

LEARN Minutes – August 14, 2007

In Attendance:

1. Kate Mallon (Wheaton)
2. Kathy Strange (Clarendon Hills)
3. Debra Kakuk (College of Dupage)
4. Ann Weaver (Westchester)
5. Karen Neal (Downers Grove)
6. RoseAnn Vonesh (Oak Park)
7. Susan McNeil-Marshall (Woodridge)
8. Sr. Marybeth McDermott (School on Wheels)
9. Joe Popowitch (Indian Prairie)

Introductions

Kathy Strange from Clarendon Hills Library attended the meeting. She described her library's population as being predominantly white with a small number of Asian residents. Because the library is so small, there are extreme space limitations. Their "ESL collection" takes up about half a shelf. She will check with the library director but thinks it might be beneficial for Clarendon Hills Library to join LEARN.

Reviewed January Minutes/Miscellaneous

1. Literacy in Action DuPage has moved to Bensenville Bible Church, 280 S. York Road, Bensenville, IL 60106. Mary Becerra is the new contact person at 708-562-5603.
2. There was a recent article in the *Chicago Tribune* about World Relief in Wheaton. Kate Mallon said that Wheaton library is often inundated with ESL students near the end of World Relief's class schedule because the grants which World Relief receives often require that students visit a public library. Teachers often wait until the last days to bring in students.
3. **Library Cards**
 - Wheaton Library has special library cards which allow people who live in unincorporated areas to only check out ESL/Literacy materials. The cards remain at the library.
 - Glen Ellyn library offers 30-day cards for the summer.
 - College of Dupage cards are available free to anyone who lives or **works** in the district. So, although COD does not Interlibrary loan audiovisual materials, patrons could go to COD to check them out directly.
4. **Marketing to Teachers** – Ann Weaver described meeting with teachers at Proviso West High School and how many were not very familiar with using the Internet and searching library databases. It is difficult to arrange meetings with teachers due to their busy schedules (meetings, classes, etc.).

Marketing

1. **Marketing Letter**

- The letter Debra Kakuk prepared was discussed. Ann suggested adding the word “participating” in the second paragraph to clarify that our Web site has contact information for “participating libraries.”
 - The letter will be distributed through the following channels:
 - 1) Email the letter to the **local library systems**.
 - 2) Send to **churches**.
 - 3) Include on the new **MLS Reference Wiki**.
 - 4) Post to **RefList**.
 - 5) Distribute **to instructors at COD**.
 - 6) Distribute to **high schools**.
 - 7) Distribute **to instructors/tutors** for LEARN groups that help teach English.
 - 8) Distribute at other community locations where people are likely to see them (e.g. hospitals).
 - 9) We will re-issue the letter/brochure annually.
2. **Brochure** – Ann described the brochure which she created in Publisher. She thinks that the best way to distribute it among the members is to send a pdf file. It was suggested that we add a couple sentences to recruit members (e.g. Not a member yet?). Because September 8 is International Literacy Day, we hope to send the letter and brochure out before then.
3. **MLS Workshop** – It was suggested that we host an ESL workshop. This could involve a number of elements:
- Demonstrations of useful ESL Web sites.
 - Publishers or tutors (like Carol Larson from New Readers Press) could discuss ways to address ESL.
 - Assemble a panel of people to talk about tips and tricks (e.g. the color yellow means caution, so items labeled with yellow might be perceived by certain populations in a certain way).
 - Discuss ways to overcome barriers to communication (use PolyTalk interpreter service , keep an *Oxford Picture Dictionary* at the desk, etc.).

Web Site

1. “**Become a Volunteer**” was added as the third link on the LEARN Web site. The page for Become a Volunteer has direct links to the Web pages which discuss volunteering for School on Wheels, Literacy Volunteers of DuPage and Literacy Volunteers of Western Cook County.
2. Under “Join,” a third **questionnaire for educators** was added. The words “school” and “institution” will be used instead of the word “college” as the questionnaire will seek to recruit high school educators as well.
3. **Calendar** – I am trying to add more information to the calendar. I am adding the Literacy Volunteers of DuPage conversation group meetings for throughout DuPage. It was suggested that tutor training schedules also be added to the calendar.

4. **ESL Links** – Because Debra has created such a useful and comprehensive list of ESL sites, I will create direct links from the LEARN Web site page of ESL links to the COD site.

Miscellaneous/Tips

1. **Recruiting Volunteers** – Debra Kakuk suggested that when groups such as School on Wheels contact local colleges looking for volunteers that they specifically contact the Counseling and Advising Department. It was also noted that students applying to medical schools often must complete volunteer hours.
2. **Oak Park Pathfinder** – Roseann distributed a pathfinder: Adult Literacy Information and Resources. I will add a link to this pathfinder from Oak Park's entry on the Members page on the site.
3. **Rosetta Stone** – Indian Prairie just purchased *Rosetta Stone* levels I, II, III for learning English on CD-ROM (available to check out). Oak Park Library has *Rosetta Stone* available online remotely for its patrons. Wheaton is hopefully getting it online remotely, too.
4. **Instructional Methods** – Susan asked if anyone could identify the best method for teaching English. There are so many products available: do we really need to get all of them? (Susan had just recently been contacted by Richard Hodgkin of Video Language Products). Sr. Marybeth said that School on Wheels uses the Laubach method.
5. **ESL Sites** – Debra demonstrated several ESL links from CODs site.
 - **English Language Listening Lab** (<http://www.elllo.org/>) – Users listen to a story and then must answer questions in order to continue. It offers fun and useful listening practice.
 - **The New York Times Learning Network** (<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/>) - Current event stories, quizzes, crossword puzzles and other vocabulary and knowledge building resources for students, parents, and instructors. Includes geography. Great for vocabulary.
 - **Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary** (<http://www.m-w.com/>) - Provides a free online dictionary, thesaurus, audio pronunciations, Word of the Day, word games, and other English language resources. Key feature is that you can hear the pronunciation of the words.
6. **Computer Tutorials** – A good site for online computer tutorials is <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/Tutorials/>. Registration is required, but the tutorials are free.
7. **Federated Searching** – Federated searching (searching all the databases at once) is a work in progress at Oak Park as it turns out it will not work with all the databases. Indian Prairie and other libraries should have this capability soon.
8. **Patron Incentives** – I mentioned that Indian Prairie was thinking of using incentives to promote the ESL collection. For instance, receive coupons for free Rental book checkout for every referral of an ESL student to use the new software on the Literacy Computer. Ann mentioned that Westchester has offered to add money to patrons' printing accounts as an incentive for various things. Another incentive possibility would be the reduction of fines.

9. **Job Searching** – The advanced search for www.chicagojobs.com allows searching job postings for all the newspapers in the Chicago area simultaneously. It also includes a “smart” search so that abbreviated words are also searched spelled out (e.g. a search for “tech” would also retrieve listing with “technician”).
10. **Share Job Searching Sites** – Please let Debra Kakuk know if you find sites suitable for ESL students (i.e. easy to navigate and use with limited English skills or perhaps one that allows for multiple languages).
11. **Tumble Books** – Roseann pointed out that the site for www.tumblebooks.com, to which Oak Park has a subscription, is a good way to hear books spoken aloud (though it is geared for children).
12. **“We Read” Books** – Debra discussed the benefits of “We Read” books – durable pages, brightly-colored pictures.
13. **Stand Out Basic** – School on Wheels is using the *Stand Out Basic* series for teaching while the tutors trained in the past are still using the Laubach method.

Next Meeting

At Wheaton Library in January, 2008. Time and date to be determined.