

Northern Lights Library Network Governing Board

Consultant for Transitions and Special Projects
Report to the Governing Board

August 20, 2011

July – August 2011

Transition Process:

July was spent as the acting, full-time, NLLN Executive Director. The majority of my time was spent on routine office business and preparing for the new Director.

Main activities included:

- Completed fiscal year expenditures, financial reports, and wrap up the outstanding bills/payments due.
- Distributed an electronic Newsletter for July; sent out the Director's 10 year report to Board members and other interested parties.
- Implemented FY2011 financial adjustments approved by the Board in June.
- Adjusted financial systems in QuickBooks with Mosaic Consulting for FY2012 and added new accounts required to meet the FY2012 adopted budget.
- Updated continuing education scholarship application form on the webpage for FY2012.
- Cleaned out and revised office (paper) files, eliminating old workshop and conference materials that took place before my tenure. Checked that permanent records were in order under the document retention policy. Much more to do!
- Updated the NLLN Office inventory for our files and Asset Detail for the auditor.
- Began gathering FY2011 documents for the auditor; reviewed narrative of financial processes in place; authorized Bremer Bank to report on NLLN assets to Eide Bailly
- Backed up files on the NLLN Director's office computer and prepared files for transfer to Kathy's computer.
- Set up email account for Kathy, added her to listservs and distribution lists.
- ***Met with Bob Wheeler (Region 1), Patricia Post (CMLE), Gay Galles (NLLN Gov Bd; Moorhead Schools) regarding the North Star Library Consortium (NSLC) and wrote up the notes from that meeting for future action. (I did not include the NSLC as a Special Project, so this will remain in the "transition" category well into the coming months.)
- ***Discussed with Patricia Post, CMLE, possible NSLC staff development events for the coming year. We face some major conflicts with the proposed mid-winter event and will need to resolve that. We are struggling with the decision to do our own or simply partner with other events and with the question of how well our members are served by events which are held exclusively in the metro area.
- August 1, began a whirlwind introduction of Kathy to NLLN! She has covered a lot of ground, in just 3 weeks! See her report for details – she is off to a great start. Much more "transition" is still in store for the coming months, but as Joan said to me, and I say to her: "You'll figure it out!"

SPECIAL PROJECTS

There has not been much time to seriously engage in the list of special projects that I will be working with as a Consultant for Transitions and Special Projects. Right now the focus remains primarily on transitions.

Highlights of Special Projects:

1. Advocacy:

- A. Participated in the July MLA-MEMO Legislative Forum in St Cloud. This allowed time for reflection on the state shutdown (which was still in progress), a re-cap of the 2011 Legislative session, and preliminary discussion of what the 2012 legislative session will bring. Hardly any good news on any account. Kathy was able to attend as well, so that was the best news of the day .
- B. Participated in the August MLA-MEMO Legislative Committee meeting. More of same. Because this is supposed to be a “bonding year”, but a large bonding bill was approved in the 201 Special Legislative Session, it is unclear whether or not another bonding bill will be considered in the 2012 session. Further state budget shortfalls and deeper education shifts (we’re at 60/40% currently and anticipated going to 50-50 next year) continue to be a major concern for everyone, in all types of libraries.
- C. Participated in the Mn Association of Library Friends Board of Directors planning retreat in August. I am on the Board for MALF and will be involved in creating and presenting regional workshops for Friends groups around the state; will participate in the MLA Conference Friends Day activities, and other work of the MALF Board.
- D. Became a member of the Lake Region Writers’ Network Board of Directors with the goal of supporting local writing groups, promoting Minnesota authors in the NLLN region, linking writers and libraries, and providing resources to writers. I’m excited about linking writers and libraries, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the NLLN region. I view this as library, literacy, and literary advocacy.
- E. Along the same lines, I have made a selection of books from the 2008-10 Minnesota Book Award program that will be used in a variety of ways in the NLLN region. In the past, we have received hundreds of books for distribution to libraries in our region. This year, we will only have about 60 books and use them for promotional and give-away purposes.

2. Early Childhood Literacy and Education

- A. Ordered books for the Communities Collaborative Brain Development Conference when their source was unable to deliver. Due to conflicts, I was not able to attend the Conference, but fortunately Kathy was able to attend and to represent NLLN in facilitating John Coy’s breakout sessions and selling books. (NLLN sponsored John Coy’s appearance at the Conference.)
- B. The Cradle Board book we have been working on in partnership with others has nearly come to fruition. Originally the idea came from the National Indian Child Care Association. Barb Fabre, of White Earth, was the national chair of NICCA and approached me and Gretchen Wronka, Hennepin Co Library System, about help in finding a publisher. Eventually we found

- Deborah Shine, publisher of Star Bright Books in New York City, who was interested in doing this project. Deborah came to Detroit Lakes and White Earth to visit last year – a great time was had by all. Along the way, we also had involvement from Lynne Burke, state representative of the Reach Out and Read program. Altogether this has been a happy project to work on and it will be great fun to see it through to publication, distribution, and use!
- C. Met with the Becker County Early Childhood Initiative to be a voice for libraries and support early literacy efforts. I also participate in the White Earth Early Childhood Initiative. Altogether there are more than 30 early childhood initiative communities in the NLLN region and are supported by 3 different Initiative Funds. I have worked most closely with the Early Childhood Initiative Communities in the West Central Initiative Fund area.
 - D. Have had Chris McArthur begin doing work with re-vamping the White Earth Readmobile catalog. Otherwise, this project has suffered from neglect this summer. I hope to devote serious time to it, and the Leech Lake Early Childhood programs, in September.
3. **Spotlight on Books** has been left on the back burner in July and August, but needs immediate attention regarding author contracts and preliminary publicity.
4. **My Special Projects**
- A. Little Free Library – this is a fun project that is part of a much larger international grassroots effort to support literacy, literature, and local community building through the exchange of books. I'll share pictures of #34 – which resides at 1220 Minnesota Ave, Detroit Lakes. I expect that there will be many more of these in the area since everyone I talk to about them gets excited. The possibilities are unlimited. And it is a great deal of fun.
 - B. Detroit Lakes has just opened a new crisis shelter for women and children in crisis. I have offered to maintain a collection of books for children – pre-schoolers through young adult – that will be available for use in the shelter. This is a local, and somewhat personal, project but based on my commitment that all children should have free and ample access to books wherever they are.
 - C. Minnesota Book Award program – I will continue my involvement with the MBA and encourage others in our region to be involved as well.
 - D. I am working with a team of folks associated with the Tamarac Wildlife Refuge to build a “Discovery Center” at the refuge for educational purposes. A Little Free Library may be showing up there!

*****Request for consideration: I would like to request compensatory time off for a portion of the time worked in July as the interim Executive Director. I would like to request 56 hours compensatory time to be taken between August 22 and Sept 9, 2011. Though I will still be available to the office for transition issues, I would take the time to travel, celebrate my mother's 95th birthday, and have some time away.**

Ruth Solie
August 20, 2011