
MARCH 2023 | SPECIAL EDITION

PLAIN SPEAKING

CENTRAL PLAINS LIBRARY SYSTEM NEWSLETTER

Educate | Connect | Inspire



Let's All Go to Kansas!

The Association for Rural and Small Libraries holds a conference each year in the fall. This conference is THE premiere conference for rural and small library professionals, advocates, and supporters. The conference planners and presenters understand the constraints of shoestring budgets, small spaces, and limited staffing within small and rural libraries, as well as the unique opportunities for innovation and collaboration. This conference is packed full of information you can take right back to your library—no scaling down required.

This unique conference is designed with practicality and the understanding that professional development and networking are essential parts of your success. Topics include programming, fundraising, working with boards, keeping up with technology, and much more!

In September 2022 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Conference Highlights included:

- 5 Preconference Workshops which offered attendees the opportunity for in-depth exploration of important topics.
- 3 Keynote Events featuring a panel on book challenges and more.
- 80+ Sessions from experts and innovators in small and rural libraries across the country.
- Extracurricular Activities to get you out exploring the Conference City with new friends.
- Exhibit Hall packed full of nearly 60 library-related vendors offering giveaways, discounts, and exclusive opportunities for attendees.
- Five Meals included in your registration fee, plus refreshment breaks and receptions.

The 2023 ARSL Conference is being held in Wichita, Kansas, which is a short 4-hour drive from the CPLS System office. Make plans now! Let's all go to Kansas!!



Accessibility at Your Library: Conversations to Better Serve People with Disabilities

ARSL – Denise Harders, Director of CPLS

This session was a panel discussion with information about funding through ALA's *Libraries Transforming Communities* initiative. The funding is available to help small and rural libraries become more accessible. The application process completed on February 28, 2023.

Jessica Chamberlin, Library Director in Norfolk, Nebraska, was the first speaker. She talked about using the grant to provide a more welcoming environment for children with Sensory Processing Disorder. Families that need this often don't feel welcome in public places. Children who have SPD may overreact to sounds, clothing, and food textures. Due to this grant, Norfolk Public Library now has sensory-friendly movie screenings; activity kits that provide sensory fidgets, writing practice, and magnets among other things; and a selection of Wonderbooks.

The second speaker talked about her library that was in the same community as her state's school for the deaf. Prior to this initiative, the library staff rarely saw any students from the school for the deaf. This grant provided funding for library staff members to be educated in American Sign Language; accessible programs for Summer Reading, Teen Advisory Group, and Adult Programs; and story time for babies and toddlers who are deaf. The library plans activities for Deaf Awareness Month in September.

The third speaker is the library director in Alta Vista, Iowa, a town of 227 people. The library is open 20 hours per week. Their grant project focused on accessibility for seniors. They used the funding to install a door opener and to put in LED lights. They discovered that the door opener is used by more than the senior members of their community. It is also helpful for families with young children and others with either temporary or permanent mobility issues.

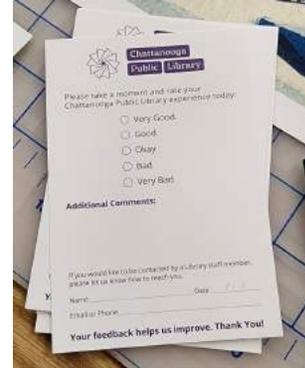


Chattanooga Public Library Tour

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office



The Chattanooga Public Library did not disappoint! It is a HUGE 4 story building. Right as you come in the door you are met with the "Circulation & Percolation Station where you can check out your books or grab a cup of coffee. I also noticed they ask for feedback from their patrons in several different ways.



The children's area is located on the 2nd floor. Right as you get off the elevator, you are met with this Tweens & Teens sign. If you are 18+ you are not allowed in the area unless you are with your minor child. What a great way to keep the area safe for kids! In the teen area they had a huge display box that served as an I Spy box. The staff refreshes the box every few months. They also offer Scavenger Hunts in 3 different difficulty levels to keep kids interested and engaged!



Chattanooga Public Library Tour

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office



The first night there, librarians were treated to Welcome Reception and a tour of the Chattanooga Public Library's Makerspace.

They put on an amazing spread of appetizers (like shrimp & ceviche) along with an open bar. It was amazing!

There were so many librarians there from all over the country.

They have everything there from passive programs like making Zines to a 3-D printer to vinyl for making T-shirts, a laser cutter, and even a huge loom to make tapestries.

Maker Menu	
Button Maker	
1" Pack of 25	\$1.50
1.75" Pack of 25	\$1.75
3D Printer	
Plastic Filament	\$0.10/gm
Vinyl Plotter	
15" Vinyl	\$0.50/ft
24" Vinyl	\$1.00/ft
24" Specialty Vinyl	\$2.00/ft
Heat Press Vinyl	\$2.00/ft
Sublimation	
1 sheet	\$5.00/ft
Large Format Printer	
24" Glossy Paper	\$3.00/ft
36" Matte Paper	\$2.00/ft
Poster Board	\$13.00
Poster Tube	\$2.00
Copies/Printing	
Color Copies	\$0.50/ea
Black & White Copies	\$0.10/ea
T-Shirts	
Gildan T-Shirts	\$2.00/ea
Bella Canvas T-Shirts	\$4.50/ea



They even had experience kits that they take out into the community for events like Origami & Quilling as well as ShrinkyDinks!



Chattanooga Public Library Tour

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

The Chattanooga Public Library is very forward thinking when it comes to their Seed Exchange program and their Home Gardner Excess Produce program. They keep all their seeds cataloged in an old card catalog cabinet.

Patrons just use their library card to "check out" the seeds, grow the plants, save the seeds, and return the dry labeled seeds back to the library for the next patrons to use. They even make it easy for patrons to use Hoopla to search for gardening books that will be helpful to them in their gardening endeavors!



I was really impressed that they have taken the initiative to accept donated, quality garden produce to share with those in need in the community! What a great way to give back to those in need and share the wealth so to speak!



Librarians Network at The Rabbit hOle

ALSC - Anne Price, Children's Librarian at North Platte Public Library



The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Institute featured authors and presenters from around the country focusing on lighting up the future. Some highlights were the Big Ideas Session with Dr. Nicole Cooke on Radically Re-envisioning LIS and initiatives that move us forward collectively thinking more broadly about the groups we serve and the groups that make up our staff. The Madison Public Library's Session Imagine That! Rethinking Play in the Library explored the concepts of true play and encouraging open, child-directed play in library settings.

The Institute also offered opportunities to network with librarians from around the country at The Rabbit hOle, Kansas City's emerging children's museum centered around youth literature, and at the Kansas City Public Library's Central Branch. Many librarians in attendance were from smaller and rural library systems, enough to fill an entire conference room for a discussion group on youth services in small and rural libraries. Brainstorming advocacy ideas and potential community partners for smaller communities, including extension offices, head start programs and state library coordinators.



Overall the conference was an incredible experience both for learning and affirming the importance of children's services in public libraries.

Attendance Renews Sense of Purpose

ARSL - Judy Hagan, Director of Atkinson Public Library

Thank you for the scholarship opportunity to attend the 2022 ARSL conference in Chattanooga, TN. The theme for the conference was “Connecting at the Crossroads: On Track to Real Change.” This was a great theme to help us as librarians lay down new tracks and to figure out what changes we would like to make in the library and our community. The best part about the conference was meeting up with other library professionals from other parts of the country to exchange ideas of programs that have worked in their libraries. To kick off the conference I attended the welcome reception at the Chattanooga Public Library. I toured their wonderful makerspace area and even designed my very own Chattanooga t-shirt with their Cricut machine.

Each day I attended the keynote speakers during breakfast and lunch, toured the vendor booths in the exhibit hall, and attended several training sessions. My favorite session at the conference was “The whys & how's of circulating kits” by Deanna Evans, Sanibel Public Youth Services Librarian from Cape Coral, Florida. She had great ideas on how to update and redo your backpack kits and to show pictures of the items inside each kit. This is an area that I knew I needed to work on, so now I have some great ideas to update the kits and to repackage some new kits for all ages.

This is the greatest conference to attend for any size library and I would definitely recommend it. My goal is to continue to attend conferences if I can receive a grant to help with expenses. The conference gave me a chance to renew my sense of purpose, connect with library professional peers, and bring back applicable ideas to the Atkinson Public Library.

Again thanks for the scholarship!



Retreat Teaches ASL for Story Times!

Joint Youth Services Retreat - Amanda Shelton, Director of Franklin Public Library

I attended the Youth Services Retreat in Ashland on September 1-1, 2022. I enjoy attending this conference so I can get ideas from books, to crafts, to projects that all pertain to the youth. I was very appreciated that there was makerspace technology available for us to try. One of my board members have been wanting us to get the Virtual Reality Headsets. I wasn't for sure how they worked and being able to test them, I knew we needed to get them. I was able to write a grant and receive the grant so our library will be getting them.

One of the sessions the lady talked about using ASL during story time. I have started teaching one word in sign language as well as Spanish. It is so fun to see the kids the following week knowing they remember how to sign that word from the week before.

One of the amazing things to do is to be able to talk and visit with other librarians and see what they are doing at their library. I like getting ideas on different programming they do at their library.

I hope they do every year; this is the one conference that I really enjoy and seem to get the most out of.

Attending Conference as a Group Provides Opportunity to Brainstorm Together

NLA - Missy Onate, Director of Gibbon Public Library

We are so thankful for the CPLS scholarships that we received to attend the NLA conference in Kearney! These scholarships allowed all three of our staff that work directly on the Summer Reading Program to participate. Some of our favorite sessions included Critical Hit! Tabletop Gaming in the Library and Sally's yearly book talk! We came back to Gibbon with so many program ideas that we can offer our community, not only this summer, but all year long! Having the opportunity to attend as a group also gave us the opportunity to brainstorm together during our breaks while sessions were fresh in our minds. We're already looking forward to next year!

Thank you, Central Plains Library System!

Missy, Gab and Annie
The Gibbon Public Library

Adapting What You Learn Leads to Benefits for Your Patrons

ARSL - Keri Anderson, Director of Hoesch Memorial Library (Alma)



I had the privilege of attending the ARSL (Association for Rural and Small Libraries) annual conference in September. I have attended this conference four years in a row, after attending my first one in 2013 in Omaha. In 2019 the conference was in Burlington, Vermont, followed by the on-line conference in 2020, scheduled for Wichita, Kansas. 2021 took the conference to Reno, Nevada, and then 2022 was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Receiving the CPLS scholarship helped me to be able to attend this year's conference, as we drove our personal vehicle – a round trip of 2,022 miles!

My favorite take-away of the ARSL Conference is networking with librarians from a wide variety of libraries/locations across the United States. And I am in awe of what other libraries have space-wise and in what they offer their patrons. In attending a variety of different sessions, and listening to the Keynote speakers each day, even though you may not have as much funding or space, by adapting what you hear about during many of the sessions, you can offer different opportunities for your patrons than you have thought possible. And as I am trying to implement new ideas, I feel will benefit our patrons, I want to thank the Nebraska Library Commission and our CPLS staff and Board for making attendance at this conference possible by providing scholarships and grants. I also appreciate all the ways CPLS helps us by providing workshops and resources that we can borrow for implementing new programming in our libraries.



What If We Don't All Read the Same Book

BYO Book Discussion

ARSL – Denise Harders, Director of CPLS

Book Clubs seem to be more popular now than they have been in recent history. There are many different types of Book Clubs...but what about BYO Book Discussions. Is it a good idea to get people together who have not read the same book? According to the presenters in a session at ARSL, the answer is yes.

The positive points include:

- All types of Book Clubs connect people.
- Busy people read whatever they like and discuss it with others.
- This type of Book Club involves very little preparation time for your staff.
- The discussions help develop a list of titles for Reader's Advisory.
- People seem to really like it.

Other non-traditional Book Clubs:

Short Stories

Banned Books

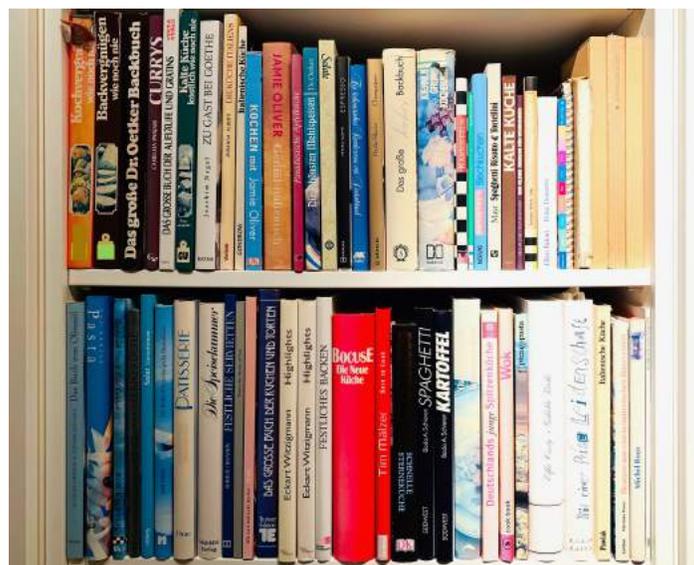
Books to Movies

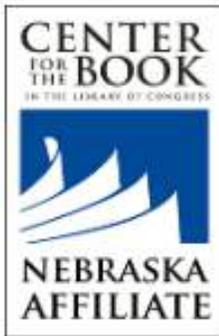
Cookbook Book Club (Go to <https://www.bookclubcookbook.com/> for lots of information)

Books in Bars

Walking Book Discussions

It was recommended that your Book Club remain smaller than 15 people. Any more than that, they tend to get unwieldy.





Nebraska Center for the Book: What's It All About

NLA – Denise Harders, Director of CPLS

This session focused on the variety of programs, events, contests and awards offered by this nonprofit organization that is based in the Nebraska Library Commission. The Nebraska Center for the Book brings together people who know and love books. They support programs that stimulate public interest in books, reading, and the written word.

Here are some of the programs that were presented:

Nebraska Letters About Literature

- Letters About Literature is a state reading and writing promotion program for students in grades 4-12. To enter, readers write a personal letter to an author, living or dead, from any genre—fiction, nonfiction, or poetry, contemporary or classic—explaining how that author's work changed the student's way of thinking about the world or themselves. The submission platform is from October 1st – December 31st.

One Book One Nebraska

- Starting each January, this program cultivates a culture of reading and discussion in our state. This program demonstrates how books and reading connect people across time and place. Each year, since 2005, Nebraska communities come together through literature in community-wide reading programs.

Celebration of Nebraska Books

- This event honors the winners of the Jane Geske Award and the Nebraska Book Awards. The October celebration is free and open to the public. The choice for the One Book One Nebraska for the following year is announced at the conclusion of the festivities.

Information provided here about the Nebraska Center for the Book is from the NLA Conference Presentation and <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/index.asp>.



Connect 4: Four Essential Partnerships for Small, Rural Libraries

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

Rural and small libraries face a wide range of challenges. Many are in locations that are off the beaten path with very little walk-in traffic. Yet, they serve large geographical areas that are quite distant from their own locations. Add to that trouble with consistent, reliable internet services to help spread the word about their programs and services. And finally, we have discovered that 2020 would bring many more challenges to our small libraries including the fact that people's habits had changed. They were more in the habit of staying at home than visiting the library and browsing the shelves for new books to read. What can be done to overcome these challenges?

In this session, attendees were encouraged to:

- Look at existing partnerships – are there ways to expand the relationship?
- Find other groups or organizations in a similar position.
- Consider any group that serve the same populations that you are trying to reach.
- Be willing to try a new role to support another group and grow the relationship.

Partnership #1 - Educational Entities (Schools, Headstart, Colleges)

- Stories
- Activities
- Book Check-outs
- Read-Across-America programs
- Book sets with book-based programs to go along with them
- Host Battle of the Book (BoB) competitions (Help purchase 5 copies for each of the schools and host the district BoB competition. For this program, we read the books alongside the students, helped prepare questions and kahoots, quizzed them on author and title matching, and helped them get accustomed to competition rules and format)

Partnership #2 - Other County Services

- Senior meal site visits
- Health Department
- Cooperative Extension Offices
- 4-H

Partnership #3 - Local Celebrities

- Artists
- Writers
- TV personalities (news)
- People in county government - mayor, firemen, police, chefs, vets, etc.

Partnership #4 - Non-Profits and Other Community Groups

- Animal Shelters
- Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts, Big Brothers & Big Sisters
- Art Museums
- Science Museums
- Parks & Rec

“How Can I Help You?” & Other Ways You’re Losing Patrons

ARSL – Denise Harders, Director of CPLS

This session was about customer service. They made several suggestions about how you could emphasize great customer service over everything else.

1. Always speak first, so that you define the attitude and terms.
2. Expand your idea of customer service.
3. Develop customer friendly policies.
4. Set expectations with your staff.

Customer service comes from promptness, politeness, professionalism, and personalization.

Here are things you should not say.

- “No.” or “I don’t know.”
- “I can’t”
- “That is our policy.”

Be aware of your body language.

- Good posture.
- Arms at your side.
- Don’t fidget or scratch.
- Turn and face directly.
- Make eye contact.
- Take notes.
- Smile, but don’t overdo it.
- No nose-crinkling.

Telephone Etiquette

- Answer phone with a smile.
- Minimize silence.
- Use a script to end every call with a question. “Did I answer your question?” “Is there anything else I can help you with today?”

Tech Kits Through the Mail

NLC Exhibit Hall – Denise Harders, Director of CPLS

Amanda Sweet, the Technology Innovation Librarian at the Nebraska Library Commission, has developed Tech Kits that can be borrowed. Here is a list of what they have:

- Oculus Quest 2 (up to 10 copies)
- Sphero BOLT Robot (up to 15 copies)
- Hummingbird Bit Premium (up to 15 copies)
- Finch 2.0 Robot (up to 15 copies)
- DJI Tello EDU Drone (up to 15 copies)
- Cue Robot w/ Blaster (up to 15 copies)
- Dash & Dot Robot Wonder Pack (up to 15 copies)
- Merge Cube AR (up to 15 copies)
- Ozobot Bit Robot (up to 8 copies)
- Snap Circuits Extreme (up to 8 copies)
- DSLR Camera Kit (up to 2 copies)
- Google Smart Home Devices (up to 5 copies)



If you want to try out any of these devices, go to <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/Tech/kits/kits.aspx>.



Marketing for Small Libraries

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

Libraries provide so much for their communities like physical spaces (computer labs, makerspaces, meeting rooms, etc.), programming (book clubs, STEM, game nights, family events, etc.), materials (books, audios, DVD's, hotspots, etc.), community needs (tax assistance, language classes, food pantries, Covid-19 tests, etc.) and digital spaces (e-books, audio books, magazines, databases, etc.). Yet, we are still confronted with questions like "There are still libraries?" **People don't know what they don't know.** It is our job to let them know what we have to offer through marketing: promoting, bragging, and branding your library. This can be done even if you have limited time, budget, and know-how!

What is Marketing?

Marketing is the process of getting people interested in your spaces, services, programs, materials, staff, resources, etc.

- Tradition: Newspaper, TV, Radio
- Print: Flyers, Brochures, Rack Cards, Newsletters
- Digital: Social Media, Website, E-Newsletters
- Other: Book Displays, Annual Reports, Presentations, School Visits, Elevator Pitches

What are your goals?

- Interact directly with community members
- Conduct Outreach to patrons who are unable to access your physical spaces
- Keep library relevant
- Demonstrate library's continued value
- Inform your community of upcoming events and programs

What can you reasonably start and sustain?

- Know that every person/every organization has a different capacity
- Know that you can't be everything everyone all the time

Three Easy Steps:

1. Market = Who are you trying to reach?
2. Message = What do you want to let them know?
3. Medium = How are you going to get the message to them?

Start small by getting into a routine:

- Find out what works and what doesn't
- If you miss an activity or even a whole week it's no big deal - try again next week

Create Marketing Habits:

- Take pictures of everything
- Don't compare yourself to others
- Connect your library to the community
- Be consistent
- Be flexible
- Keep it simple
- Have fun

Breaking Down Barriers with Seed Libraries & Community Gardens

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

Sensory gardens, seed libraries, and community gardens are growing in popularity across the country. When thinking of adding any of these to your library, check with the US Census in order to find out how many people are in your service area, along with the number of residents who are over 65 with disabilities, how many residents are in poverty, and how many live in apartments with limited space to grow their own food. Helping those in our communities who do not have the ability to grow their own food or have a garden is a public service that keeps on giving!

Garden Paths:

- Paved/smooth surface
- Wide enough for wheelchair turnability (ADA guidelines)
- Leveled & well drained
- Steps vs. ramps

Sensory Gardens (great for seniors, children & adults):

- Sound - windchimes, water fountains
- Eyes - Colorful flowers & leaves
- Smell - Lavendar, basil, rosemary, thyme, mints (very smelly)
- Touch - Soft plants (example: Lambs ear)

Outdoor Community Garden (raised beds/plots available for "lease" paid via volunteer hours).

Tools & Materials:

- Gloves
- Hand tools
- Shovels
- Watering Can
- Adaptive tools for those with disabilities
- left-handed scissors
- Hose that can be easily turned on
- Colored stakes to show which plants need watered

Seed Libraries:

- Displayed publicly
- Select Varieties (just native flowers, popular veggies, donated seeds, perennials)
- Seed of the Month (to highlight excess seeds & their information)
- Perennial plants (minimum upkeep, comes back each year=less work, seeds for library)



NLA's Up for the Challenge Conference

NLA - Jodie Peetz, Ord Public Schools K-12 Media Specialist

On October 6th, I was fortunate to attend the Nebraska Library Association "*Up for the Challenge*" conference in Kearney thanks to a generous scholarship from the Central Plains Library System. I was very excited to receive this stipend since I am new to my position. I am currently serving in my second year as the Ord Public Schools media specialist. I enjoyed the opening keynote by Alison Macrina. She spoke on the topic of intellectual freedom and social justice. It was nice to hear another perspective on this topic. As a new librarian, I am constantly making sure that I am inclusive of all types of literature. This speaker provided many reasons why we need to look through a neutral lens when choosing books for our collection.

My favorite session on the day was by Lane Gibson called Read the Rainbow: Serving the LGBTQ+ Community in Your Library. Lane gave a powerful talk on the basics of understanding what each of those letters mean and how to make the library a safe space for everyone. This is a topic that I do not have a lot of experience with, so I truly appreciated being able to ask questions in a nonjudgmental setting to gain understanding of this growing community. It was very helpful to hear what other school libraries are doing to support their students.

The exhibit hall had a lot of great vendors. I was lucky enough to take home a few new titles for our library. I love being able to physically preview books before I purchase them. I left this conference with a big smile and having gained knowledge in very controversial subjects. The library community is one of the greatest professions on earth and it was great to see so many of my friends and touch base with fellow colleagues in the school library program that I am enrolled in. Thanks again CPLS for making this possible.



...Pass It On

ARSL Exhibition Hall – Denise Harders, Director of CPLS

This information is valuable. To you – and other people. The Federal Trade Commission provides pre-made programming (i.e., videos, presentations, activities, and FREE handouts) about a variety of topics at <http://ftc.gov/PassItOn>. Here are just a few:

Charity Fraud
Home Repair Scams
Identity Theft
IRS Imposter Scams
Online Dating Scams
Work-at-Home Scams
You've Won Scams
And Many More

Go to <http://ftc.gov/bulkorder> and order as many fact sheets or bookmarks as you need (in English or Spanish).



Readers' Advisory 101 with LibraryReads

ARSL – Denise Harders, Director of CPLS

Do you struggle when asked to recommend a book for someone? LibraryReads proudly presents “Readers’ Advisory 101”. This 75-minute training session is aimed at library staff wanting an introduction (or a refresher!) on some of the primary Readers’ Advisory skills/tasks. More information on their [YouTube channel](#)!

The staff at LibraryReads has added a [new page of Resources](#) aimed specifically for readers’ advisory and collection development topics! They will be adding content on a regular basis.

Connected Libraries: Getting Creative with Mobile Devices

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

During the pandemic, libraries found out that access to mobile devices and to the internet was a challenge. Some households didn't even have access to one. Here is how one library helped solve that issue for their patrons.

Devices on a budget:

- Grants
- Federal" LSTA, CARES, ARPA, ECF
- State
- Local
- Community need - do you have a compelling story to tell

Things you may get for free:

- Free software when possible
- Upgrades
- No charges for unused hotspot data

Circulation before the pandemic:

- Long, complicated Mobile Device Agreement Form (scary)
- Patrons had to be:
 - 18+
 - Library card for 30 days minimum
 - No restrictions on library card

Circulation after the pandemic:

No agreement form or fines!

Available to anyone with a library card

Generally treated the same as any other item checkouts

Results? Zero difference in the rate of overdues or issues when compared to before the pandemic. But it resulted in much happier staff and patrons after the pandemic.

The library works with community partners (nonprofit, government, social service, health, school organizations, etc.) that has or knows of mobile device access needs in order to attain access for community members. This has led to happier patrons and community members, new partnerships within the community, new library users, and greater flexibility in the face of ongoing change.

Attending NLA Leaves Staff Feeling Refreshed & Ready to Tackle New Projects!

NLA - Macey Lackaff, Director of Rock County Public Library (Bassett)

I was able to attend the NLA conference that was held in Kearney, NE in October of 2022. This conference is always so much fun, brings so many new ideas to librarians and always leaves me feeling refreshed and ready to tackle new projects!

My coworker and I went down a day early so we could attend the pre session on disaster management of collections. This was a very fun session as it was hands-on, and we got a firsthand experience on how to handle certain situations. I hope our library never has to go through something like this, but now we do have some resources if it were to happen. Another session we found very informative was the session covering the first amendment. I had never heard of this happening before this session and could not believe it had actually taken place so close to home. Once we got back to the library, we did some staff training and feel comfortable on what to do if this happens in our library. This would be something we would have never become aware of if we did not attend the NLA conference.

Along with the awesome sessions I always enjoy just being able to network with other librarians. Everyone is filled with so many great ideas and different approaches to things. Being able to have some time just to discuss projects others are working on or how they would handle a certain situation always gives me so much confidence and assurance.



Our library greatly benefits from the scholarship CPLS provides to attend a continuing education event. While we try our best every year to attend the NLA conference, this scholarship proves to our county board and library board the importance of attending events like this and how there is support to help small libraries like us get there. We are so fortunate to be a recipient of this grant and cannot thank CPLS enough for all of the work they put into making libraries a better place!

Here is a picture of my coworker, Kim Ost, during the disaster training. She is working on restoring a document after it was covered in mud and filth.

"Your Brain's Synapsis are Firing Like Crazy"

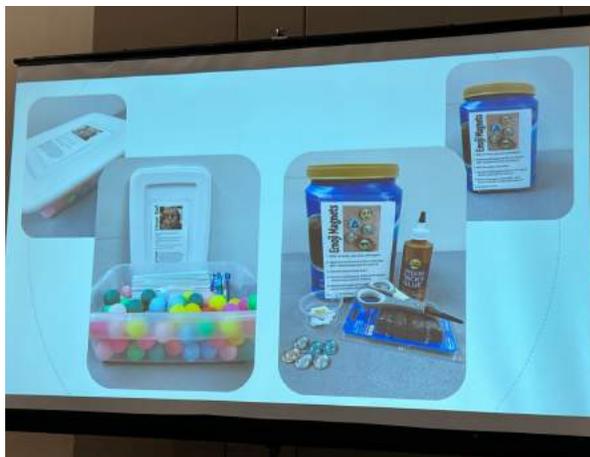
ARSL - Stephanie Branham, Director of C.B. Preston Memorial Library (Orleans)

I cannot talk about the Association for Rural and Small Libraries conference enough! This was my first time attending the ARSL Conference and I had such an amazing time. I don't know that I could find the words to describe the energy you feel when you enter the conference space, but it is like touching a live wire. From the start, you are surrounded by fellow librarians who are all just so excited to share and absorb knowledge. It's a fast-paced journey through a variety of different subjects, so by the time you are done at the conference, your brain's synapsis are firing like crazy. Although you leave physically exhausted and a bit overwhelmed... the weeks following the conference are almost as crazy as you process through all that you have learned. I loved the keynote speakers they had during meals but it was the breakout sessions that truly got me fired up!



One of my favorite break outs was The Dynamite Dozen. This session gave ideas on having pre-boxed up crafts and STREAM projects ready to pull out on a moment's notice. The intent of these kits is for moments such as those random rainy days that pop up and your library is suddenly flooded with kids.... You quickly have a project to pull out to keep them entertained and learning!

There were a LOT of breakouts to choose from and some of the sessions were really hard to choose between. I wished I was able to attend all of the breakout sessions and could have stayed for weeks just learning and networking with other librarians. Sadly, they had to limit how many sessions they could offer and so in the end you had to miss some presentations that also sounded interesting. However, the ARSL conference takes advantage of a program called Whoova so you can not only access the slides of the presentations you attended but also review those that you had to miss!!!!



I am so grateful that I was able to attend this year's conference. I am very thankful for the scholarships I received in order to attend. I highly recommend the ARSL conference for anyone looking to reignite that fire that got them started in the library or for those who are just looking for new ideas... Trust me, no one went home without a ton of new or different ways to do things in their own library.

Treasure Hunting: Asset Mapping Your Community

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

This topic intrigued me with the title, so I had to check it out to see what it was all about. Asset Mapping is finding local assets which serve as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development. It is acknowledging that everyone has gifts, that relationships build better communities, and that at the center of it all is our citizens in the community. And it is bringing all of this information together into a map of the community so you know where to turn for certain skills or gifts.

Why should you map assets?

- Appreciate and **celebrate the gifts** that exist in the community
- Find **potential partners** with common goals
- Align library resources with what **residents find meaningful**
- **Avoid duplicating** what others are already doing well

What is Asset Mapping?

Taking the gifts, skills, and capacities that can be shared with the community

- People - Gifts, skills and capacities
- Associations - Groups of people with common interests
- Institutions - Professional groups of people
- Physical Resources - Parks, Recreation Area, Hiking Trails

Characteristics of a Good Asset Map:

- Highlights what's meaningful to people in the community
- Sparks new ideas for connection
- Easy to update (online GIS Tool vs paper)
- Easy to share

How do we do this?

1. Set the boundaries
2. Form a team (more people, more perspectives)
3. Identify assets in the community
4. Make the map
5. Take action and share

A resource to help get the ball rolling can be found [here!](#)

NLA Conference Prepares Library for 1st Amendment Audits

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Nebraska Library Association for all your hard work and months of planning so everyone has the opportunity to attend the conferences for continued education, and also for providing help with funds making it possible to be able to attend these functions.

My boss and I attended the conference at Kearney. It is so nice to meet other librarians from many different locations both big and small. Just being able to listen to other librarians' views on ways to improve relations with the community and issues that they are dealing with as well, is uplifting and educational.

At this conference, we attended a class on first amendment audits. If it weren't for this class, we would have had no idea of some of the problems libraries were facing and how to deal with those issues properly. Macey and I practiced some scenarios to better prepare ourselves just in case we were to experience this auditing situation. We are definitely learning just because we are a small town library, doesn't mean we're exempt from some of these topics.

The Keynote speaker Dr. Ferial Pearson was an amazing speaker. She opened my eyes to a world of diversities that I had no idea even existed. Her speech was both educational and very touching. She was a joy to listen to.

Another class I attended was about expanding health education in libraries. This class taught me the tools to better assist patrons who can benefit from the right sources to get the educational help they need. Making sure they get the proper resources can be life-saving. Since our community is mainly elderly-based, this class was very fitting for our library.

In closing, these conferences are so beneficial in so many ways. Every chance I get to tell others about all the fun and educational material we learn, I do pass it on to others. Thank you again, for all you do to give us libraries a great experience to learn and get together.

Much Appreciated,

Kim Ost, Assistant Director at Rock County Public Library (Bassett)

Engaging Beyond Our Walls: Libraries as Hubs for Making Neighborhood Games & Outdoor Story Telling

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

Beyond Our Walls (in partnership with IMLS) is responsible for recruiting 25+ libraries to become hubs for making neighborhood games and interactive stories using local history and landmarks. Their goal is to increase the voice of residents in telling interactive stories, especially tied to local history and the public good. Community members can learn about a local sculpture by texting it or take an audio tour or a story walk using a cell phone. Through the use of their tool, called Hive Mechanic, they empower anyone to create outdoor and immersive experiences for ordinary phones — no coding or programming skill required. They extend what libraries are already doing — including outdoor “story walks” that surged in popularity at libraries and public history projects with digital media. Their approach is based on successful installations with the DC Public Library (DCPL), the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, and neighborhood cultural centers.

Grant recipients receive:

- \$300 for supplies – including materials, text messaging access, etc.
- \$150 stipend for training – one person at each library (or a motivated patron) can receive this stipend for their time spent in more in-depth training (optional)
- Turn-key templates to tell your local stories in just 30 minutes.
- Patrons can publish 1-10+ games or stories. We host all technology for you.
- Built-in workshops and experiences for your patrons, led by the pioneering Game Center of American University.
- Participate in our peer innovators network of 25 leading library innovators.

For more information regarding this unique opportunity, please visit [Beyond Our Walls](#).



Everyone is a Maker, Even You!

ARSL - Autumn Carlson, CPLS Office

Makerspaces offer open-ended activities, and access to learn, explore, collaborate, and share. Libraries are the perfect setting for this since their mission is to support a community of lifelong learners.

What are Makers?

- Curious
- Playful
- Hands-on learners
- Resourceful
- Self-directed
- Persistent and learn from failure
- Collaborative and learn from others
- Willing to share ideas
- Problem solvers
- Focused on process more than finished product
- Open to the unexpected
- Comfortable with "not knowing"

Myths of Makerspaces & Making:

- Must be high tech
- Crafts don't count
- Must be a dedicated space
- You must be an expert

What qualifies as a Makerspace:

- Multi-use space
- Dedicated space
- Community events
- Maker Box program (kit they can check out to take home)
- Virtual program
- Take & Make program
- Outreach programs offsite

A free toolkit is available to help those who have limited staff, space, and budgets that are preventing their library from creating a makerspace. You can get your free copy [here](#). Makers in the Library also has a facebook group and offers FREE webinars!

Mark Your Calendars....



ALA Conference 2023
Chicago, IL
June 22 - 27, 2023

Joint Youth Services Retreat
Ashland, NE
August 31 - September 1, 2023

ARSL Conference 2023
Wichita, KS
September 20 - 23, 2023



CPLS Biennial Conference
"Tools of the Trade"
Kearney, NE
October 19, 2023



A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Public Library Association (PLA)
Columbus, OH
April 3 - 6, 2024

ALSC 2024 National Institute
Denver, Colorado
September 19 - 21, 2024



A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



NLA Conference 2024
Kearney, NE
October 9 - 10, 2024



CPLS HAS SCHOLARSHIP MONEY AVAILABLE!

Many of you may be looking forward to a new year and new opportunities to attend events such as the ALA Annual Conference, the Joint Youth Services Retreat, the ARSL Conference, or other training opportunities that come up during the next year. The System can help! We have money available for you!

CPLS can award up to \$200.00 per event in Nebraska and \$300 for out-of-state events. These funds are available to help cover expenses such as registration, mileage, meals, etc. Only one scholarship per person per fiscal year (July - June). Each Library Agency shall be limited to two scholarships per year.

Name _____

Library _____

Event _____

Date of event _____

Scholarship requested for _____ (meal, room, etc.)

Amount requested _____

Who should the check be made out to _____

Other information: _____

Send your request to: Central Plains Library System
2727 W. 2nd Street #233
Hastings, NE 68901

NLC GRANTS FOR CONFERENCE IN WICHITA!



The Nebraska Library Commission is offering forty grants to attend the Association for Rural and Small Libraries Annual Conference on September 20-23, 2023. This conference is being held in Wichita, Kansas. It is amazing to have the conference for a national organization close enough to drive!

The forty grants will be a flat \$500 for you to use as necessary to attend the conference. This round of grants will open up sometime in March. Watch this webpage to see when they are available. Don't sleep on this opportunity. You may get the NLC grant of \$500 and also the Central Plains Library System scholarship for \$300. That will nearly take care of all the expenses of going to Wichita. See you in Kansas!

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