

Connie Morella LAC Meeting Minutes - 11/9/2022

Barbara Levine (LAC Chair), Kate Sweeney (Regional Manager), Jim Montgomery (Library Board Member), Colin Repetti (Secretary), Claudia Deane, Ellen Hungate (Head of Children's Services) present

It's very difficult to directly compare two libraries, particularly when they are of dramatically different sizes, as are Connie Morella and Little Falls. Because of the size and foot traffic, Little Falls can maintain regular operations with fewer staff members, and staff may spend less time doing direct service to customers at a desk, freeing them up for other tasks. At Connie Morella, it is generally better to have two staff on both the info and circulation desks; Little Falls can generally operate with just one, though having a separate children's desk does increase the complexity.

Programming

- Toddler Story Times restarted October 18, Tuesdays at 11-11:30am
- Lego Duplo programming restarted October 26, Wednesdays at 4pm
- Regular adult programming (book clubs, etc.) happened as usual
- Programming for understanding Medicare options recently
- Next to tackle is teen programming, haven't started that yet

There was an issue with the public restrooms, it appears to be resolved now per the plumber who came

Other projects

- Test kits and mask distribution continuing
 - Ebb and flow in demand, seems to be up right now
- Connie Morella was an election site yesterday

Minutes:

- Some changes were made to the minutes
- Voted and approved minutes from last meeting

Head of Children's Services update

- Ellen introduces herself to everyone
 - Was most recently working as a School Librarian in DC, previously in DCPL(?)
 - From Hyattsville, is a local
- Programming
 - Already mentioned Toddler's storytime and Lego Duplo
 - Wants to do other programs around once a month
 - Something to do the day after Thanksgiving, used to be a popular program

- People are reaching out to her with program ideas
- Increasing little by little to avoid staffing issues
- Barbara was at second Toddler storytime, says it was very well attended
 - Also attended Lego Duplo program today, asked if it needs to be Ellen supervising that or if other people could
 - Per Ellen, in theory someone else can supervise, volunteers supervised in the past
- Jim Montgomery asked if she's regional or just at this branch
 - Ellen is just in this branch
- Barbara recommends sending out information about programming on the BCC listserv
 - Barbara is happy to coordinate this with Ellen
 - Kate is unsure if this is something the branch is allowed to do or if this has to happen officially under Digital Strategies, but members of the public (see: LAC) can publicize events however they want
 - This is a grey area, will check with Digital Strategies to get clarification
- Discussion regarding fliers for events
 - Have to be somewhat limited due to environmental reasons
- Jim Montgomery mentions he is passionate about childhood literacy (under 5)
 - Who usually brings children to Toddler storytime?
 - Per Ellen, some parents, some grandparents, doesn't have specifics
 - Jim asks if local childcare facilities bring children to these events
 - Per Ellen, not so far
 - Per Kate, childcare centers are always welcome but they can run out of space in which they would need to issue tickets to limit attendance
 - Per Jim, in the strategic plan, there is a goal to reach out to underserved communities and ensure they know about all the programs available to them
 - Most people don't know about these programs
 - Marc Elrich's number one goal was initially early childhood literacy
 - Now Marc Elrich has sent out a press release regarding the strategic plan, how do we take this opportunity?
 - Kate Sweeney mentions there are system-wide efforts to improve outreach

Jim's Report

- Last meeting was the joint meeting with the Friends of the Library to kick off the budget cycle
 - The budget cycle really starts next week when the County Executive holds his first budget forum

- He gives a snapshot of the current county and state financial outlook, then opens things up to everyone in attendance to make a comment or ask a question
- There will be 8 across the County through September, done before Christmas, one will be in Spanish and one will be in Chinese
 - We would like to have at least one person present at each, ideally more
 - First one will be the Spanish language one, the BCC forum will be on December 14, 2022
 - [Here is a link with all the dates](#)
- Jim Montgomery likes to go to every one of these, gives a great education on the current outlook of the County and helps people in advocacy figure out what to ask for
- The strategic plan seeks to reach out to underserved communities while keeping services running
 - To Jim and the folks at the joint meeting, that means staffing (ideally should be enhanced)
- Will be doing another joint meeting in January to see where things stand
 - Jim would like the next meeting to be more participatory

Chair's Report

- Barbara has a draft letter to be sent to Marc Elrich
- Claudia wonders if MCPL is a star library, three counties in MD are per a Library Journal article
 - No we are not
 - Howard, Harford and Carroll are star libraries
 - It appears this is mostly determined through statistics, like per capita usage and portion of the budget(?)
 - Kate is going to send us the article
- Would love to have some children's programming on the weekend
- Are there other material things needed? (like chairs for storytime)
 - Per Kate, no and if they did they could likely go to the FOL