

# Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

December 6, 2017

6:30-8:00 pm

Rockville Memorial Library

Notes

## **Attendees**

Debbie Brown, Jonina Duker, Steven Frank, Rita Gale, Francie Gilman, Jill Lewis, Monica Martinez, Dennis Pillsbury, Kathleen Reedy

## **Introductions**

After committee members introduced themselves, a brief discussion was held about the most effective way to publicize the committee's recent award, the Eleanor Ablard Award for community service. The county online information blogspot, *Paperless Airplane*, was mentioned as a promising venue.

## **Library Update**

Homebound Services

Rita Gale presented the library update and explained that Elizabeth Lang was unable to attend tonight's meeting because of illness. Rita described Elizabeth's work updating the library system's important homebound service program. Initially the revamped service will be a pilot program through the end of June (fiscal year). Renamed "Books at Home," information about the service as well as an online application form will be available on the library system's website. Individuals registered for the service will receive and return books through the U.S. Postal Service, free of charge. Books will arrive at the person's home in existing mail bags with a mailing label containing the person's address on one side and the library address on the other. When a book is ready to be returned to the library, the recipient turns the mailing label over and mails the book back to the library. Books will be sent library (book) rate. Guidelines specify that a certain number of books will be sent to an individual monthly (although this number can be changed). Initially, indi-

viduals will be limited to twenty books per month. The books sent will be chosen through the individual's perusal of the catalog or through discussions with a staff member. Once chosen, the books will be placed on hold for the individual, and each branch library will have a special place for the holds to reside. Staff will pull the books to be sent from the hold area. All individuals using the service will have a current library card. "Books at Home" also presents an opportunity for staff to market e-books, in case that would be useful to the individuals using the revamped service. There are twenty-four individuals currently on the "Books at Home" waiting list. To insure that the service gets off to a good start, Elizabeth will make presentations to library managers and other groups. AAC members asked about the "Books at Home" staff time commitment at each branch. It is estimated that branch staff would need to spend approximately fifteen minutes per week, not be a huge time commitment. Although each branch will have a staff point person to be the initial contact person for an individual using the service, any staff member in a branch should be able to assist with the service after the initial contact with the user is made.

AAC members recommend that substitute library staff receive "Books at Home" training. Dennis Pillsbury asked how the initial online application will work. Rita explained that a physician will certify that an individual is unable to come to the library to obtain books. Jonina Duker asked if this service would be available for a temporary inability to come to the library. Yes. AAC members recommend that the application be tested for accessibility before "Books at Home" commences. Jonina suggested sending a plastic magnifier with the books as a good marketing tool. The magnifier could include the library logo and contact information.

### Refresh Projects

Quince Orchard Library will reopen on December 16<sup>th</sup> of this year, and Bethesda and White Oak will reopen in the spring of 2018. Jonina recommended that all elevators be in working condition before a refreshed branch reopens, and the AAC members agree. Dennis explained that every branch library has had accessibility issues and described a Department of Justice survey of county buildings. The survey detailed the accessibility deficiencies in each branch library. Libraries are working on fixing the deficiencies but not all are completed. Elizabeth will provide further information on the refresh projects and accessibility at the next meeting.

## **Program Discussion**

Rita discussed the importance of finding out who the audience is for a particular program. She asked AAC members to think about whether the program audience is the public or a specific segment of library users. The target audience will define the program location and marketing. Where a program is held can be critically linked to a particular branch population. In terms of program evaluation, the number of program attendees is important but equally important is the program value or benefit to the attendees, even if it is a small number of attendees.

Programming is an essential focus for Elizabeth. With Monica Martinez' assistance she has already begun to detail the important aspects of sensory story time programs for children with autism. As they plan sensory story times, Elizabeth and Monica answer such questions as the following: what sort of manipulatives are helpful, would parents like to stay after the story time to talk/ share thoughts, what is the best seating for this audience— squishy comfortable carpet squares instead of ordinary carpet squares?

Elizabeth wrote a social story about coming to the Rockville Library, and Monica reviewed the story and made recommendations. Please see Monica's program priorities for a full explanation of a social story. The plan is for a similar social story to be written for each branch. Elizabeth and Monica will report on the progress of social stories at the March meeting.

Jill compiled a list of the AAC members' three program priority recommendations. For this meeting's discussion purposes she also compiled a condensed list which she read to members. Both the complete and the condensed lists are included as attachments to these notes but are "living" documents that can be altered at any time. AAC members should identify which priority program recommendation they (with their organizations) can begin to work into more detailed program proposals keeping in mind whether the program is to be a system-wide or branch-specific program. Francie proposed that committee members use the following program proposal template/format for uniformity: program title, program description in less than 50 words, program length, public program or specific audience.

Three AAC members are ready to discuss their program proposals with Mary Ellen, Elizabeth, and Rita. Monica has already begun work with Elizabeth, Debbie

will contact Elizabeth and Mary Ellen about her organization's proposal of a film showing to celebrate Louis Braille's birthday, and Francie and Cindy will put forward Independence Now's housing program proposal. A discussion on the best means to market programs for individuals with disabilities is an agenda item for the March meeting.

### Staff Training

The staff training discussion will be held at future meetings although AAC members should continue to look at the notes from the Potomac discussion and look at the staff training tip sheets compiled by the American Library Association. For future discussion, members should see if they (with their organizations) can update or revise any of the tip sheets that relate to their target communities.

### **Board report**

Kathleen discussed the successful November joint Friends of the Library/Library Board meeting, a highlight of which was the AAC's receipt of the Ablard award. A second award, the David Chiles Member(s) of the Year award was presented to the past chair of the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee. The meeting's featured speaker was Patrick Lacefield, Director of Public Information for the county, who gave useful information on strategies to publicize/market library information and events. A second joint meeting will be held on January 10, 2018 and will focus on advocacy issues and the development of advocacy tips. Kathleen stressed the importance of introducing library issues and needs at every upcoming county public meeting, especially the county executive's budget town hall-style meetings. Kathleen will make sure the AAC members receive full information about the upcoming meetings and advocacy strategies.

### **Recommendations**

- AAC members recommend that substitutes receive "Books at Home" training.
- AAC members recommend that the "Books at Home" application be tested for accessibility before the pilot commences.
- A plastic magnifier or other marketing tool could be sent with the "Books at Home" books.

- Elizabeth report on “Books at Home” progress at the March AAC meeting.
- All elevators be in working condition prior to the reopening of a refreshed branch.
- Elizabeth will provide further information on the refresh projects and accessibility at the next meeting.
- The AAC priority program topics list is a “living” document that can be altered by AAC members as they continue to discuss programming with their organizations.
- AAC members be cognizant of the intended program audience as they plan programs with their organizations. Determine if the intended program audience is all library users or a specific segment of library users. Determine how program success will be evaluated (number of attendees or benefit to a smaller audience).
- Elizabeth and Monica will report on the progress of the pilot sensory story time program.
- Debbie will work with Mary Ellen and Elizabeth to finalize a Louis Braille birthday celebration for January 2018 and report to the AAC.
- Francie and Cindy will present their housing program proposal to Mary Ellen and Elizabeth and report to the AAC.
- In addition to these three program proposals, other members will work with their organizations to refine program proposals to send to library administration.
- AAC members will look at the staff training tip sheets to see if one exists that they can update to fit the populations they serve.
- Kathleen will make sure the AAC members receive full information about the upcoming meetings and advocacy strategies.

### **Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting will be held in the third floor Board Room of the Rockville Memorial Library on Wednesday, March 7, 6:30-8:00 pm.