

NJLA COUNTY LIBRARIES SECTION MEETING: 6/27/22

Attendance/Introductions:

Natalie Niziolek, Cape May County Library (*Chair*)
Jenn Brenner, Cumberland County Library
Carolyn Oldt, Gloucester County Library
James Keehler, Hunterdon County Library
Amelia Rodriguez, Mercer County Library
Jenn Doderer, Ocean County Library
Cassie Collucci, Somerset County Library
Louisa Bann, Sussex County Library
Ellen Callanan, Sussex County Library (*Secretary*)
Debbie Fagnan, Sussex County Library
Heather Lubchansky, Sussex County Library
Will Porter, Sussex County Library
Jill Butcher, Warren County Library

Annual Conference Wrap-Up/ Thoughts:

- **County Libraries Luncheon:**
 - **A great first-time event!** Good food, liked the awards, enjoyed hearing about projects that other libraries were working on, opportunity to have conversations with staff from other libraries.
 - **Suggestions for future luncheons:** create an environment in which encourages more mingling/mixing, perhaps have awardees do a short presentation related to their award-winning projects (above and beyond the description in the awards program, e.g., Powerpoint, etc.).
 - **Poster sessions/County Libraries table at NJLA:** Cassie suggested taking it a step further by having the County Libraries submit ideas for poster sessions and/or have a table at NJLA to highlight what County Libraries are doing. Increased awareness and promotion may lead to more interest in becoming active in the section

What are topics we would want to see - we can make them happen! (Sponsor something?)

- **Something for/about middle managers,** perhaps based on the model of the one-day mini-conference for middle managers that the Administration and Management section had in 2019 (?) which went over well, or a pre-conference.
- **Staff training** (building on the very popular session offered at NJLA this year by Cassie, Heather and Natalie): this could be included in a mini-conference or presented as a pre-conference
- **How to manage/structure your career,** include information for those who are not necessarily interested in becoming a Director (what are the benefits of other positions

within the library/what do other non-Director managerial and non-managerial jobs have to offer?)

Carolyn and Natalie volunteered to form a committee to work on a possible mini-conference or pre-conference, possibly in conjunction with the NJLA Administration and Reference Committee (Janet Torsney to be contacted re a potential collaboration). Additional committee volunteers/draftees welcome!

2022-23 Planning

- **Pause July/August meetings?** Consensus to continue meeting throughout the summer so that momentum isn't lost
- **Continue 4th Monday at 10 a.m.?** This time works for those in attendance. May revisit in the future, to potentially enable those not in attendance due to schedule issues (like staff who don't work on Mondays) to participate
- **Continue virtual?** Virtual has worked well. Suggestion to incorporate hybrid meetings in the future using Owl or other technology. Hybrid meeting format could be a guest presentation with discussion at the end and library tours for in-person attendees
- **Topic Choosing – Google Form** - <https://forms.gle/xDrvR8VWJ4UXrEH1A>

Survey responses (total of 9 so far)—DEI (5), Assistant Directors/Supervisors (3), Staff training modules/initiatives (8), Digital Divide (4), Advocacy (2), Innovative Marketing (4), IT (4), Other topics identified were budgeting, grant writing, purchasing via state contract vendors, staff development days, recruitment and retention, policies, programming, employee assessment, strategic planning, book challenges, and First Amendment audits.

Sara Siegler (Ocean County Library) and Brian Morgan (Somerset County Library) were suggested as possible presenters for a program on state contract vendors/purchasing (both are QPAs).

Natalie will send out a list of program ideas to all in the section, and will develop a rough program schedule as well.

Promotion

- **Template e-mail current members can send to their organization?** Heather to develop template to send out inviting attendance and participation in County Libraries meetings. Suggestion to disseminate via someone with peer connections (Assistant Director? IT lead? Someone else?) rather than the Director.
- **Reach out to systems that don't have any representation?** Outreach to the County libraries who have not had attendees at our section meetings to welcome and encourage them to participate; Ellen and Natalie to begin working on promotion and outreach after receiving Heather's draft
- **Include larger library systems - what is criteria? Number of staff/ locations/ service population? Levels of staffing?** Will has suggested inviting libraries with multiple locations to participate. If so, perhaps change the name of the section to Large Libraries

or Large Public Libraries section. James will draft a list of non-County libraries which are “large libraries”.

Final Thoughts/ Sharing

NJLA County Library Membership update: James relayed that this membership category is approved and will be active for January 1, 2023; Libraries will be able to sign up this year for three month “bridge” period.

Promoting County Library Section meetings: meeting announcements may be sent out to various NJLA list groups. Natalie will update NJLA County Libraries webpage

NJLA Conference favorite programs:

- Staff training session (great job to Heather, Natalie and Cassie!)
- Academic Libraries section program comparing student technology skills between students who had bibliographic/technology instruction in high school and those who had none
- Program on building community resiliency (great job, Hunterdon County!)

Carolyn suggests that NJLA provide links to Powerpoint presentations, handouts, and/or recordings to all sessions on the conference website. While some Powerpoint presentations are available there, it appears that it is up to each presenter as to whether or not materials are provided in that way.

Sussex County Library’s Summer Reading kickoff on Saturday was enjoyed by those who attended. It is nice to be back in person, and the public appreciates that as well. Debbie is in the process of applying for an LSTA grant.

Somerset County Library’s 11th branch in Montgomery opened in mid-June. It is beautiful, with (among other features) mini-study spaces reservable through Communico, lovely new furniture, and lots of new technology. It is already very busy, and Cassie invites everyone to visit. Suggestion that perhaps our first hybrid meeting could be held there!

Next meeting 7/25 10am