Project Summary

Librarians Build Communities, a Membership Initiative Group (LBC MIG) of the American Library Association (ALA) was chartered in the spring of 2014 as part of the project completed by Team F of the 2014 Emerging Leaders team members; this fulfilled one of Team F’s primary goals, to create a solid organizational structure within ALA for Librarians Build Communities. In its presentation to ALA’s Chapter Relations Office, original Team F members (Sara Zettervall, Brian Hart, Lynette Roberson, Aaron LaFromboise, Morgan Sohl, and Lindsey Taggart) committed to continue to work together to support LBC through its initial three-year MIG cycle.

LBC accomplishments prior to this year were detailed in Team F’s Final Report for Emerging Leaders and in the MIG’s First and Second Reports submitted to ALA’s Committee on Organization in 2014 and 2015.

Status Summary

LBC MIG actions continue to be guided by LBC’s overall philosophy. As expressed by ALA staff liaison Don Wood: “LBC was established to provide library workers with information about skills-based volunteering so that they can plan and carry out volunteer programs benefiting libraries and other social service organizations in communities that can benefit from organized, targeted volunteer events.”

In support of these goals, members of the LBC MIG moved forward with and accomplished several tasks for 2015-2016:

- Following the ALA Annual Conference in 2015, the team decided to better utilize the LBC website (www.ala.org/groups/lbc) for communication. Subsequently, in the fall of 2015, Sara Zettervall contacted ALA to get a blog added to the site. The blog has since been used to announce LBC activities and results at conferences. Sara continues to maintain the blog and website.

- At the LBC meeting at ALA Annual in 2015, the team decided to look into options for affiliation with an ALA unit or subunit. In particular, the team was interested in pursuing a panel presentation highlighting LBC accomplishments at the 2016 Annual Conference. Morgan Sohl was a member of LLAMA’s conference planning group and explored the possibility of submitting a session proposal through them. Lynette Roberson held a similar position in PLA and investigated possibilities there. Although both units showed interest and support, the team ultimately decided to submit a session proposal through PLA. Lynette took the lead in drafting a proposal that was revised and approved by the whole team. In spite of initial support from the conference committee chair, though, the session was ultimately not chosen. However, the process of exploring these connections was ultimately useful for LBC in two respects: 1) We raised awareness of our activities among leaders in ALA, and 2) We learned more about our options and began to think critically about the future of the MIG and finding our niche within ALA.

- In early 2016, LBC members were contacted by leaders from the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion about co-planning volunteer events at ALA Annual in Orlando. LBC members had been seeking contacts in the local public library system,
which the Task Force was able to provide, and a new collaboration was born. Sara Zettervall from LBC and Martin Garnar from the Task Force recruited ALA members Anthony Bishop (a Spectrum Scholar) and Alex De Feo to assist with planning and promotion. Jody Gray also supported this effort through her role as Director of the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services. Ultimately, our collaborative effort brought 22 volunteers to help out with Summer BreakSpot at four Orlando Library branches, helping to serve lunch and promote the library to hundreds of at-risk children. This project also collected school supplies for those same children at the conference and delivered them on the Monday of the conference.

- A new relationship is currently being forged with ALA-ODLOS. This is based in part on connections made while planning the volunteer opportunities at ALA Annual this year and partly on new potential for support following the hire of Jody Gray. As part of that relationship, LBC presented a poster at the Diversity & Outreach Fair at 2016 Annual. Many of our founding members reunited to present the poster and meet Jody: Brian Hart, Lynette Roberson, Aaron Lafromboise, Morgan Sohl, and Sara Zettervall.

- Sara Zettervall was appointed to represent LBC to the new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group, which will spend the next 2 years implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion throughout ALA. LBC was identified by the Task Force as an important partner in supporting ALA’s outreach to diverse communities. This connection is just getting off the ground but may have important implications for the future of LBC.

Future Actions

The LBC MIG is entering its final year of the 3-year MIG cycle. Over the course of the next year, in addition to the tasks below, we will need to decide the future of LBC. We are considering whether the MIG is the right format for us and whether we might be absorbed into an ALA office or division. We expect that the relationship with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group will provide some options for our future that we can’t yet predict and are hopeful about the possibilities. Other tasks include:

- Planning and collaborating on a volunteer event at ALA Midwinter in Atlanta (2017, led by Brian Hart).
- Planning and collaborating on a volunteer event at ALA Annual in Chicago (2017, participants TBD but likely in collaboration with ODLOS).
- Creating a structured web and social media presence for LBC and finding 1-2 volunteers to specifically manage that part of the project.

Report submitted 08/01/2016 by Sara Zettervall on behalf of the LBC MIG Leadership Team