



LAMS Letters

A Newsletter of NCLA's
Library Administration & Management (LAMS) Section

Inside this issue:

FROM the CHAIR 1

Featured Project 2

Featured Librarian 3

Book Review, pg 4 4-5

Call for Apps pg 5

FROM the CHAIR By Laurence Gavin



Opportunities for professional development are not always available. I feel lucky to be able to take advantage of the training, networking, and leadership workshops provided to me from within my own library system here in Cumberland County and to have benefited from the many training workshops provided by the NCLA. As leaders, it is our responsibility to foster professional growth through the development of leadership qualities. Once prepared, we must create the opportunities for emerging leaders to shine, then step back and let them go while all the time offering support and guidance. The upcoming 2014 NCLA Leadership Institute is just such an opportunity for emerging leaders in your organization to prepare for and shine in a leadership role, on a project that they have proposed. More information and the links to get started are listed on the last page of this issue.

Emerging leader and Featured Project:

--

Debbie Shreve is the Head of Youth Services for Orange County Public Library. She has worked in libraries, both public and academic, for almost 20 years. Debbie has been actively involved in NCLA for the past 6 years serving on the Youth Services Section Board as director, vice-chair and current chair. She also served on the 2013 Conference Planning Committee and is a graduate of the 2012 Leadership Institute.



Summer Reading: Can Our Efforts Make a Difference?

As a new manager it can be challenging to balance the desire to make changes and the need to assess how something can effectively be changed. My experience has shown that when implementing change it is necessary to develop a methodical approach that includes staff input and perhaps customer input, when appropriate. Also, be willing to make adjustments along the way, but do not stray from your ultimate goal. If you can get your staff on board before the change is implemented, you can ultimately plan for a smoother transition.

A project that my department recently completed was the revamping of our Summer Reading Program. My initial decision to make changes was sparked by the onset of "Read to Achieve," the NC state initiative that set the goal for every child to read at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade. Another, more confirming reason for change came from my involvement with the State Youth Services Advisory Committee and the need for libraries to tie summer reading participation to overall school success. We've all heard the term "summer slide," and as librarians we know how important it is for a child to continue reading throughout the summer. As librarians we have the unique privilege to encourage reading for pleasure and promote the library as a fun place to visit. What if our planning efforts for Summer Reading could combine the promotion of reading for pleasure, the library as a fun place and school success? Wow! What a win-win situation for all involved!

So, how do we create a win-win Summer Reading Program? This year our focus lies on three key components: the importance of reading every day, the benefits of attending staff led literacy based programs at the library and the need to get books into children's hands, even when they do not come to the library. Our changes include:

- A new reading log encouraging 15 minutes of reading every day, either being read to or reading alone. Our library is aiming toward a goal of 5,000 hours read this summer.
- A shift in program philosophy that includes more staff led literacy based programs and fewer paid performances.
- A shift in how we deliver donated books through our Read to Give program. This year we have identified pockets of the community where children are not coming to the library. We will go to community parks and give books directly to those children. Research has shown that the more a child is exposed to books in the home, the more likely they are to achieve reading success in school.

In order to implement these changes effectively, I needed to research and evaluate what has been done in the past while keeping my focus on the benefits a new program would bring to the community. As a manager it is my job to look at the big picture, set clear goals and procedures and communicate these with staff and the public. I'm excited to see how our changes will play out this summer. I'm optimistic, but also realistic that some people may not be happy with the changes. We all know from working with the public that we can't please everyone, all the time. However, I'm confident that we have implemented some advantageous changes to our program that will ultimately impact our community in a positive way.



Featured Librarian: Alan R. Bailey

Alan R. Bailey is an Associate Professor and head of J.Y. Joyner Library's Teaching Resources Center on the campus of East Carolina University. He received MLS degrees from East Carolina University and North Carolina Central University. Over his 30-year career as a professional librarian, Alan has held leadership roles in school, public, community college, and university libraries. He currently serves as a director at large on the NCLA Executive Board and his first book, *Building a Core Print Collection for Preschoolers*, will be released this summer by ALA Publishing.



Per Alan:

I was recently appointed head of a department comprised of faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students. One of the many joys of my new role includes managing a team of diverse individuals. I find it invigorating and inspiring to learn and grow from people of different backgrounds who see the world from a totally different point of view. So you can understand why I was a bit bewildered when maintaining a positive workplace environment while leading a team with diverse work styles and personality types became a major challenge in my new position.

Of course, each employee accepts change differently and over time their adaptability affects the dynamics of the team and its effectiveness within the organization to meet overall goals. Factor in the added stress of the sudden retirement of the previous department head, the resignation of another beloved staff member, the addition of a new department head, and the anticipation of hiring a new staff member, and even the strongest team of individuals can become distressed as the order of things seems to be rapidly dissipating before their eyes. When I saw stress, concern of losing jobs, lack of confidence, and fear of the unknown edging into the lives of these knowledgeable and skilled employees, it became apparent that I needed to lessen the uncertainties associated with these changes immediately to maintain a positive workplace environment and cohesive team.

I began meeting with employees individually and collectively to gain a greater understanding of their job duties, learn their personality types and work styles, determine their skills and abilities, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Through these open and honest conversations I determined the source of many concerns and I was able to immediately diminish several by simply sharing my vision for the department and clearly stating my expectations. These conversations are ongoing, and as they continue I hope members of the department realize that the order of things is not being upset after all. Yes, changes are being made, but the customer-centered goals of the department and genuine appreciation for the people who make these goals a daily reality still exist. I hope my team also realizes that I am a leader committed to nurturing cohesiveness through respect, responsibility, trust, and an open exchange of ideas.

All leadership books and seminars express the importance of communication. This experience clearly reveals the positive results achievable through individual and collective conversations. These open, honest, and often personal meetings are absolutely necessary and often the results can be astounding and long-lasting. As leaders, we should all devote a little more time to enhancing our communication skills. The benefits of building relationships with those we supervise are immeasurable. I am fortunate to lead a department of committed and talented employees. My goals are to increase their levels of job satisfaction, help them become more successful, create a positive environment, and help them realize they are genuinely valued as part of the team. As employees are more successful in their roles, they feel more confident. This confidence leads to empowerment, and once individuals feel both successful and empowered, a more cohesive and effective team is sure to develop. And without a doubt, an empowered team will not only meet the needs of their customers but successfully accomplish departmental/library goals as well.

Book Review:

How leaders facilitate change is always of interest to me. This month I reading, *Employees First, Customers Second: Turning Conventional Management Upside down* by Vineet Nayar. Nayar details a journey of transformation for his company by focusing on the how of the strategy rather than the what. Something he says “is really the most interesting and valuable part of our story”. By doing so created a culture of trust within his organization by pushing the envelope of transparency in communication and information sharing... unlocking the potential of the employees.

Nayar, Vineet. *Employees First, Customers Second: Turning Conventional Management Upside down*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business, 2010. Print.



INFORM
CONNECT
SUPPORT



Call for Applications:

The North Carolina Library Association (NCLA) and the State Library of North Carolina are pleased to issue a call for applications for the NCLA Leadership Institute, which will be held October 30 - Nov 2, 2014 at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro.

The Institute is an intensive four-day residential event and subsequent to the Institute, the cohort of participants will participate in a one-day follow-up session held on April 17th, 2015 and will participate in some way at the 2015 NCLA Biennial Conference, October 19 - 23, 2015.

We look forward to this experience with a new group of future North Carolina library leaders. No more than thirty participants will be selected for the Institute through a competitive application process with consideration for duplication from each institution.

Mission—The mission of the North Carolina Library Association (NCLA) Leadership Institute is to create opportunities for learning and skill building in leadership and mentoring. The Institute will cultivate an improved understanding of self and others, while inspiring participants to serve in leadership roles within the profession at local, state and national levels.

Eligibility—To participate in the NCLA Leadership Institute you must be (1) a member of NCLA and (2) currently employed by a North Carolina library. Preference will be given to those who have worked in a library for 15 years or less; however, all interested librarians and library staff are encouraged to apply.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.nclaonline.org/leadership-institute/leadership-institute-call-applications>