

Texas Library Association Conference 2012 Report

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Opening Session – author Brad Meltzer:

Ordinary people can change the world

Librarians/teachers leave a legacy – they affect individuals and the community

You never know who you have inspired/touched – you won't always know or get a thank you

Advocacy

Let state and local representatives know you are paying attention

Get involved early on (help in campaigns, host a fundraiser event at the library)

Develop a relationship with legislators

Contribute to campaigns

Thank government officials when they do something to help

Be overly courteous

Don't threaten to withhold vote or mention term limits

Speaking with their staff is just as good as speaking with them (often the staff is better informed and the staff will communicate concerns to them)

Know your issues and business well

Emails are a good communication method (snail mail is much slower to process)

Contact governor also, as well as committee members and senators – contact everyone up and down the line

Legislative committee chairs have a lot of power – contact them also

Involve kids and teens – legislators are persuaded by issues that affect kids

Be honest and fair

TLA has a political action committee that will give funds to library-friendly candidates – contribute to the PAC

Legal

Every nonprofit should have a conflict of interest, whistleblower, and document destruction policy in place

Texas C-Bar has a nonprofit compliance checklist

It's okay for nonprofits to lobby (within certain limits)

Soliciting contributions - Put statistics in solicitations (numbers seem to be persuasive) and show how our cause promotes economic growth

Collaboration with other organizations is essential

Social Media

Photos are very important – more interesting than words

Children see their online and offline lives as merged, whereas adults see them as more distinct

Designing the Digital Branch (hosted by representatives of the Topeka Shawnee County Public Library)

To some patrons, the digital branch may be their only branch

Having multiple delivery strategies is important

Digital branches should promote librarians as information consultants rather than information mediators

Use websites to feature unique content

Websites should provide: instant membership, local flavor, simple navigation with lots to do/see, provide a sense of “there’s always more to look at”, be continually updated, be current, give patrons a sense of belonging, allow for feedback, be fun and conversational, feature Youtube and Facebook links

Allow people to subscribe to site thru RSS and email

Making Libraries Relevant to the Hispanic Community

Census shows increase in Hispanic/Latino population though library use remains low

Libraries need programs beyond ESL and GED for Latinos

Programming is the best hook to bring them in

Suggested programming – Zumba classes, salsa classes, salsa music, karaoke, family-oriented salsa night, salsa tasting contest involving local restaurants, programs on Mexican-American history, events relating to Mexican holidays such as Dia de los Muertes

Suggested adding salsa music to music collection

ALA website has information on gathering “Los ninos”

Events should be publicized in both English and Spanish

How to do an author Program – Pros within the Publishing Industry

Plan as far in advance as possible

First decide on a specific author

Send the request in writing with as many details as possible – date, time, attendance estimate, theme, partners, history, bookseller involvement, expense coverage, honorarium

Get creative with the event/do something original, value added

Work the price of the book into the ticket price

Here are the websites that will help – Edelweiss, Early word, Library Journal, Book List, Librarylovestest.com, Random Revelations, netgalleys, Goodreads

Follow up with the publisher and send them copy of promotional materials and media coverage

“Ripples, ripples” – publishers want to see the books and authors getting wider exposure

Embrace technology (Skype, online chats, Facebook chats, telephone call ins)

AVID is an example (Authors Visiting in Des Moines)

Bottom line – get butts in seats:

Use your resources to get the word out - Email blasts, newsletters, traditional media, new media (i.e. social media)

Tips from the Houston Public Library:

Partner, partner, partner!

Know your competition (i.e. Murder by the Book already does mysteries)

Cross performances add value (i.e. local musicians)

Know what's going on in community/avoid conflicts with other big events

Marketing is everything

Food and alcohol bring people in