**NJLA County Libraries Section (CLS) Meeting**

**Thursday May 16, 2024, 10:30 a.m.**

In-person at Burlington County Library System Headquarters with Zoom option

1. **Welcome and introductions/In attendance:** Christina Nemphos (Burlington County Library System/BCLS), Ellen Callanan (Sussex County Library System/SCLS), Lisa Downs (BCLS), Heather Lubchansky (SCLS), Athena Kalos (SCLS), Julia Thomas (SCLS), Renie Garlick (SCLS), Jen Brenner (Cumberland County Library), Jen Amorese-Berrios (Somerset County Library System/SCLSNJ), Natalie Webber (SCLS), Doreen Bader (SCLS), Julie Knapp (SCLS), Bryan Thomson (SCLSNJ), Rebecca Berkowitz (BCLS), Cecily Binegar (BCLS), Anthony DeVenuto (BCLS), Jill Butcher (Warren County Library System/WCLS), Ashley Mitchell (Camden County Library), Emily Witkowski (Hunterdon County Library)
2. **Conference Luncheon Updates:** all good so far!

* 71 people registered!
* Open seating; greeters will be at the door
* Optional icebreaker questions on tables
* Powerpoint slides and trivia being compiled
* Waiting to hear back from 3 directors re award recipients (*award certificates to be created*)

1. **Update** *Will Porter, NJLA Executive Board Liaison*: no report
2. **Upcoming Meeting:**

* **Thursday June 20, 2024 via Zoom**: Last meeting with the current Board. Incoming section leaders to be introduced and oriented. No additional agenda topic at this time.
  + *(Post-meeting note: Election results now announced. Congratulations to winners Heather Lubchansky from SCLS who will serve as President, Crystal Hooper from SCLSNJ who will serve as Vice-President, and Jen Amorese-Berrios who will serve as Secretary)*

1. **Employee Engagement Mini Presentations:**

* **Staff Development Week (SDW) -- Lisa Downs (**[**ldowns@bcls.lib.nj.us**](mailto:ldowns@bcls.lib.nj.us)**), BCLS**

Charge: post-Covid, switch from in-person Staff Development Day with buildings closed to the public at all 15 locations (*8 branches plus 7 others)* to a Staff Development event in which the libraries remained open to the public

* Committee of 8 volunteer BCLS staff members formed a work group to plan a week of multiple programs offered at multiple locations in September 2023; co-chaired by Head of Circ and an HR rep
* Surveyed staff as to what they wanted to get out of this week *(answer was professional development and personal growth)*, and planned programs around those priorities
* Events open to all 140 staff members; voluntary participation, advanced registration for sessions
* All 8 branches served throughout the week as locations for various programs
* Offerings included Mindful Meditation (*offered twice, both programs at capacity*), Microsoft 365 training (*also offered multiple times at capacity, i.e., 15 in-person and 15 Zoom*), “101”-type training classes to educate newer staff and refresh older staff, crafting activities, networking activities (*e.g., meet-ups between staff from multiple location who were attending library school or were recent library school graduates*), BCLS history artifacts “show and tell”, escape rooms
* 29 staff members as presenters, as well as 2 paid presenters
* Multiple locations and times
  + - Branch staff covered for each other at various locations as needed
* Several programs offered multiple times due to popularity
* Some programs had both virtual and in-person options
  + - 29 staff members as presenters, as well as 2 paid presenters
    - Use of staff members provided opportunity and ability to create customized training, improve internal communication
* Also had options that didn’t require attending a class, such as trivia, Staff Appreciation Week (*which was* *incorporated into SDW*)
* Staff appreciation expressed as anonymous acts of kindness from one staff member to another—included poems, sweet treats (*e.g., Hershey’s hugs and kisses chocolates, Lifesaver candies*), thank you notes
* Managers gave gifts of appreciation to those in their departments, as well as individuals doing for other individuals
* Staff loved these expressions of kindness and appreciation, which were creative and put many smiles on faces
  + - Everyone received some form of expressed appreciation
    - Most expressions of appreciation were anonymous
* Offered incentives, gave a ticket given for attending a program
* Promotion/Marketing/Branding:
* “Teaser” emails starting several months prior (*e.g., “Save the Date”)*
* Created a Staff Development Week logo
* Had a theme of the day (*e.g., Disney Day, T-shirt Day*) each day
* Frequent fun emails before the week to keep all informed and excited
* Motivational emails during the week with information on the coming day’s programs, winners of contests, etc.
* What went well
  + Over 260 session attendees
  + Staff feedback was “phenomenal”!
  + Increased staff knowledge, productivity and morale
* Advice and Future ideas for improvement based on staff feedback and committee member experience:
  + Think outside the box
  + Make it FUN!
  + Add more topics
  + Some sessions could be longer
  + Staff could attend more programs

Already have started planning for next Staff Development Week to be held in October.

* **Staff Reading Competition -- Julia Thomas (**[**jthomas@sussexcountylibrary.org**](mailto:jthomas@sussexcountylibrary.org)**) and Athena Kalos (**[**akalos@sussexcountylibrary.org**](mailto:akalos@sussexcountylibrary.org)**), SCLS**

Created and co-chaired by Library Assistant (Julia) and Library Page (Athena). Idea started as a joke--mentioned to supervisors, who were enthusiastic and supportive

Goals: include all staff who were interested, make it a fun competition between branches, encourage staff reading, increase circ stats during a slower time of year

* Competition started March 4 and ended April 22 (7 weeks)
* A few weeks prior to the start, sent email to all staff letting them know about the competition; explained how it would work, included dates and method of recording, counting and tallying, and indicated when winners would be announced (*i.e., at Staff Development Day on May 3)*
* Sent “teaser” email reminders as the start date got closer
* Created ticket to be filled out for each book read—who read it, book author and title, genre
* Gave each branch a glass jar in which to collect tickets; tickets sent weekly to Athena to be tallied
* Julia sent fun weekly emails to keep everyone informed and motivated (*including one in Morse Code sent on April 1!*)
* Emails included updated weekly stats for all but last two weeks of program, which were kept secret until the “big reveal” on Staff Development Day
* Results: 72 of 89 staff participated (80% participation rate), 937 books read, lots of fun had by all!
* Winners announced, and prizes awarded, at Staff Development Day
  + Individual winner prizes for most books read overall (*first, second, third place*), as well as for those who read the most in a specific genre, and branch prizes for highest staff participation and books read
  + Staff were not told ahead of time that genre prizes would be awarded (*a fun surprise!*)
  + Prioritized the awarding of prizes and rewards across branches and levels of staff to be as inclusive as possible
* Giving awards at Staff Development Day was great for staff morale, and very uplifting
  + After Staff Development Day, Athena shared spreadsheet of results, both per-branch and systemwide, with all SCLS staff—included figures, charts, and graphs, easy to read; also sent Staff Feedback survey, which many completed and returned
* Have already started planning for next year. Future goals/ideas:

* Continue to streamline, keep it fun, and keep it simple
* Include line for page count on tickets, award some or all prizes based on page count
* Count magazines (which would have been counted this time, but no one submitted a ticket for any)
* Exclude picture books and children’s books
* Lengthen time between end of competition and results to allow for more time to tally results and create spreadsheets (*challenging to incorporate compiling statistics and running program into the workday, as both Athena and Julia are part-time at SCLS*)

1. **Questions/Other: meeting ended at 11:25 a.m., followed by Building tour**
2. **Building Tour (in-person attendees)**

**Next Meeting: Thursday June 20, 2024, 10:30 a.m. via Zoom**