

# The itizen

The newsletter of Citizens for Maryland Libraries  
P.O. Box 267, Funkstown, MD 21734

Number 9

Fall 2001

## Reading to Children

Two prisons in the Jessup area, Maryland Correctional Institute for Women, and the Maryland Correctional Institute in Jessup, participated in a program called **READING IS FUNDAMENTAL (RIF)**. RIF is a federal program that grants funds to promote reading among young children, especially the economically deprived. The library coordinator worked closely with the reading specialists in the prisons. Since the project would involve parents and children reading together, it was important to minimize a situation where a parent who did not read well would feel embarrassed to display poor reading skill in front of their children. Although funds were limited, the libraries, on the recommendation of the reading teachers, purchased three sets of children's books with similar titles. One set was integrated in the library's regular collection. One set was placed with the reading teacher, to help the inmates practice reading the books. The third set was chosen for the children. On visiting day, they would select their reading material from this set. The children's coordinator from one of the local public libraries visited the prisons and gave inmates a brief training session on how to select children's books for the various age groups.

The first session was held at the women's institution, where approximately nine children read with their mothers.

The second session took place at the medium security men's prison. The inmates decorated the visiting room with crafts including paper balloons that had the names of each child. Tables were set up with displays of children's books. The men, bantering with one another as they decorated the room, became quiet and huddled together in one corner as the children entered the visiting room. The children and their caregiver greeted their incarcerated parent, then sat quietly in a very subdued manner. This quiet lasted only until three inmates started singing nursery rhymes and encouraged the children to join.

The library coordinator asked the 22 children and their caregiver to raise their hands if they visited a library in their area. No one raised a hand. The coordinator discussed the importance of reading to small children, told the group of the "It's Never Too Early" campaign in the public libraries, and encouraged the parents to visit their

local public libraries. The coordinator also gave tips on how to read to stimulate a small child's interest. Parents and children then selected the books that they wanted to read, and then each family went to a corner for their reading session. The children read to the parents, but in the case of a very small child, the parent read. After the reading session, the groups formed a large circle and each child talked about the book he/she had read. They gave the title, said what the book was about, and told the gathering what they liked or disliked about the book. Every child was encouraged to say something about his/her book, as the adult clapped encouragingly. The program ended with each parent helping their child to select a book that they would take home to read and discuss at our next session. At the end of the session, one caregiver said, "This was very good for me. I run a day care center and I have gotten some great ideas on

## Library Losses Davis McCarn & Ed

Maryland's library community mourns the loss of two sterling former library advocates who died recently. Ed Hall, a former administrator of the Anne Arundel Public Library system, oversaw the construction and expansion of many libraries across the state, including Southern Maryland Regional Library System and the Washington County Free Library. During his 22-year stint at the AACPL, he built the county's award-winning system virtually from the ground up, including seven branches, a new headquarters and a centralized computer catalog.

Davis McCarn served on the CML's board for several years, was chairman of PUBLIUS, the Public Action Committee for Maryland's libraries, and the designer of CML's Web page on the Internet. Davis constantly advocated for library issues, especially in Montgomery County where he served on the board. In our last newsletter, we reprinted a letter that Ed had written to the *Washington Post* about the library funding situation in Montgomery County. The newsletter also had an insert with comparative library statistics in Maryland that Davis had painstakingly put together. CML board and the library community extend sympathy to the families of Ed

## Library Advocacy

Tips from one of the sessions I attended at the ALA conference in San Francisco.

Library advocacy tends to be crisis driven, activated mostly when a building or library is to be closed or funding cut. Library Advocates tend to be ingrown - the same people all the time. Many advocates lack the skills to tell the stories adequately to the media. Advocacy often stops after the event.

To ensure more effective advocacy:

- Design a framework to build library advocacy skills.
- Maintain local balance to sustain support, e. g., large municipalities, and large groups of Friends and Trustees.
- Work with state agencies on sustainable plans. From lessons learned - build a base that will be sustained.
- Involve librarians more in training to be advocates. There is a need for more librarians to tell their own story of how they have impact on the community.

Advocates should know their district and its makeup, the governing officials, the committees they sit on, their friends, those who can influence them, and tie what they say to the official's sympathies. Get library allies at all levels. Legislators have a hard time saying no to children. Plan an orientation session to train on issues to be talked about. Cover all points to be made, using salient information. Everything you do ties it back to the issues and benefits. Keep a librarian to answer misinformation and discuss future trends. Keep appointments. Be on time. Plan what to say, say it in simple terms. Stay focused. Remain calm. Maintain an ally from among the staff of the person you are trying to influence.

For more tips on library advocacy, read the article by Ellen G. Miller on "Advocacy

## Early Literacy Tops Librarians' Agenda

Leaders: In a few short years public libraries have moved to the forefront of the effort to help children start school ready to read. Read this very informative article by Mike Bowler in *Baltimore Sun*, September 30, 2001, 4B.

*Excerpt:* What has given the librarians impetus is research evidence that 90 percent of a child's brain growth occurs during the first three years of life... Now the librarians' motto is "It's Never Too Early" ... Next month the Johns Hopkins University Center for Reading



## Resources/Events/News at the

In the spring, the Enoch Pratt Free Library's board formed the Pratt Advisory Council, a citizen's community forum that will serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors. The Council's mission will be to provide a forum of mutual exchange of ideas and information and to facilitate problem solving between representatives of the branch library communities, the Central Library/State Library Resource Center, the Board of Directors, and library staff. The Council, consisting of community members, including teenagers, representatives from the Friends of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and representatives from the Mayor's office and City Council, will meet quarterly.

● The Port Deposit Library now has an intercom to enable individuals with handicaps to communicate directly with the librarian. This is part of the library's effort to make the library accessible to all customers.

● Anne Arundel County Public Library now has a new electronic reference called

"Learn a Test," an online interactive test preparation site for academic, career and civil service tests such as the 4th grade and 8th grade reading tests, postal worker exam, GED, SAT and ASVAB. This allows users to practice with real tests, save their work and, if necessary, go back and finish later.

● Montgomery County Public Library Literary luncheon series: "Robert Smalls, First Black Civil War Hero," November 15, 2001, Strathmore Hall Arts Center, Rockville. For information, call the Friends at 240-777-0020.

● Harford County Public Library is seeking adults who want to "Share the Gift" - the joy of books with small children. Volunteers will share stories, fingerplays, and other library materials with young children in preschool and licensed day centers. Call 410-638-3151x244 or 410-273-5601x247.

● Lillie Dyson retires. Library staff, directors, and advocates attended the retirement reception for Lillie Dyson in June. Many attendees paid tribute to Lillie

for her contributions to the Maryland library community.

● Valerie J. Gross is the new director of Howard County Library. Valerie stated in *Great Expectations*, the library's calendar of events, "I look forward to working with you all as we seek out innovative ways to best provide outstanding, up-to-date library programs and services for our communities."

● Maurice Travillian was appointed by the director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to the 2001 Board of Examiners for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Maurice will be one of the examiners reviewing and evaluating applications for the award that is the nation's highest level of recognition for performance excellence.

● CLIS graduate Dr. Karla L. Hahn had a book signing on October 1 for her book: *Electronic Ecology: A Case Study of Electronic Journals in Context*.

### DATE TO REMEMBER

The CML annual meeting is on November 3  
at the Cross Keys Inn in Baltimore.  
It will start at 9:30 a.m. and end around 3:30 p.m.

Keep tuned to THE CITIZEN for news about the Annual Friends of the Library general meeting in spring 2002. Please send news of the activities of Friends in your library system to the editor of *The Citizen*, or the executive director of CML. Remember, Citizens for Maryland Libraries serves the entire Maryland library community.

## Membership Application

Yes, I want to join CITIZENS FOR MARYLAND LIBRARIES (CML) along with the many citizens and organizations across the state of Maryland, who through their membership in CML continue to work

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment

Checks should be made payable to:  
**CML** (fully tax-deductible)  
or to **PUBLIUS**  
(not eligible for tax deduction).

### Mail to

Citizens for Maryland Libraries  
P.O. Box 267 / Funkstown, MD 21734

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 Individual (through December 2001) or \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Individual (for THREE years, through December 2003)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Friends of Library Groups \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Corporations / Organizations  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Benefactor \_\_\_\_\_ \$500 Life Member

Additional contributions to CML \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or to PUBLIUS \$ \_\_\_\_\_ work toward improved library service and libraries in Maryland.