

LEARN Minutes – January 17, 2007

In Attendance:

1. Kate Mallon (Wheaton)
2. Virginia Duran (College of Dupage)
3. Debra Kakuk (College of Dupage)
4. Ann Weaver (Westchester)
5. Hugh Glenn (Literacy in Action Dupage)
6. RoseAnn Vonesh (Oak Park)
7. Jean Demas (Lisle)
8. Sr. Marybeth McDermott (School on Wheels)
9. Joe Popowitch (Indian Prairie)

Introductions and Announcements

- Literacy in Action Dupage will be having a tutor training class the last two weeks in January. For more information call 630-833-2950.
- Virginia Duran teaches an ESL class at the College of Dupage and is also the ESL/ELL Specialist for Electronic Learning Environments in Naperville.

College of DuPage Materials Available

Debra Kakuk reminded the group that she is wading through numerous boxes of ESL materials donated to her department by the ESL/ABE department's private library. She has already put aside 10 large boxes full of items for LEARN members to review for possible acquisitions. These resources range in age from new items to books that were published in the 70s, and range in audience from all levels of students to tutors. Once she is done examining this large donation, she will make the materials available for viewing. For convenience, College of Dupage may host the next LEARN meeting in conjunction with this event. **You must, however, bring your own boxes to retrieve the items.**

Expanding Our Focus to Schools and Universities

1. **Educators Not Utilizing Libraries:** In November, Jean Demas attended an Adult Education Conference where she hosted three 15 minute sessions talking about LEARN and discussing ESL in libraries. The sessions had attendance of 17, 8 and 7 respectively. Among the participants in these sessions were ESL educators at local colleges. Jean was shocked to learn that most educators did not even think of their own college libraries as a resource for ESL materials.
2. **Targeting Educators:** We need to inform educators about the ESL resources available to them through libraries:
 - Include another questionnaire on our Web site which targets educators (ask about staffing, availability of orientations, etc).
 - Develop an educator toolkit which highlights their unique needs.
 - Send a letter/brochure that more or less says, "Educators, are you aware that the libraries have..."
 - Coordinate with the college librarians to offer orientation for ESL instructors.

- Consider recruiting educators (not merely part-time tutors) to become members of LEARN.

Marketing in General

1. **Create a Marketing Plan:** Our current mission is:
To identify and promote collections, organizations and resources to adults learning to read or learning English in the Chicago area.
 In essence, our mission *is* to market ESL resources to people who need them. Before we set goals for marketing (i.e. how many brochures to distribute, where, how often, etc.), we must first devise some literature to disseminate.
2. **Brochures:** Ann Weaver will have a draft of a brochure by **March 15, 2007** which could also be used with bookmarks. It would include the LEARN Web address, mission, logo, list of members, space for each member library to put local information, etc.
3. **E-mail Letter:** Debra Kakuk will come up with a draft of an e-mail letter we can send out to organizations, to include in library system newsletters, to colleges, etc.
4. **Tutors:** Our members which offer tutoring are constantly looking for more tutors. Therefore, we will encourage tutoring whenever possible. (Posters at member libraries, mention becoming a volunteer before programs, inclusion in the brochures, etc.).
5. **Linking to LEARN:** Ask organizations, “Would you please link to our site.”
6. **Conferences:** We could host our own annual “Literacy Fair” and/or make sure that a LEARN member attends other such events to promote LEARN.

Grant Possibilities

1. **Past Grant Proposals:** It has always been difficult to arrive at a grant proposal that could be utilized by our various members. Some proposals that we have explored include:
 - Traveling laptop computers with ESL software.
 - Funding for smaller member libraries to create or develop small ESL collections.
2. **New Grant Proposals:**
 - Seek funding for online software that could be accessed remotely by members of the group (or is this something we should encourage the state to offer?).
 - Funding for TV or talk radio spots to highlight the member organizations which offer tutoring with an emphasis on a need for more volunteer tutors.
3. **Grant in 2007** – The LSTA grants have not been posted yet, and there is a possibility that due to lack of funding they might not be offered this year. We will monitor the grant offerings to see if there is even a possibility of applying in 2007.

School on Wheels

1. **Marketing:** Sr. Marybeth described how they market School on Wheels. Over six weeks they e-mail 91 churches, 39 newspapers, 10 senior centers and local colleges.

2. **Software and Laptops:** The primary software that they use is the Rosetta Stone. School on Wheels also has some laptops to lend out. Students often just want to practice typing and use the Mavis Beacon software.
3. **“No” Logs:** I described how Indian Prairie Library is trying something called a “No” Log. Every time a staff member tells a patron, “No,” that staff member writes down why the patron was told they could not do something or could not receive a particular service. Periodically we review these lists to decide if we need to change our policy or add a new service. School on Wheels, and our other tutoring organizations, could keep a “No” log. Any time a student asked for something that School on Wheels could not provide, that could be recorded and forwarded to LEARN. The member libraries could look to accommodate the needs of the students that were lacking. For instance, the need for Mavis Beacon software to help learn typing sounds like something we could install on computers at the library fairly inexpensively.
4. **Television Coverage:** School on Wheels was featured in a Channel 11 news segment. Sr. Marybeth has received 16 phone calls in less than a week from people volunteering to tutor. It was a tremendous advertising boost.

Web Site

1. **Questionnaire for Educators:** As Jean suggested, I will try to develop a questionnaire geared toward educators.
2. **Better Links to Existing Resources:** I will try to add more links to sites which are already doing what LEARN has set out to do: promote local literacy efforts. For instance we could add a link to the state literacy site.
3. **Become a Volunteer:** I will add a page on our site devoted to becoming a volunteer tutor in one of our member tutoring organizations.
4. **Calendar on State Site:** Try to have the calendar on the state literacy site include information about LEARN member events.

Next Meeting

We are leaving this open. It depends upon when and if grants are made available through the state and if COD hosts the next meeting to allow members to review the materials which Debra will put aside. Lisle Library has also offered to host the next meeting.