

**2014 Emerging Leaders
Team F: Librarians Build Communities
Final Report
June 2014**

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Introduction and Summary

The mission of Librarians Build Communities is “to connect librarians with libraries and community organizations in need of skilled volunteers in order to form meaningful volunteer opportunities and to improve awareness of the expertise librarians possess.”

(<http://www.ala.org/groups/lbc>)

The 2014 Emerging Leaders team (Team F) assigned to Librarians Build Communities (LBC) was asked to build on the work of three previous Emerging Leaders teams. Those teams, from 2011, 2012, and 2013, delved deep into research on how LBC could be structured and promoted, then set up the initial websites and created promotional tools and procedures. We in the 2014 Team began our work aware of our indebtedness to the previous Teams and the project sponsor, Don Wood and the ALA Chapter Relations Office, as we transitioned LBC from an Emerging Leaders project into a sustainable, ongoing Member Initiative Group (MIG) within ALA.

In 2014 Team F, we were faced with several primary tasks, detailed in the following pages. In brief, they were: promoting LBC to ALA divisions and chapters; supporting and reporting on LBC projects at the local level; revising and updating the website, toolkit, and communications; and investigating and implementing volunteer database options. We were able to achieve a measure of success in all of these areas, although some progressed farther than others. Attending to technical issues, such as the website migration to [ala.org](http://www.ala.org), was straightforward and successful. We were – and will continue to be, as a MIG – hampered by the fact that we have no funding. But in this, we’re no different than most of the volunteers we serve.

What we found most important, and the purpose that unified all of the tasks we completed, was ensuring that LBC would have a structure and support to continue into the future. To that end, we are most proud of the swift petition and approval of LBC as a MIG. All of the online infrastructure and promotion of LBC activities are enhanced by the fact that we can now say this is not just a project but an enduring program within ALA. Going forward, we will all continue in varying capacities as LBC volunteers, and we will promote the LBC MIG at ALA. Details of those plans close out this report.

We would like to thank the Emerging Leaders program and Don Wood for giving us this amazing opportunity to shepherd this worthwhile project into its next phase.

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Outcomes, Next Steps, and Accomplishments

Outcomes and Next Steps are quoted directly from the 2014 Emerging Leaders Team F charge.

Outcome 1: Maintain the communication tools developed previously and relocate the project website to an ALA Web space.

- Website: <http://www.librariansbuildcommunities.com/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/librariansbuild>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LibrariansBuildCommunities>

Related next step: The emerging leaders will work with immediate past LBC emerging leaders to gain access to the website, Twitter, and Facebook accounts.

Accomplishments

Team F members:

- Investigated and compiled all the passwords for accessing the communication tools above, as well as the LBC Gmail account. These passwords are now in the possession of the LBC MIG.
- Restarted use of the LBC Facebook site to promote LBC activities and related news in librarianship. Volunteer support of an ongoing social media presence is something we expect to address within the MIG.
- Reached out to Easter DiGangi to get the perspective of a former EL team member, and we held a brief and productive Skype session with her.
- Contacted ALA Chapter Relations and secured the successful migration of the LBC site to its new domain within ALA: www.ala.org/groups/lbc
- Created a LBC group in ALA Connect and promoted it on the new website.
- Completed ALA's Drupal training and got access to make updates to the new LBC site. They have made updates to the site per changes detailed in other outcomes.

Outcome 2: Evaluate already-completed LBC events.

- a. Determine success factors and opportunities for improvement to pass on to future event coordinators.
- b. Incorporate results in toolkit for LBC event coordinators.
- c. Collect success stories in the LBC blog to use for promoting LBC.

Related next step: Emerging leaders can follow up with Chapter leaders to gather as many success stories as possible and post online on the LBC site, CRO site, and in "the literature" (which now, of course, includes personal blogs, etc., as well as the LBC social media) to

maximize exposure to the LBC concept and efforts.

Related next step: Emerging Leaders should utilize the previously-created LBC Public Relations plan for promoting the LBC program. The team should provide ideas for potential projects, such as librarians raising funds, sponsoring a blood drive, sponsoring a food and clothing drive for communities struck by a disaster, or outreach during a hurricane or flood recovery. Other projects might include librarians holding book drives, voter registration, and so forth. Ideally, there are no limits to a nationwide effort of librarians helping build communities in various ways.

Accomplishments

Team F members:

- Promoted LBC at events within their own states:
 - Lynette promoted LBC at the 2014 Texas Library Association annual conference in April, and handed out brochures at the conference's Information Commons.
 - Aaron promoted LBC at the 2014 Tribal College Librarian's Institute poster session and handed out brochures, to build excitement for LBC and Emerging Leaders. She is exploring LBC volunteer opportunities for 2015.
 - Lindsey promoted LBC at University of Missouri-Columbia's 2014 LISGSA Conference (Library and Information Science Graduate Student Association).
- Planned LBC events for future events in our states:
 - Lynette is planning an LBC event with The Bridge Homeless Recovery and Dallas Public Library for the fall of 2014. The planned event includes a book drive and library organization activity.
 - Lindsey is planning an LBC event for the Missouri Library Association's annual conference on October 8, 2014. The event will bring librarians together to volunteer at The Food Bank for Central & Northwest Missouri.
- Compiled a list of prior projects/contacts and collected success stories and opportunities for improvement from past participants from the 2011, 2012, and 2013 Emerging Leader classes.
- Updated the "LBC in Action" portion of the website with the new success stories collected from previous LBC events.
- Added a "planning timeline" to the LBC toolkit to give future LBC organizers and participants an idea of what steps to take and when to make their event successful.

Outcome 3: Provide an LBC coordinator toolkit to ALA Chapters and invite them to host an event in the next year.

Related next step: The 2014 emerging leaders will review the existing toolkit for LBC coordinators, and invite Chapter leaders to sponsor an LBC volunteer day during their local conferences. Information to Chapter leaders will address all 5 Ws + 1 H (who, what, when, where, why, and how) of how to sponsor an LBC volunteer day during their Chapters' annual

conferences. Approximately half these conferences are held between January and May and half between June and December. Therefore, this effort would begin immediately upon acceptance of this proposal.

Related next step: The emerging leaders can encourage libraries and other community organizations/non-profits to propose projects and provide a tool or guidelines regarding information needed about a proposed project (desired results, logistical information, space available, number of volunteers needed, desired completion date, supplies needed or available, assignments, skills needed, etc.).

Accomplishments

Team F members:

- Decided at the outset to promote existing materials and simultaneously make any updates we felt were needed over time. This means we started promotion using the prior version of the site and toolkit in order to get the word out as quickly as possible.
- Drafted letter to distribute via email to chapter leaders. Don Wood emailed the letter to all state chapters and student chapters in February. The letter did not generate any direct inquiries with Team F but may have raised awareness of the project.
- Followed up in our home states by contacting possible sponsor-partners for state conferences. State spring conferences were not able to coordinate LBC events due to the tight timeline, but a fall event has been agreed upon between Dallas Public Library and The Bridge, a homeless recovery center.
- Created a brochure to promote LBC at any event. Aaron has distributed the brochure at the Tribal College Librarian's conference and at the Montana State Library Commissioner meeting. The brochure has been updated and will be distributed by Team F at ALA Annual.
- Created a flyer to promote the MIG informational session and social reception being held in Las Vegas (see Appendix) to be distributed by Team F members at ALA Annual.
- Made some revisions to the communications toolkit and posted the updated kit to the new website. We agreed that the toolkit should have a major overhaul but decided that any major changes should come after the MIG information session in Las Vegas.

Outcome 4: Develop a database tool with the ability of match volunteers with projects for future sustainability of the program.

Database tool should include a means to submit projects, provide submission guidelines, and function from an ALA-hosted LBC website.

Related next step: A database could include a listing of libraries and other organizations needing volunteer assistance. For example, a school library in Arlington, TX, needs to weed its collection. Librarian volunteers from Ft. Worth, Dallas, and the surrounding area see the post in the database or online and volunteer to help. The database tool should include a means for libraries to submit projects electronically and be accessible from an ALA-hosted LBC website.

Accomplishments

Team F members:

- Researched and built on the research of prior Emerging Leaders teams to investigate the best database options, using the following criteria:
 - The database must be publicly-accessible for individuals or groups to post open opportunities, and for members of the public to browse opportunities, even if they're not ALA members.
 - The database must be user-friendly.
 - Ideally, the database would easily integrate with ALA's existing structure for volunteer opportunities.
 - Ideally, the database would enable a feed of volunteer opportunities to be posted to the LBC website.
- Tested Zoho, Volunteer Match, Google Forms (used by the prior LBC teams), and ALA's Opportunities Exchange as options. Ultimately, we determined the Opportunities Exchange was the best option and took the Google Form offline. The Opportunities Exchange meets the first three of the four criteria above and is free to use.
- Updated the new LBC website with instructions for posting and browsing LBC opportunities on the Opportunities Exchange.

Conclusion: Going Forward with the MIG

On March 10, 2014, Team F created a petition to have Librarians Build Communities established as Member Initiative Group. We set forth the petition as a means to give LBC a permanent home within the ALA structure and complete it as an Emerging Leaders project.

On March 12, 2014, we had already gathered the required 100 signatures. We submitted those signatures along with a variation of the following Statement of Purpose to the ALA Committee on Organizations (COO) for approval:

“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. Skills can include the skills that library workers exercise every day in their jobs (e.g., short-term cataloging projects, book repair, technology projects, story hours) as well as other skills such as painting, basic home/school/library building repair and improvement, carpentry, gardening and yard work etc. Assistance includes, but is not necessarily limited to advice and toolkits on how to develop a relationship with a library or community agency that can host an event and how to plan, organize, manage, recruit volunteers, obtain needed supplies or equipment, evaluate results, and share lessons learned with the library community so volunteer initiatives can grow and become a viral form of library advocacy. Skills-based volunteering can, literally, be grass roots advocacy.”

- Jim Rettig, April 17, 2014

In an effort to expeditiously establish the Librarians Build Communities prior to ALA Annual, we requested that the MIG be approved ahead of the normal schedule. On April 30, 2014, Don Wood notified the team that the MIG had been approved.

An informational meeting to introduce the MIG to other members of ALA is scheduled to take place at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference during a session on Monday, June 30, 2014 in the Networking Uncommons. We will also distribute brochures and name badge ribbons to conference-goers throughout ALA. We, the members of Team F, have pledged to continue the work of Librarians Build Communities at least through the three years of the MIG, and we invite any and all who are interested to join us.