

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Status of Advocacy Initiatives

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Information only

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
Cathleen Bourdon, Communications and Member Relations AED
Marci Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy

CONTACT PERSON:
Marci Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy
312-280-2431, mmerola@ala.org

DRAFT OF MOTION:
N/A

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SUMMARY: Recent activity of the Office for Library Advocacy is featured, including information on ALA response to the funding crisis. Updates on initiatives, including the National Book Festival, Camila Alire's Presidential Initiative, Advocacy University, the Safeway Partnership, Advocacy Training, and Ilovelibraries.org, is also included. The Library Funding report is submitted on behalf of the ALA Public Information Office, and authored by John Amundsen, PIO.

Funding Crisis Efforts

The Office for Library Advocacy, in partnership with American Libraries, PIO, and Chapter Relations, are continuing to monitor funding issues that arise around the country. This group worked with the ALA president to craft statements on recent funding crises in Ohio (June 23, 2009) and Michigan (August 6, 2009). View statements here:

2008-2009 ALA President Jim Rettig on Ohio:

http://www.ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/news/pressreleases2009/june2009/ohiostatement_pio.cfm

2009-2010 ALA President Camila Alire on Michigan:

http://www.ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/news/pressreleases2009/august2009/michigan_ala.cfm

National Book Festival

OLA staff (Marci Merola, Director and Jaclyn Finneke, Communications Specialist) represented the Association at the Library of Congress's National Book Festival, held September 26, 2009, on the National Mall. The ALA table was located at the Pavilion of the States, along with Center for the Book, and representatives from every state and many U.S. Territories. It is reported that over 130,000 were in attendance.

Camila Alire's Presidential Initiative

Marci Merola is serving as a staff liaison to 2009-2010 ALA President Camila Alire for her advocacy and literacy initiative. A toolkit on "Frontline Advocacy" will be produced through the Office for Library Advocacy. Library Strategies has been hired as a consultant for this project.

Advocacy University

Camila Alire's Frontline Advocacy Toolkit, as well as a new resource on making better budget presentations will be available later this fall.

Safeway Corp. Partnership

Safeway Cereals with library-focused back panels are scheduled to launch this October. This ALA partnership with the Safeway Corporation is designed to bring public awareness and advocacy messages about libraries to consumers through a new cereal box campaign.

The first two panels to launch will feature themes on "Find your Family Tree @ your library" and "Discover the World @ your library" and will appear on the Toasted Oats and Honey Nut Toasted Oats cereals. They will be distributed nationally to approximately 1,500 Safeway-owned stores around the country, which include Dominick's, Genuardi's and Safeway Stores.

The remaining three panels will focus on lifelong learning, get rich (promoting the value of the library), and great mysteries of the library. These will launch at a later date, to be determined by Safeway.

OLA has been working with PIO, ORS and the ALA Development Office on this project, and many ALA units contributed content and ideas.

Advocacy Training

Marci Merola accompanied ALA President Camila Alire and Presidential Steering Committee Co-chair Patty Wong in a day-long workshop on Frontline Advocacy that took place September 28, 2009, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Over sixty librarians attended, from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Marquette University and the Milwaukee Public Library.

Advocacy Training Subcommittee Chair Judith Gibbons and Marci Merola conducted an advocacy training at the Kentucky Library Assn. Annual Conference, October 2, 2009. Over 100 attended, representing public, school and academic librarians, as well as one Trustee.

Marci Merola will speak to attendees at the Iowa Library Association Annual Conference on October 22, 2009, and will facilitate one of the ALA Planning Discussion Groups.

The Advocacy Training Subcommittee of the Committee on Library Advocacy will offer a half-day program on ways for libraries to cope in a tough economy. "Surviving in a Tough Economy: An Advocacy Institute Workshop" will take place on Friday, January 15, 2009 from 1:30-5:00 p.m. Location to be announced.

Ilovelibraries.org

Ilovelibraries.org continues to be published twice monthly. The website is currently generating 11,000 hits daily.

Library Funding

Despite increasing attendance across the country, libraries of all types across the country still face significant funding challenges. Reductions in collection budgets and staff to cut operating hours and outright closures highlight the ever-present need for continued vigilance and advocacy efforts.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – (September 21, 2009) – In a literally last-minute move, Pennsylvania lawmakers passed a bill on September 17 giving Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter the cash necessary to keep the Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP) open. This legislation prevented Nutter from having to enact "option C," that would call for the dismissal of 3,000 city employees as well as the closure of FLP. Many other libraries in Pennsylvania, however, still remain in dire circumstances – *From American Libraries*

Robbins, Illinois – (September 9, 2009) – Facing dwindling tax revenues and state grants due to the recession, the library in Robbins, a suburb South of Chicago, was slated to close. However, the town's most famous son, Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade presented the library with a check, through his foundation. In addition to Wade's gift, the library is being kept open with funds from a federal grant, a fundraiser, and support from the library board in Skokie, an affluent suburb North of Chicago. – *From the Chicago Sun-Times*

Chicago, Illinois – (September 9, 2009) – Unable to get the union that represents library workers to agree on budget cuts, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley fired half of the 279 pages in the Chicago Public Library System. Without the help of the pages, who stock books in the library's branches, books have been piling up unshelved, preventing patrons from getting books as readily as before. The cuts came as a result of a recent standoff between the mayor and the library employees' union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, who along with the Teamsters, were the only two unions in Chicago that did not take pay cuts. – *From the Chicago Tribune*

Dayton, Ohio – (September 8, 2009) - The Dayton Metro Library released its schedule of five furlough days designed to help meet the budget shortfall caused by \$4.9 million in state cuts. Starting September 17, ten of the branch libraries will be closed every other Thursday until November 12. The Main Library and the other ten branch libraries will begin the furlough days the following Thursday, September 24, and close on alternating Thursdays until November 19. Programs scheduled on furlough days will be canceled. Book drops will be open and due dates have been adjusted so nothing is due on furlough days. – *From whiotv.com*

Annapolis, Maryland - (September 6, 2009) - Just as circulation has hit a record high, Anne Arundel County's public libraries are seeing shorter hours, smaller staffs and fewer programs because of budget cuts caused by the recession. Recently released circulation figures show a nearly 4.8 percent increase in the fiscal 2009 year over 2008 in books and materials checked out by patrons. In fiscal 2009, which ended June 30, circulation hit nearly 5.7 million. But the sour economy led to cuts throughout the county's budget. Effective July 1, the library system's budget took an 11 percent hit. In July, the nine smaller branches ended Monday morning hours. The system will have three large branches, down from five, open on Sundays during the school year starting at the end of September, and part-time work was trimmed by 20 percent. – *From the Baltimore Sun*