattye L. Nelson

OLOS Chair Forges New Library Links

Virginia Mathews, Chair of the Advisory Committee to OLOS is working to link senior and youth through the library.

Expanding the role of libraries and librarians is the common thread that ties together the diverse activities of Virginia Mathews, Chair of the Advisory Committee to OLOS.

Programs bringing together teenagers and elders are highly regarded among gerontologists as a means of breaking down generational stereotypes, allowing elders to share their wisdom and life experience and teenagers to share their energy and enthusiasm. High schools, universities and senior centers often coordinate such programs. Mathews, who serves *ex officio* on the OLOS Intergenerational Task Force, believes libraries are perfect settings for intergenerational interaction.

"All the materials are right there," she explains. "The basis of intergenerational programs can be shared information, discussion and reinforcement of positive images and choices. We encourage librarians in youth services and librarians serving the elderly to develop programs that demonstrate the library's potential to build bridges between youth and elders--full relationships that focus on higher order thinking, literacy, and the exploration of ideas. I'd like to see active elders serving as library volunteers to interact with latch-key kids after school. These kids' parents are often very busy, but elders have time to listen, to help with hobby development and career motivation. With the resources of the library at their fingertips, youth and elders can expand each others' knowledge of a wide range of topics."

Mathews serves as a liaison between the library community and the senior



Virginia Mathews

"The library is the perfect setting for intergenerational interaction. All the materials are right there. The basis of intergenerational programs can be shared information, discussion and reinforcement of positive images and choices."

to optimum effect. Teamwork between librarians and Head Start teachers and administrators will enhance client services through programs such as parenting classes and family literacy programs taking place out of libraries; training of Head Start personnel in library areas and librarian input in the selection of materials for Head Start clients.

Mathews stresses the importance of developing a strong relationship between librarians and this leader in the education field: "Head Start is a program that even the government's doubters have acknowledged as a success--and funded. Head Start has been a leader in showing the importance of very early learning opportunities in making a positive difference in lifelong learning patterns. Head Start is the organization that all the other early childhood agencies look for leadership. If we can develop a solid bond between Head Start and libraries, that kind of connection will spread throughout the field."

services community. She wrote one of the two library-related papers presented at the last White House Conference on Aging in 1981 and she works in a consulting capacity with the federal Administration on Aging.

Mathews also liaises between the library community and literacy organizations. As consultant to the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, she is Project Coordinator in a two-year grant project to help librarians work more effectively with Head Start teachers, parents and children. The goal of the project is to develop fully integrated programs in which Head Start can use the resources of the library

San Francisco Activities Highlight Outreach and Diversity

Programs at the 1992 ALA Annual Conference embraced the broad scope of OLOS activities. Multiculturalism, literacy and sexuality were among the many issues addressed in the events sponsored by OLOS during the ALA conference in San Francisco June 25-30.

"From the Grassroots: Outreach Makes It Happen" featured Clara Stanton Jones, Chair of the Advocates for Library Outreach Committee, former Director of the Detroit Public Library and past President of the ALA, as keynote speaker. Jones' talk was the kickoff for a lively discussion of outreach issues which demonstrated the variety, creativity, ingenuity and devotion of outreach librarians. Another highly successful OLOS event was the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) Gay and Lesbian Task Force pre-conference forum: "When Sex is the Question: Who Asks, Who Answers," which provided information on developing human sexuality collections. The Task Force also presented "Gay and Lesbian Media After Mapplethorpe."

The need for culturally diverse library collections, access and services was emphasized in several OLOS conference programs. The American Indian Library Association (AILA) and the OLOS Committee on Library Services for American Indian People examined "American Indian Library Services and Collections: The California Perspective." American Indian library services were also the focus of "Beyond the Stereotype: Expanding Access to American Indian Cultures," presented by OLOS along with the Young Adult Library Services Association Intellectual Freedom Committee, the Association for Library Service to Children Intellectual Freedom Committee, AILA, the ALA Intellectual Freedom Round Table, the ALA Library Service for American Indians Subcommittee, and the Ethnic Materials and Information Exchange Committee (EMIERT). Differing viewpoints among cultural groups were the basis for the program presented by EMIERT,

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Outgoing Minority Fellow Reviews Her Year

Sheila Delacroix left the ALA for a new job as Assistant University Librarian for Reference and Information Services at Auburn University this fall. The second recipient of an ALA Minority Fellowship, Delacroix describes her 1991-1992 Fellowship as the source of "many professional learning experiences."

Delacroix encourages others to apply for future Minority Fellowships, stressing the program's opportunities to "give you a greater understanding of ALA and how it works for you, and benefit career growth." She praises the program's flexibility "to the individual goals and priorities of each Fellow."

Delacroix concludes her Fellowship year proud of her work towards changing the image of librarianship. Her chosen Fellowship project was the revision of the "tedious-sounding" description of librarianship in career guidance software packages such as SIGI (System of

Interactive Guidance and Information). Delacroix provided the company with a description of the profession which emphasized intellectual curiosity, pleasure in learning and service and belief in education and literacy for all. "Thousands of students use this program every year" says Delacroix "Changing the description of librarianship can help attract more quality people to the profession."

The Office of Library Outreach Services instituted the Minority Fellowship program in 1990 to promote minority leadership within the profession. ALA staff from the Office of Library Personnel Resources, the Association for Library Services to Children, and the Human Resources department serve on the Fellowship advisory board. Librarians interested in applying for the 1993-94 Minority Fellowship can contact OLOS for guidelines. ■

Literacy Officer Position created in Office of Library Outreach Services

A newly created position in OLOS will "help us give literacy the level of attention it deserves" says Executive Director Mattye Nelson. The Literacy Officer position will be handled by Carolyn De Bonnett, formerly of ACRL.

The new Literacy Officer will represent ALA at literacy meetings, assist the OLOS Executive Director in seeking more funding for ALA literacy projects, and provide information for libraries involved in literacy efforts. "The OLOS Advisory Board has wanted to have someone working on literacy for OLOS full-time for many years," Nelson explained. "With the money from the Cargill grant, we're finally able to do this. I can't devote as much time as needed to literacy, but now with Carolyn here, I know that we can develop this very important part of the OLOS mission."

De Bonnett, formerly Membership and Chapter Relations Officer in ACRL, has several years of experience as a volunteer literacy tutor at the Chicago Public Library. She worked with other non-profit organizations, including Operation PUSH and the Illinois Arts Alliance, before coming to work at the ALA. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing from Roosevelt University and plans to acquire both a Master's of Public Administration and an MLS. "I look forward to using both my LVA (Literacy Volunteers of America) training and my previous ALA experience," she commented. ■

OLOS in San Francisco (Cont. from page 3)

National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking and the OLOS Committee on Library Services for American Indian People: "Exploring Columbus: Hispanic and Native American Perspectives."

"The Uniqueness of the Asian American Studies Collection and Its Development," sponsored by the Ethnic Materials and Information Exchange Round Table and the Ethnic Research Committee, spotlighted the collection at the University of California at Berkeley. In conjunction with the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, OLOS presented a program on "Resisting the 'Melting Pot' Mentality: Celebrating the Multicultural Deaf Community." EMIERT and the Publishing and Minority Materials examined "The Diversity Dilemma: Librarians talk with Publishers About

Multicultural Media." The Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association and the Chinese-American Librarians Association sponsored "Librarians Makes Diversity Happen." "Best of the Best in Audio-Visual Materials for Children and Young Adults," presented by EMIERT and the Jewish Librarians Committee, also featured a multicultural perspective.

Not all the conference was spent in meeting rooms. African-American children's book writers Walter Dean Myers and Faith Ringgold received the 1992 Coretta Scott King Awards at an elegant breakfast on the final day of the conference. Also, bus loads of enthusiastic librarians toured Bay area libraries on the OLOS-sponsored program "Bridging the Bay with Family Literacy Programs." ■

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Greensboro Library Builds Community Literacy Network

Literacy is a community-wide priority in Greensboro, North Carolina, thanks to a three-year old coalition led by the Greensboro Public Library.

The Greensboro Community of Readers includes the town's mayor, corporate leaders, local authors, newspaper editors and TV personalities, as well as social service agencies, literacy tutors and library volunteers and staff. The Community of Readers emphasizes

the relevance and importance of reading. The Community of Readers . . . has done exactly that."

The literacy coalition meets a crucial need in Greensboro for adult education: 20% of the town's adults do not have a high school diploma. Prior to the creation of the coalition, Greensboro social service organizations promoting literacy were isolated from and often even unaware of each other. Many of



literacy through a variety of events throughout the year: plays, storytelling festivals, workplace literacy projects, reading skills workshops for low income parents, and even a circus. Admission to all these events is free or nominal, to enable families from homeless shelters and housing projects to participate.

The Community of Readers' success has achieved both regional and national recognition: the coalition was named Library Program of the Year in 1990 by the Southeastern Library Association and won a 1,000 Points of Light Award from the White House in 1991. Dr. Hannah Arlene Fingerett, director of Literacy South and author of *Participatory Literacy*, praises the Greensboro program: "The best way to motivate students is to create a literacy-rich environment so that the student is aware of



these organizations struggled to meet the educational needs of Greensboro's population on shoestring budgets.

The literacy coalition changed that situation almost overnight.

Within six months of its first meeting, the Community of Readers raised \$11,000 and added 34 organizations to its membership roster. Greensboro Public Library Literacy Program Director Steve Summerford attributes the success of the group to its library base: "It is often difficult to get politicians, social service workers, and business people to trust each other, and stop protecting their turf long enough to work together. It takes a neutral organization like the public library to build the kind of trust that makes this coalition successful." ■

Bell Atlantic/ALA Family Literacy Project Grant Recipients Announced

Eight Mid-Atlantic region libraries will receive 18-month grants of up to \$10,000 to participate in the Bell Atlantic/ALA Family Literacy Project:

- ★ Carroll County Public Library, Westminster, Maryland
- ★ Chesterfield County Public Library, Chesterfield, Virginia
- ★ Lonesome Pine Regional Library, Wise, Virginia
- ★ Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.
- ★ Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Mount Pleasant Branch, Washington, D.C.
- ★ Ocean County Public Library, Barnegat, New Jersey
- ★ Prince George's County Memorial Library System, Hyattsville, Maryland
- ★ Wissahocken Valley Public Library, Ambler, Pennsylvania.

In addition, four libraries in the region were awarded up to \$5,000 in matching grants to continue programs begun in 1990 and 1991:

- ★ Marion County Public Library, Fairmont, West Virginia
- ★ Monroe County and Peterstown Public Library, Union, West Virginia
- ★ Paterson Free Public Library, Paterson, New Jersey
- ★ Rockbridge Regional Library, Lexington, Virginia.

OLOS Chair

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The groundwork for the new partnership was laid at a planning committee meeting held in June of 1992. Twenty-two top children's and school librarians met with twenty-two Head Start administrators serving diverse communities including migrant programs, Indian reservations, rural and urban areas. The committee examined five central points: materials selection and acquisition; involvement of parents and families in

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Bell Atlantic and Cargill (Continued from page 1)

and West Virginia.

Like the Cargill project, the Bell Atlantic partnership stresses corporate volunteer involvement. The Bell Atlantic project, however, also provides funding to libraries. Grants of up to \$10,000 are provided to local libraries in the Bell Atlantic region to establish or improve family literacy programs. The libraries develop literacy programs in conjunction with local literacy providers and employee volunteers from Bell Atlantic offices. "We want to build strong relationships between libraries and businesses, and between libraries and literacy providers," says Project Director Margaret Monsour. The Bell Atlantic

project is now in its third cycle of funding.

One outstanding Bell Atlantic program is the Books for Families project at the Broadway Lifelong Learning Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, in Baltimore, Maryland. In partnership with the Office of Employment Development, this program involves parents and their pre-school children in reading classes. Learners participate in employment counseling, computer and ABE classes at the Learning lab in BLL. Twice each month, parents attend reading activities. After participating in 4 classes, a family receives one hardback and two paperback books to start a home library. A

dial-a-story recording provides 24-hour access to storytelling, encouraging interest in stories and books.

The Bell Atlantic-ALA partnership received a PLA 1992 Advancement of Learning Award and a Points of Light Award from President George Bush and the American Business Press in 1991.

OLOS Executive Director Mattye Nelson describes the two projects as "hopefully, just the beginning of a long series of partnerships between the ALA and many corporations and foundations. Since the literacy level of parents has a strong effect on the literacy level of children, family literacy initiatives are a crucial investment in our future workforce." ■

OLOS Chair (Continued from page 5)

Head Start programs; technical assistance to teachers and enhancement of classroom activities; training for volunteers and aides and administrative arrangements and collaborations with other agencies. The committee's suggestions and recommendations will be shared with Head Start units across the country through videotapes and a resource note-

book.

Next year, regional meetings will bolster the connection between libraries and Head Start. Selected librarians in each state will be designated as contact and referral people for Head Start workers.

"This partnership will expand the scope and enhance the effectiveness of

national literacy efforts." Mathews explains. "A very high level of literacy is needed to achieve satisfying work and effective life management. Positive attitudes towards lifelong learning are essential. We can intervene right now to prevent another generation from being part of the cycle of low literacy, poverty and low self-esteem. Libraries will play a crucial role in making that happen." ■

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