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Announcements

On Monday, February 8, 2010 the **Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Library System**, and the **Board of LIMRiCC** will meet. The LIMRiCC meeting will convene at 5:30 p.m., the MLS Board meeting immediately following. Meeting agendas can be found at <http://www.mls.lib.il.us/board>. Both meetings will be held at the MLS Burr Ridge office located at 125 Tower Dr., Burr Ridge, Illinois.

The **MLS Legislative Breakfast** will be held on President's Day, Monday, February 15, 2010 at the MLS Burr Ridge office. MLS is seeking stories on how your library and your community have been impacted by the system. These stories will be shared with legislators at the breakfast. If you have a story contact the MLS Consultants at consultants@mls.lib.il.us. Register by February 10, 2010 for the breakfast at <http://www.librarylearning.info/events/?eventID=9241>.

The spring **MLS New Member Orientation** for new library staff will take place Thursday, May 6, 2010, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the MLS Burr Ridge office. Tour our suburban office and meet the faces behind Resource Sharing, SWAN, Consulting, and more. You'll gain a better understanding of Illinois library systems and learn what MLS can do for you. Register at <http://www.librarylearning.info/events/?eventID=9516>.

MLS congratulates the **A.C. Buehler Library at Elmhurst College as a recipient of an ACRL 2010 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award** (<http://library.elmhurst.edu>). The library was selected for the award for its "its strategic planning initiatives and focus on student engagement."

MLS is offering a **group discount on the "Tell Me More" language learning product**. See flyer at <http://www.mls.lib.il.us/consulting/pdf/TellMeMoreLanguageProductFlyer.pdf> for complete product details. This purchase is available to Academic, Public, and School libraries. Pricing is based on FTE or registered card holders, depending on your institution type. For pricing, contact Gretel Stock-Kupperman at stockg@mls.lib.il.us. Public libraries interested in the "BYKI" Recorded Books language product may also contact Gretel for

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pricing.

The Library System Standards Committee has released the first complete draft of the revised **Illinois Library Standards** for review and comment. The draft is available on the Library System Standards blog at <http://illibrarysystemstandards.wordpress.com>. Please review and provide your feedback on the blog.

[[Permalink](#)]

How MLS School Librarians Communicate their Value

Two certified school librarians from Westmont School District 201 share the impact they have on their school communities as well as provide tips on how other school librarians can communicate their value to administration.

[[Permalink](#)]

[Read full article](#)

http://www.mls.lib.il.us/enounce/2010/04_03/schoollibrariesvalue.asp

Continuing Education Events

Have you recently attended a program at MLS? We'd love to hear from you! You will receive an email after each event with a link to our online evaluation. Did you miss the email? You can now go to "My Events" on L2 and find links to evaluations for each workshop you attended. Log-in to your account in L2, click on your name in the top right, and then click on "My Events" located in the left side navigation. For assistance contact CE Manger Yvonne Riley at RileyY@mls.lib.il.us.

[Copyright for Special Libraries](#), Adam Bennington and Nancy Maloney, Tuesday, February 16, 2010, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., MLS Chicago

[21 Ideas for 21st Century Libraries](#), Kim Bolan and Rob Cullin, Tuesday, February 23, 2010, 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., MLS Burr Ridge

[Wayfinding and Signage in Libraries](#), Kim Bolan, Tuesday, February 23, 2010, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., MLS Burr Ridge

[South Suburban Adult Programmers \(SSAP\) Meeting](#), Friday, February 26, 2010, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Lansing Public Library

[New & Emerging Technologies](#), Benny McCann, Wednesday, March 3, 2010, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., MLS Chicago

[MLS New Librarians Group: Surviving Your First Years as a School Media Specialist](#), Wednesday, March 31, 2010, 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., MLS Burr Ridge

For more information and to register, visit the MLS CE Calendar at <http://www.librarylearning.info/?LibSys=MLS>.

[[Permalink](#)]

Grants & Awards

ALA announced the continuation of its \$750,000 two-year grant **"The American Dream Starts @ your library"** funded by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. This new round of funding will help 70 public libraries in Dollar General communities expand their literacy services for adult

English language learners. To be eligible, the applicant institution must be a public library or a public library with a bookmobile providing literacy services for adult English language learners, and must be within 20 miles of a Dollar General Store, distribution center, or corporate office. Each funded library will receive a onetime \$5,000 grant. Applications are being accepted online through February 28, 2010. To learn more and to apply, visit

www.americandreamtoolkit.org.

[[Permalink](#)]

Member Spotlight: River Forest Public Library, Sneezle Packs

The River Forest Public Library supports its community's needs in times of health and illness, through a unique service called Sneezle Packs. Learn how a simple reader's advisory reference interview can lift a sick kid's spirits and bring a bit of ease to their caregivers.

[[Permalink](#)]

[Read full article](#)

http://www.mls.lib.il.us/enounce/2010/04_03/riverforestsneezlepacks.asp

Next Issue

The next issue of *MLS E-nnounce* will appear February 17, 2010.

[[Permalink](#)]

How MLS School Librarians Communicate their Value

by Christina Stoll, MLS Library Services Consultant, Michelle L. Torrise, Library Media Specialist, Westmont High School, and Kristin Pergande, C.E. Miller Elementary School, CUSD201, Westmont, IL

The article "*The Future of Libraries: What roles are your media center and media specialist playing in helping your students navigate the Age of Information*", by Lawrence Hardy in the January 2010 issue of American School Board Journal (www.asbj.com), is one not to be overlooked by school librarians.

The heart of the article speaks loud and clear:

"Students have more information at their disposal than ever before...In fact, researchers say, students' seemingly innate facility with new technology belies a widespread naiveté regarding the abundance of information they're retrieving – its accuracy, reliability, usefulness, and impartiality...And that is why many educators and advocates say that high-quality school libraries – staffed with certified librarians – are essential to the academic mission of successful schools."

Further the following school librarian's quote sings too true to what may happen within MLS school districts if not across the entire state.

"As schools are making tough budget choices, if the librarians aren't at the center of the school culture, they're on the cutting board,"

Facing this trend head-in, one suburban district within the MLS's membership captures and communicates the value of its school media program with great success. All School librarians are encouraged to take away at least one idea and make it your own way of communicating your value to your administration. You need to start communicating now on your value, so if a time comes that your library program is on the chopping block, you already have the numbers, the stories, and the supporters behind you.

Hardy's article ends with an ominous but hopeful statement from the same school librarian as above:

"Paradoxically, these challenges and opportunities make it both an unsettling and exciting time to be a school librarian. I am concerned that people won't recognize the opportunities, I think it's the best time, in the history of time, to be a librarian".

As you read the following two school librarians experiences, you hear the excitement from their students and partner teachers on how great librarians and libraries are. Be part of the excitement and tell your own story.

Westmont High School Library Media Center

The Library Media Center at Westmont High School (WHS) serves 532 students and is staffed by certified library media specialist Michelle Torrise and library aide Sue Hinckley. The media center is utilized during every period of the school day, often reaching full capacity on a regular basis.

The library media center labs and open space are used by:

- Teachers for classroom instruction that requires the use of technology
- IVHS and independent study students
- Library Media Specialist in providing information literacy and technology instruction
- Study hall students working on projects and research
- Staff professional development or planning
- Guidance counselor meetings or career counseling with students
- Administration for MAP testing
- Students for club meetings, studying, interacting, reading, research

- Students and staff for after school learning lounge

Michelle's role as certified media specialist is to provide resources and services to students and staff that support student achievement as defined by the curricular goals of the school and district. Her primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Library management and oversight
- Collection and program development
- Professional development and technical support
- Leadership in technology integration
- Information literacy instruction
- Student engagement in reading and critical thinking

Library aide Sue Hinckley plays a critical role reinforcing policies and assisting students, when Michelle is providing instruction outside of the library media center or collaborating with other teachers. In addition, both Sue and Michelle work closely with regular and special education teachers, the reading specialist, technology department staff, other district librarians, parents, and students in collaborating towards the common goal of supporting student achievement.

Nancy Bartosz, Assistant Principal at WHS shares her own observations on the value that the library and library staff bring to the entire school:

"The media center is a hub of scholarly activities focused on research, literacy, and technology integration. Collaboration with the media specialist provides our staff with ongoing opportunities for individualized professional development, support for curriculum enhancement, and an understanding of new ways to share their content-area material in ways that inspire students. As a school administrator, I rely on the library media specialist to maintain our momentum on school improvement and support an innovative professional learning climate."

As the certified library media specialist Michelle also provides leadership in technology integration and instruction, linked to state standards, by designing and implementing a model for integrating technology that can be utilized across content areas. For example last semester she worked with the freshman English team to design a fully integrated digital storytelling unit. This semester the students will have the opportunity to use the skills they learned to create public service announcements for their health class.

WHS administration is fully aware of Michelle's impact on the school, as Bartosz continues

"As a media specialist, Michelle has enhanced our school-wide academic climate by effectively developing "systems" that work for our students. Her collaboration with teachers provides opportunities to build connections between classroom learning and "real-life" research skills. Michelle's enthusiasm is contagious. She finds ways to invite students into the media center while maintaining high expectations for learning. Michelle has invested herself in our school community in many ways by attending field trips, working with our public library, and getting students involved in library programming. Her investment in our students reaps positive rewards and shows the value of effective leadership in the library media center."

The WHS teachers are also appreciative of having a specialized media specialist at their school:

"Having a Library Media Specialist is an invaluable asset. We collaborate on a regular basis and on a variety of issues. It brings a more well-rounded approach to curriculum planning," states Freshman English Team, Jamie A. Mahmoud.

Communicating the library staff's and the library program's value back to administration is done by a process of collecting data, which also aids the library staff in identifying the needs of the school community, evaluate existing programs, and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

On a daily basis data is collected by the library staff on the number of:

- Students visiting the media center and the reason for their visit.
- Classroom groups using the space and the reason for their visit
- Classes taught by the library media specialist
- Tech support service requests we complete, (i.e., what, when, and where)

- Student interventions and supports provided
- Books circulated

This process includes when students sign in to provide their name, the class period, and the subject they will be working on. Teachers are asked to provide their class name and number of students. This information is used to ensure that the media center has the ample resources available at times when they are needed most.

Furthermore, by looking at the reasons why teachers and students use the media center, the library staff can identify new opportunities for adding services, for getting rid of services that are no longer utilized, and for further collaboration in instruction. The data is also used to demonstrate the value of the library media program and where it is having the most impact.

Communicating information regarding the school library media center program is critical in raising awareness of the value of our program to the school community. Michelle communicates information on her school's library program in a variety of ways including:

- Monthly reporting to the administrative team that include a summary data points and a write-up of program highlights and new initiatives.
- Focused communications to my principal and assistant principal via email on specific project goals, objectives and assessments.
- Sharing information on library programs and services with teachers through her library blog and collaborating with teachers through her library wiki.
- Sharing curriculum related resources and monthly reporting with all district staff on the district wiki.
- Providing periodic reports to staff on the evaluation of services provided by the library media center.
- Giving annual feedback on collaboration efforts to all teachers and staff.
- Displaying certain data points in the library media center to share information with students and staff and promote our programs, as seen on her school's blog page at <http://www.cusd201.org/srhigh/staff/mtorrise/?itemid=3496#3zS4kzCBwpa1>.

One message that Michelle would share with other school media specialists is to go beyond a simple list of the services your school library provides. She feels it's critical to include hard numbers on the use and effectiveness of programming in evaluating library media programs and substantiating the value of those programs to the school community.

C.E. Miller Elementary School Library Media Center

C.E. Miller Elementary School serves 225 students in grades K-Fifth. Since 2008, the school library has been staffed by certified library media specialist Kristin Pergande. At the time of her hire, technology education and the library program were fused to create an information literacy approach to learning in which students explore literature, learn information seeking strategies, hone research skills, and evaluate their learning.

Each class visits the library twice a week for forty minute periods. One visit is dedicated to check-out and shared reading, while the other period is tied to the students' curricular studies. By using the classroom curriculum to practice skills such as research, note taking, evaluation of resources, and multimedia presentations students see a clear connection between the library program and their classroom studies, as well as an authentic use of valuable technological tools.

As a certified reading specialist, Kristin includes much instruction in reading strategies, genre, story structure, and vocabulary in her daily lessons which reinforces and supports classroom instruction as well as district initiatives.

The library program also includes regular connections outside of the school from author visits to guest speakers on topics from dance to Monarch butterflies. These programs provide valuable experiences for students, an opportunity to establish relationships with community members and to invite community members to learn more about Miller's library program.

Evidence of Kristin's success can be seen through anecdotal comments which staff members, students, and parents have made:

- A fifth grade teacher reported he had “never had a class that was as excited about reading or that did more independent reading. The kids are reading books, talking about books, and trading books with one another.”
- The parent of a kindergartner remarked how pleased she was that her daughter was able to check-out books from the library and that this was the highlight of Kindergarten for her daughter.
- A first grade student, who is a frequent library visitor, told Kristin, “I love you because you let us take books from the library whenever we want.”

Moreover, students’ research skills have improved dramatically since Kristin implemented mini-lessons and guided practice on each of the steps outlined in the Big6 research model (www.big6.com).

School Principal Kelly L. Baas echoes the same appreciation for Kristin and what she means to the school as the certified school media specialist in her own thoughts:

“I am thrilled to have a library/media specialist in our building. Over the past two years that Kristin has worked here, she has done amazing things. I have seen great growth with the students and their motivation to read through the way she speaks to them about books. Kristin has also been able to help teachers integrate technology into their teaching and find ways to make their jobs easier. Her greatest asset is her ability to really listen to what students want in the library and to go out and find those books to share with them. She has also done a great job in helping support teachers with the research piece by developing lessons and organizers to help students when working on a research project.”

In addition to collecting comments, Kristin takes pictures to document activities, writes articles for the TribLocal, and posts to the school blog. She meets with classroom teachers on a regular basis to discuss curriculum and opportunities for collaborative units of study and ways to integrate the library and technology into existing curriculum and projects. She also assists classroom teachers with revamping existing projects or creating new ones; demonstrating how as the certified librarian she can lighten teacher workload while simultaneously improving student learning and reinforcing curriculum.

All of these efforts serve to inform teachers, administrators, parents, and community members about the changes and activities taking place in the Miller School Library.

Kristin feels it is important for professional library media specialists to advocate for their own library program. Educators and community members may not be completely familiar with the roles and responsibilities of library media specialists. To achieve this goal she prepares weekly reports that outline the many tasks she completes and these reports are sent to the school principal, the district superintendent and her counterpart at Manning Elementary School.

Kristin truly believes that no opportunity for advocacy is too small; any conversation a media specialist has with a parent, student, or staff member will advance the program’s objectives.

Comments or questions about this article can be emailed to Christina Stoll at stollc@mls.lib.il.us.

Member Spotlight: River Forest Public Library, Sneezle Packs

by Christina Stoll, MLS

Sue Quinn, Head of Children's Services describes the River Forest Public Library (<http://www.riverforestlibrary.org>) as a small town library serving a community where the library staff know many of the residents on a first name basis. Serving around 12,000 residents, the River Forest Library is located approximately 10 miles west of Chicago. Their tag line is "Check out the World from Here".

One unique very personal service offered within the Children's department is called *Sneezle Packs*. This is not a new service, for the library has been offering this for over 7 years, yet with the increase of attention given to the flu, the library staff saw a need they were already filling and stepped up their promotion of the service.

The service works when a caregiver calls the library and requests a *Sneezle Pack*. A reader's advisory reference interview is conducted by one of the library staff in the children's department. Questions about the child's age, interest and types of materials such as books or AV are asked. The library staff member then takes this information and creates a *Sneezle Pack*, typically made up of 3-4 books, a DVD, and an activity such as a coloring sheet or word game. The items are placed inside one of the library's bags, and a *Sneezle Pack* tag is attached. The bag is then placed at the circulation desk for the patron to check out. The purpose of the *Sneezle Pack* tag is to alert the library staff upon return of the bag that the items inside need to be cleaned with disinfectant wipes.

The idea for *Sneezle Packs* resulted from a need which the library staff identified among the parents and caregivers in their community, that not everyone has a support system at home when their child gets sick. The library staff realize that when a child gets sick, life can get hard. The library staff saw this service as being a good community member.

A low cost service, the *Sneezle Packs* involve the staff within the Children's department conducting Reader's Advisory Reference interviews and then gathering the materials. Library bags are used for the transportation of the packs and the only small cost is for the additional activity or item purchased from Oriental Trading Company that goes into the pack.

The service is open to kids up to 8th grade, the average users being 8 years and younger. The only change to the service that the library staff have seen since its start has been more DVD and audio book requests versus print materials. Except for the rare request where staff are only given a few minutes to fill the order and not always able to locate the child's top picks, the service continues to run smoothly.

The communities' response to the service has been very positive, contributing to the world of mouth marketing as one parent recommends the service to another. The library also promotes the service with press releases and in-house flyers they hand out to families. See a sample flyer at http://www.mls.lib.il.us/enounce/2010/04_03/RiverForestLibrarySneezlePackFlyer.pdf.

The library staff see *Sneezle Packs* as another opportunity to connect with their library users on a personal level. *Sneezle Packs* are just one of the many services that the family friendly River Forest Public Library is known for.

Questions about this article or the *Sneezle Packs* can be emailed to Sue Quinn at sue.quinn@riverforestlibrary.org.