

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2008/2009

Julie Adams MLA Annual Conference November 19-21, 2008

I attended the Minnesota Library Association Conference, November 19-21, 2008, in Bloomington. The conference had many interesting sessions and keynote speakers. The first keynote speaker was Tim Spalding the developer of "LibraryThing" a social network for people to share information about books they own and/or have read. This speaker was very interesting and had some really good observations about the library's world subject heads and their inability to evolve with the times.

I attended "Managing Negativity at Work" session with speaker Lauren Burnett. She had worksheets for us to complete on subjects such as identifying our triggers and defense mechanisms and how to identify different personality types. She also gave specific examples of how to our body language influences day-to-day situations.

"Staff Development 2.0" was the next session I attended. The presenters were a team of librarians from Gustavus Adolphus College. They had attended the Minnesota Library Association Institute for Leadership Excellence in 2007. They discussed staff development techniques from MILE. A very useful tool from this session was a handout titled "The Strength/Weakness test".

The session "Harnessing Google to Accomplish Daily Tasks" gave lots of good examples of how to organize, share, and archive information on your desktop using Google gadgets. Although I have already been using some of the gadgets discussed, since the conference I have looked through the ones I am unfamiliar with and see some potential for using these gadgets on projects.

A session I wanted to attend about lexile levels was canceled. I was disappointed about this as I would have liked to have learned more about this since our local school uses the Accelerated Reader program. But the session I attended instead about romance reader's advisory was very informative and interesting. The handouts give a lot of information about sub genres which will come in handy not only for reader's advisory, but for collection development as well.

I attended a session about how to create a staff wiki. Since I have such a small staff here at our library, the need for creating a wiki isn't as necessary, but I do see how this may become a very useful tool within our system. I plan to bring the information along to a Viking Library System automation meeting.

The speaker/author for the Inspirational Fiction session was lovely and gave a lot of great information for collection development—many authors were discussed that I had not heard of before.

"Eight keys to an Effective Library" was a presentation by Sandra Nelson. The eight keys she listed are:

1. Focus on users wants/needs
2. Provide excellent customer service
3. Make data-based decisions
4. Collaborate and build bridges
5. Reward risk takers
6. Become more politically active
7. Learn from the completion
8. Embrace change

All very good points to be reminded of.

The "Minnesota Library Funding" session was a follow up on a meeting I attended several months ago about minimum levels of funding and maintenance of effort. It was good to hear that a committee had been formed after that first meeting and that they have been working toward compromises on maintenance of effort. Some of the recommendations from this group will need legislative action.

The final keynote speaker I heard was Sandra Nelson, "Why is everyone so crabby". The description for this presentation said it was "guaranteed to cheer you up". I didn't find that to be true at all, in fact a college and I talked about how depressing it was that the speaker said that because of the economy the way it is, several libraries will close within the next 5 years. That may be true, but definitely not information that is uplifting. Luckily, I had attended Sandra Nelson's session earlier in the day and have the eight keys to success to work on here at our library in hope that the economy does not have a dire effect on us.

I would like to thank Northern Lights Library Network for this grant opportunity. I always enjoy attending the Minnesota Library Association Conference, and your financial help this year is greatly appreciated!
Julie Adams, New York Mills Public Library

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