

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** Fourth quarter 2008 Media Relations Activities Report

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

*Information Item – No Action Required*

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Cathleen Bourdon, Associate Executive Director, Communications and Member Relations

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**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

NA

**DATE:** December 30, 2008

**BACKGROUND:**

Public Information Office media relations activities for the past quarter (mid September – December 2008) have focused in several areas:

- Library Card Sign-up Month
- Banned Books Week
- Teen Read Week
- National Gaming Day @ your library
- Library Usage During Recession
- William C. Morris Award

Since our last report, the American Library Association's (ALA) clipping service (based on the top 150 newspapers by circulation) and online news scans returned more than 2,400 articles that included mentions of the ALA. The overall circulation total for ALA media coverage is more than 751 million.

According to the Newspaper Association of America, there are more than 1,400 daily newspapers and 6,700 weekly newspapers in the United States, so the following list of placements should be viewed as a snapshot of coverage achieved by the ALA.

**Summary**

The fourth quarter began with Library Card Sign-up Month. Kareem Abdul Jabbar served as honorary chair for Library Card Sign-up Month 2008. Abdul Jabbar provided recorded audio public service announcements (PSAs) that promoted a library card as the best back to school tool. The audio PSAs were broadcasted by more than 800 radio stations in all 210 markets and Jabbar's print PSA received placement in *Entertainment Weekly*, *O Magazine* and *AARP*. PSA placements achieved more than \$800,000 in donated ad space and were viewed by more than 30 million people.

Library Card Sign-up Month also served as a platform for the release of a Harris Interactive Poll on library card registrations. According to the poll, 68 percent of Americans have a library card, up 5 percent since 2006. Poll results indicate that this is the greatest number of Americans with library cards since ALA started to measure library card usage in 1990. Release information was picked up by NBC Nightly News as well as other media organizations.

This year marked the 27th anniversary of Banned Books Week (September 27 – October 4), and PIO worked closely with the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) to secure media coverage with Chicago media and national news organizations. This year's celebration was kicked off with a special "Read Out" event on Saturday, Sept. 27, which took place at Pioneer Court on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. ALA President Jim Rettig joined such best-selling authors as Judy Blume, Stephen Chbosky, Lois Lowry, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, and Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, authors of *And Tango Makes Three*, the most challenged book of 2007. Many other authors and local personalities also joined in the festivities. PIO secured interviews for ALA leadership and participating authors with WGN TV, WLS (ABC Affiliate), *Chicago Tribune*, WGN Radio, WBEZ (NPR Affiliate) and many other local media outlets. Other coverage highlights include the Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, *Detroit Free Press*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, Google Books, Yahoo, About.com and PBS.

PIO continued to work with OIF throughout the quarter by obtaining interviews on the issue of censorship in libraries. Reporters focused on book challenges to *And Tango Makes Three*, *Bunny Suicides*, and the *Twilight* series.

More than 4,900 schools and libraries registered to celebrate Teen Read Week (TRW), October 12 – 18, 2008. This year's TRW theme was "Books with Bite @your library," and libraries promoted a variety of books – from vampire stories to cooking to technology (byte) – as a tool for getting young adults to read. This year's coverage consisted of multiple Web, print, radio and television placements resulting in a circulation rate of more than 135 million people.

YALSA leadership participated in radio interviews that aired on 103 stations, including the Minnesota News Network, and reached more than 1.2 million listeners. YALSA members also participated in interviews with *Family Circle Magazine*, and About.com. Pre-recorded audio TRW Public Service Announcements (PSAs) featuring celebrity voice actress Nancy Cartwright of "The Simpsons" aired on 179 stations before and during TRW.

PIO also assisted with the promotion of a TRW event that took place on Oct. 17, at Benito Juarez Community Academy in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. More than 270 students joined celebrity author Kimberly Pauley, *Sucks to Be Me: The All-True Confessions of Mina Hamilton, Teen Vampire*, for a book talk and lunch for ten of the school's winning book club members. The event was covered by Chicago's Univision affiliate, WGBO-TV.

Also, more than 566 blog postings mentioned TRW. PIO also identified more than 25 television clips that aired on local news shows. The clips were viewed by more than 431,491 viewers, with a publicity value of more than \$20,000.

More than 14,000 people of all ages came together in their local communities to participate in gaming events at more than 600 libraries around the country on National Gaming Day @ your library, Nov. 15. An estimated 5,500 library gamers joined ALA in an attempt to establish a record for the most number of people playing the board game "Pictureka!" The record attempt was made through a donation from Hasbro. Hasbro mailed more than 16,000 copies to libraries in the U.S. Coverage highlights include *Girls' Life*, *The Dallas Morning News* and Forbes.com.

As the nation experiences an economic downturn, libraries across the U.S. report that more people are turning to libraries in record numbers to take advantage of the free resources available there. A PIO press release on library usage during economic hard times was well received and generated extensive placements, which resulted in a circulation rate of more than 212 million. As a result, PIO organized interview opportunities for ALA members with NPR's "All Things Considered," CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, *Parade Magazine* and the Associated Press to name a few. Coverage on this issue was extremely favorable and positioned libraries as trusted and valuable community resources. The CBS and NBC national placements hold a publicity value of more than \$640,000, which is calculated by multiplying the number of minutes the placements ran times the cost per commercial minute that advertisers pay, according to our vendor.

As the ALA Youth Media Awards approach, PIO continues to work with YALSA to secure placement for its new William C. Morris Award, which honors a debut book published by a first-time author writing for teens and celebrating impressive new voices in young adult literature. PIO secured placement with the Associated Press, which resulted in more than 129 placements, including the *Washington Post*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. An award mention also made CNN's cable news ticker.

#### **Findings at a glance:**

According to the Newspaper Association of America, there are more than 1,400 daily newspapers and 6,700 weekly newspapers in the United States, so the following list of placements should be viewed as a snapshot of coverage achieved by the ALA

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Total Clips	1,323	1,075	38
Total Circulation	520,787,719	219,685,171	10,710,650

Total Clips: 2,436

Total Circulation: 751,183,540

Total Publicity Value: \$2,524,712 (*Includes, Cision, Television and Print PSA totals*)

To view fourth quarter placements, please visit the PIO Web press center at <http://www.ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/index.cfm>

**-End-**