**Library Volunteer Leaders - Notes**

**4-7-21 1:30 EST**

**Host: Wendy Johnson, Indianapolis Public Library**

**wjohnson@indypl.org**

Hello, Friends –

This week we had an in-depth discussion about read to dog programs. It’s another wonderful example of how an in-person program can be successfully moved to a virtual platform. Plus the benefits to the community may change the face of the program in the future with a new hybrid model combining both in-person and virtual experiences.

With Volunteer Recognition activities well underway, we explored other ways to say “thank you” without sounding redundant. If you would like to share your letters, messages, newsletters, etc. please send them to Carla, clehn@califa.org, for posting to GetInvolved.

As always, if you have topics to add to the agenda, please send them my way.

Please, take care!

Wendy J

Meetings will be held every Wednesday at 1:30 EST for an hour until further notice. We’ll use the same Zoom link each week. Please share the link with fellow library volunteer leaders…**the more smart people the better**.

Zoom:  <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85199850785?pwd=WHorb3h2ckgvZjhZT1BOVWxEMzhlZz09>

Access Code: Volunteer

**Topics Discussed**

**Pet Therapy Restart Thoughts**

* One of our group transitioned a year ago to Zoom utilizing staff in breakout 10 rooms 1 time/wk in the evening. Teams join in at 6:15 for visits and getting settled in. Kiddos jump in at 6:30 for reading, joke time, and to jump into breakout rooms. Utilizing 26 teams to cover 10 shifts a week. 500 hours in 2020. Improved confidence with reading! Future will most likely continue to host virtual sessions along with in-person. Benefits of virtual – aging dogs can continue and volunteers who aren’t ready to return can still participate. Learn more here: <https://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2020/08/taking-children-reading-to-dogs-virtual/>
* If it’s virtual, does the dog need to be certified/trained as a therapy animal? Could dogs from animal shelters participate? What about bunnies, cats, etc.?
* Pet Therapy Groups
	+ Therapy Dogs International, <https://www.tdi-dog.org/default.aspx>
	+ Love on a Leash, <https://www.loveonaleash.org/>
	+ Pet Partners, <https://petpartners.org/>
	+ St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs (Ontario), <https://www.sja.ca/English/Community-Services/Pages/Therapy%20Dog%20Services/default.aspx>
	+ Paws & Think (Indianapolis), <https://pawsandthink.org/>
* “Read to the Dogs”, “Dog Ears” and a few other programs on hold until 100% fully open
* Struggles with volunteers not interested in going virtual. “My dog’s not trained to interact with a screen.”
* Therapy teams were brought into the library without screening – usually by an enthusiastic juvenile librarian. Volunteer leaders have/are back tracked to straighten things out.
* And here’s our friend Leslie and her 4-legged participating in a reading program:



**Sample “Messages of Thanks” (Chauna)**

Sometimes our “thanks” become stale and canned. Share what you say to help us keep it fresh.

* Appreciation language - Breauna Dorelus just posted some language ideas that gets beyond the surface level on Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CNXfEoEJvh2/>
* Sending out videos
* Miss you; looking forward to a time we can come back together; co-creating the future; challenging year; miss you and appreciate you all; Really hard and challenging year; We missed being able to have all our volunteers being with us; Those of you that could help, thank you and helped our library do ….x, y and z (maybe less on the stats and more on feel good stories or quotes to make it more a feeling letter – sorry, I am just thinking of this now); We miss you all and we greatly look forward to when we can all be working together again; Thank you for your continued support to make the library a wonderful resource, space and community; Sharing impact vs output to illustrate community impact
* Sharing the impact of a few years prior to pandemic & what has happened during…tie these to organization’s pillars
* Bookplate for 1000hours or 10 years, then each year afterward. Books have already been selected by library.
* 40% of volunteers are back, the rest are on hold. If you’re not volunteering right now, we know you’re cheering us on.
* Capture what staff has to say:

1. For active volunteers in this past year, how have you seen them make a positive impact on the Library and/or the community we serve?2. What has been the impact on the Library as a result of not having regular volunteers this past year?3. What do you miss about having volunteers at the Library?4. Do you have any specific "kudos" you'd like us to share? It could be about one particular volunteer, a group of volunteers, or a volunteer role that's made a big impact.5. Is there anything else you would like to share with the Volunteer Services team at this time?

* Our team is sending snail mail to volunteers that say "We can't "mask" our gratitude!" in reference to face masks of course. In the card there is a quote from our office (Volunteer Services) and people throughout the organization that work with them.
* Volunteers through the years... show a timeline and twist stories and outcomes that happened as time has happened
* I like this messaging from Volunteer Canada “The past year has been challenging and volunteers have both stepped up and stepped back to keep our communities safe.” It thanks volunteers that are currently engaged virtually and those who have been put on pause
* Last year we had our director write a message for National Volunteer Month. Here's the newsletter: <https://t.e2ma.net/message/rkanzb/35qzoob>
* Is it thanking all for their continued engagement including sharing the great library experience with all their neighbors in the community. Advocacy is a great form of volunteering.
* Here is our link to the Virtual Volunteer Celebration this year. Feel free to share this with your volunteers if you like: <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/stephenpost/register>
* Oh, I also did a survey of volunteers in last month's newsletter asking them what makes volunteering with us meaningful and I'm going to share some quotes in our next newsletter

**TikTok**

We continue to explore ways to use TikTok.

* Great library content available
* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMe5BMa3q/>
* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMe5BP2XL/>

**Resources and Training Opportunities**

* Volunteering is good for your health, an article: <https://shine365.marshfieldclinic.org/wellness/volunteering-health-benefits/?utm_source=blog&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Shine365&utm_content=volunteeringhealthbenefits>
* Webinar Recording: [8 Strategies for Creating a More Inclusive Volunteer Program](https://getinvolvedclearinghouse.org/training-materials/eight-strategies-creating-more-inclusive-volunteer-program)
* Thursday, May 6 – Crafting Inclusive Volunteer Recruitment Messages –

10:00 – 11:30 am Pacific time, free

Register here: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMtcOqgrzkrHddh5b6xysm3dUy4Q6t76sVh>

* Thursday, June 3 – No “One Right Way:” Creating New Systems for Volunteer

Engagement -- 10 am – 11 am Pacific time, free

Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2124039175063372557>

* “[2021 Texas Volunteer Management Conference, Shaping the Future of Volunteerism](https://www.texasvmc.org/)”, 100% Virtual, May 13 & 14. $20 for Student/AmeriCorps, $35 General Admission.
* Texas Volunteer Management Conference 2020 Past Webinar recordings – Free – <https://www.texasvmc.org/webinars/>
* Points of Light Conference, [Registration is open](https://events.bizzabo.com/297882?utm_medium=email&utm_content=119715489&utm_source=hs_email). July 14-16, virtual. Early bird $99 through April 30.
* Volgistics National Peer Group – on-line – 2nd Tuesday of the Month – free!

FMI contact Jessica Link, linkj@crlibrary.org. Recordings are available after you sign a release.

* Join the GetInvolved list serve by emailing Carla, clehn@califa.org. Fabulous resource with samples, current news & updates.

**Future Topics**

* Our leadership role
* Teen Advisories / Summer Program
* MLS programs lacking volunteer content: Rebecca (returning in June-ish)
* Circle Back for updates:
	+ University of North Carolina – Charlotte (UNCC) Class Project Update – Chauna
	+ Reinventing volunteer engagement in our libraries – removing barriers