LMD Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 17, 2011 from 12:30-2:30 at the Thurmont Regional Library- FCPL

Present: Carrie Willson-Plymire (president), James Kelly (vice president), Dianne Whittaker, Debra Mattingly, Bob Maranto, Janet Vogel, Morgan Miller, Julie Zamostny, Erica Cooper, Derek Gee, and Marie Slaby

Steering Committee Meeting

- Bob Maranto agreed to put together a guide to being secretary for Morgan who will take over from Tanya Shelton-Council this July – primarily this will include info about the website
- Bob also volunteered to send out publicity about the LMD programs at the 2011 MLA conference
- Derek Gee and Dianne Whittaker agreed to be mentors to first-time conference attendees – Janet Vogel happily took their names (she is a co-chair of the membership committee of MLA)
- LMD Program Planning

LMD program planning for FY12 was discussed. Results of a recent MLLI survey indicated an interest/need for training in several areas. LMD discussed providing training in conflict resolution and presentation skills, noting that advocacy would be covered at this year’s MLA conference through the LMD sponsored preconference “Heads Up, Hands On: Advocacy from the Front Line.”

TED- related training topics were also suggested (check out http://www.ted.com for ideas, particularly training sessions from the TEDx Midatlantic 2010 conference (http://tedxmidatlantic.com/). TED trainings deal not only in popular technology, but also asking the question of “What if…?”

*Please forward ideas for speakers in conflict resolution, presentation skills, and TED topics to Carrie and James.

James mentioned that DLDS is sponsoring a workshop series on E-Visioning that will be spread out geographically throughout the state. The first of these is scheduled for June 7th at the Boonsboro branch in Washington County. In general, these sessions are structured by asking “What if?” at the beginning of the day and arriving at “What’s next?” at the program’s conclusion. They will be aimed more at provoking thoughtful discussion and idea-sharing than providing hard and fast answers.
• **MLA Conference**

Morgan will pick up Dr. Alire at the airport on Tuesday, May 3rd and transport her to Ocean City. Travel back to BWI on Thursday, May 5th, will likely be arranged through local library staff in Ocean City.

Volunteers are needed to help staff the sales and registration tables, assist with the Silent Auction, and to help at the Virtual Community Table. Volunteers can sign up for shifts on the MLA website at [http://www.mdlib.org/conference/forms.asp](http://www.mdlib.org/conference/forms.asp).

Contact Carrie regarding items for the Silent Auction. Morgan will donate an orchid from her husband’s greenhouse.

LMD is putting together a basket for the auction: Bob will kindly donate a couple of books, Debra some marbles (for folks who have lost theirs), Carrie and James have several other goodies to put in the in-basket “Manager’s Little Helper” collection which will center around a bottle of booze...

Janet invites anyone who is interested in tweeting the conference to get in touch with her. There’s a possibility that iPads may be provided to volunteers for this purpose.

**Discussion of Tony Hsieh’s *Delivering Happiness***

In sum, this book is about what makes Zappos not only a great company, but also a great place to work because the company’s 10 core values (p. 154) are inherent in every aspect of the company’s culture—from how they interact with their customers and staff to the kind of service they provide.

In general, these values add up to being nice to everyone you encounter, going the extra mile for everyone, and having a higher purpose. Bob pointed out an interesting correlation between Hsieh’s philosophies on customer service and competition and a scene from the movie *Miracle on 34th Street*. If a customer enquires about a product that is not currently sold by the company, Zappos will search for the product on the websites of three competitors and direct the customer there.

Zappos’ approach to staff development was related back to DLDS’ model of libraries in Maryland as “learning libraries.”

Zappos’ unique hiring processes were also emphasized—they offer every new employee $1000 to quit after a 2-week training period in order to retain committed people whose values are aligned with their own.
At length, we discussed how Zappos customer service philosophy relates to how we can be flexible with fines, renewals, and other policies when serving patrons in the library. While being flexible with some of these policies helps our patrons, it can be difficult to appease staff at the same time when attempting to help them see beyond the policy. Some ideas for keeping both patrons and staff happy when exercising flexibility on policies included provided training that includes these types of scenarios for staff to work through, maintaining a “No” log (writing down every time we tell a patron “No” with regard to a policy or procedure and then revisiting the log later to evaluate these instances), and helping them to see the big picture (i.e. being flexible on fine payment and renewal helps us to retain our customers and even increase our circulation). Debra pointed out a philosophy about policy-making that she learned from Nancy Choice: “Make as few rules as possible and don’t make rules to punish the few.”

The discussion turned to ways in which we can boost staff morale, encourage and build teamwork, and better staff libraries during these difficult and often very stressful funding times. Ideas are listed below:

- Thurmont Regional Library consolidated the children’s and adult services desks to serve as a single reference desk. This has not only helped with staffing coverage, but also increased teamwork and staff skills.
- When only one staff member needs to be scheduled on-desk, have another staff member serve as “back-up” and use a beeper/buzzer to alert them when they’re needed.
- Look into local services in your area that can be provided for free to library staff. For instance, one LMD member reported that there is a local massage school nearby where trainees need to accrue a certain number of training hours. They came to the library to provide massages to library staff for free.
- Maintain a public log book where staff can write nice things about their coworkers and pass it around regularly.
- Get out your Nancy Pearl or Sneaks doll and allow staff to decorate (or take out their frustrations!) regularly as a fun outlet.
- Food and parties are good, though you might need to incentivize the reason for the party to get some reluctant staff to participate (i.e. have a party, offer a prize if staff meet a program registration or circulation goal, etc.)
- Don’t disregard the facilities—post uplifting quotes and comic relief from sites like unshelved.com and despair.com in the staff restroom.
- Use events like National Poetry Month (April) as a creative outlet for stressed staff.
- Use volunteers when/if possible.
• When strapped with budget and staff cuts that you have no control over, focus on what you do have control over—brainstorm as a team on ways to improve circulation, desk staffing, etc.
• Do a little group therapy—have a counselor from the Employee Assistance Program lead a group therapy session to address concerns about the current economic climate or allow time for staff to talk openly about their concerns at meetings.
• When all else fails, talk to libraries in California, Ohio, and other areas where libraries have struggled severely to help put things in perspective.

Other LMD Business

The question of creating an LMD listserv for general discussion was brought forth, but we ultimately decided to forgo one in favor of an LMD Facebook page where discussions can be archived. Morgan will be in touch with Janet to create LMD’s FB page and will serve as site administrator.

Some discussion of social networking policies came up. Most systems are still in the early stages of drafting a policy. Cecil County Public Library recently created theirs, which Morgan will forward to the rest of the group.

Next Meeting: June 16th at the Arbutus branch of BCPL – Facilities Management for Librarians a redo

Minutes submitted by Morgan Miller