

# Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | March 2024

1. **State Update:** Thank you to all who participated in advocacy activities over the past two months. We had a strong showing in Albany for NYLA Library Advocacy Day and a good reception from legislators and their staff to our requests for additional funds. All legislators indicated support for our requests and agreed to sign-on to the committee letters to leadership endorsing the NYLA Budget Priorities. Next up will be to see how library aid fares in the one-house budget bills. The bills are expected by March 14<sup>th</sup> so we may have news at the board meeting.
2. **Memo of Understanding Process Update:** On February 29<sup>th</sup> we sent out MHLS Action Memo #24-02 to all member library directors and board presidents requesting their signatures on the Memo of Understanding. As requested, an online event to introduce folks to the MOU and answer questions they may have was offered on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. Libraries have until April 30<sup>th</sup> to sign the MOU.
3. **Personnel Updates**
  - a. Our newest catalog staff, Rebecca Hagan and BJ Vickery, have each completed 30-hours of training to comply with Innovative's Technical Services Coordinator Certification.
  - b. MHLS Outreach & EDI Specialist, Kerstin Cruger has been invited to present at the upcoming Public Library Association Conference in Columbus, OH on the topic of Path to Belonging: Creating EDISJ Small, Rural Libraries.
4. **Facilities:** Our solar installation project is going well with one anticipated change order\* to install a mitigation system to reduce the likelihood of snow "avalanches" off the roof to protect folks walking near the building as well as to protect the gutter system. All panels are installed, and the electricians are finishing up the wiring. Next up is an inspection by Central Hudson before we can be connected to the grid.
  - a. **\*ACTION:** The change order item meets the threshold in the MHLS Fiscal Policy to require a board motion to authorize. The cost of the change order is \$13,019 and would come from the MHLS Capital Fund.
5. **Delivery Services:** Valley Courier has agreed to extend our new contract from 12 to 18 months with no rate change. This will enable us to align this contract process with our budget development process in the future.
6. **Technology Operations:** Laurie Shedrick, MHLS Assistant Director & Technology Operations Manager and I met with Yariv Kursh, General Manager for Clarivate who oversees Innovative Interfaces Inc., our ILS Company and Carrie Pearson, our ILL Account Manager to discuss three things:
  - a. Improved communication

- b. Raise awareness of issues for consortia, particularly those within Vega Discover
- c. Examine our contractual relationship for products and the possibilities for a renewal or future contract.

As a result of our meeting, ILL staff are now prioritizing key elements of our new catalog that are not working well and we have been given the new mobile app product from ILL which will roll out later this year. To learn more about the mobile app please visit the MHLS Knowledge Base: <https://kb.midhudson.org/patron-mobile-app/>

## **7. Library Sustainability**

- a. We are pleased to announce a new partnership with Girls Who Code. We are now a Community Partner and introduced our member libraries to the programming opportunities from this partnership through a program held on March 6.
- b. We will partner with the Poughkeepsie Public Library District to host the Mexican Consulate in the MHLS Auditorium in April. This supports our Plan of Service goals to work cooperatively with non-library organizations to align the library community with efforts to build community resilience and providing opportunities to institutions serving targeted populations to improve outreach services. We expect to welcome 400+ people to our property while the consulate is on site.
- c. Support for the next round of funds through the State Aid for Library Construction Program kicks off with a webinar presented by MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator Laura Crisci on April 24<sup>th</sup>.
- d. We will be hosting a groundbreaking workshop on “compassionate customer service” for member libraries on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our presenter is Jennifer Bollerman, Assistant Director of the Patchogue-Medford Library, who recently completed Stanford Medicine’s Applied Compassion Training, an 11-month program to help professionals in various occupations to put compassion into action, employing dialogue, skill-building, and practical tools in real-time scenarios. This event focuses on self-care and self-compassion as well as having compassion for those we serve. This is in response to the significant burden library workers across the region are feeling as they come out of the COVID era and are confronted with new pressures of more patrons needing mental health and social services in additions to the other pressures of working with the public.
- e. We are partnering with the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, Ramapo Catskill Library System, Mount Saint Mary College, SUNY New Paltz and BOCES School Library Systems of Dutchess, Orange-Ulster, Rockland, Sullivan, and Ulster counties to produce the Banned Book Symposium: Proactive, Reactive, and Supportive on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm at Dutchess BOCES, 5 Boces Road, Poughkeepsie. The event includes two sessions with a choices of presentations from academic, school and public librarians followed by lunch and the keynote

speaker, Jeff Trexler from the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

f. 2024 Cohorts:

- i. We have announced a new cohort opportunity for members: Evaluating Our Impact: Summer Reading Program Cohort 2024-2025. This cohort will evaluate their library's current Summer Reading Program by focusing on why they hold the SRP and evaluate current practices through dollars spent, organizational goals reached, and other specific aspects chosen by participants.
- ii. We will once again offer an Early Literacy Cohort, this year's focus will be on those who are interested in establishing a new community partnership or strengthening an existing partnership to support a library's capacity to provide early literacy services to their community.
- iii. Applications for the Spring 2024 session to grow The Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley program are now open. Applications are available to individuals who work at libraries and nonprofit organizations in the following counties: Columbia, Greene, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester. Navigators who meet the requirements by June 30, 2024 will receive a \$500 investment incentive payable to their organization
- iv. The Libraries as Community Resilience Hub Cohort kicked off in February and will meet three more times this year. We are grateful to our partners Sustainable Hudson Valley and the Ramapo Catskill Library System to help our member libraries learn more about climate change threats, community resilience, and placemaking.
- v. The Library of Local (LoL) Program participants met in February to regroup and share best practices. The LoL Summit will be convened in April to discuss the future of the program and how to leverage what we have built to be stronger partners in community resilience work throughout the Hudson Valley.

8. **Bravery in Literature Award Ceremony:** We were a proud partner of the first-ever Bravery in Literature Award Ceremony held on Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at the Fisher Center at Bard College. We raised over \$140 in Debra Klein's name toward the MHLS Book Haven Collection at the event.



*Ashley Teal, Administrative Associate; Laura Crisci, Library Sustainability Coordinator, and Stephanie Werskey, Library Sustainability Associate & Communications Specialist at the Bravery in Literature Awards Ceremony*



9. **Hudson Valley Gives:** We are researching MHLS' participation in Hudson Valley Gives ([hvgives.org](http://hvgives.org)), a one day fundraising event in May.

10. **The Town of Union Vale** voted against reinstating a contract through MHLS for unrestricted library services on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>.

**11. Board Operations:**

- a. Directly after the March Board Meeting we will offer lunch before our two-hour orientation for new system trustees. This orientation session is designed by the MHLS Board Development Committee to be suitable for our new/newest trustees but, as always, all are welcome to attend. A tour of the facilities will be offered after the orientation for those who are interested.
- b. MHLS Trustee Continuing Education Reminder: MHLS trustees should take at least 2-hours of continuing education relevant to our work on the board each year.
  - i. [Trustee Continuing Education Policy](#)
  - ii. [MHLS Trustee Continuing Education Procedures](#)
- c. Board-to-Board Visits
  - i. Reminder: Please coordinate response to libraries requesting a visit with your peers in the county before individually responding and, as always, please let me know if you need any assistance to prepare for your meetings or with follow-up information.
  - ii. Please let Ashley know when you have completed a visit so we can track our outreach to members as per the request from the Board Development Committee:  
[ateal@midhudson.org](mailto:ateal@midhudson.org)
  - iii. Suggested Talking Points:
    - 1. Encourage member library trustees to reach out to their State Senator and Assemblyperson to share how important an increase in state aid is to our System and how their library benefits from System services.
    - 2. Highlight the offerings available to satisfy the trustee education requirement in the MHLS Training on Demand platform:  
<https://my.nicheacademy.com/midhudson-trustees>

**12. Executive Director's Event Participation: January 19 – March 6**

- a. MHLS System Services Advisory Committee
- b. Presentation: [Trustee Handbook Book Club "After Party III"](#)
- c. Meeting: Update on Town of Union Vale with neighboring libraries and Dutchess County representatives to the MHLS Board
- d. Presentation: 2024 Advocacy Briefing, co-presented with Max Prime, NYLA Government Relations Specialist



- e. Advisory Board Meeting, Sustainable Libraries Initiative (2)
- f. New Director Orientations:
  - i. Christopher Leary, Catskill Public Library
  - ii. Lisa Palmer, Hyde Park Public Library
  - iii. Jacqueline Elmo-Emel, Mountain Top Library
  - iv. Melissa McHugh, Olive Free Library
- g. MHLS Committee Chairs Mid-Year Check-in
- h. National Climate Action Working Group
- i. Pre-Advocacy Day Meetings, Albany (NYLA Legislative Committee, PULISDO, and NYALS)
- j. Advocacy Day Meetings (lead for meetings with Assemblymembers Slater, Levenberg, and Barrett and Senator Hinchey)
- k. Meeting: Steve Frazier, Supervisor, Town of Union Vale (joined by Barry, Rajene, and Ric)
- l. Consultation: Anita Prentice, Board President, Desmond-Fish Library
- m. Columbia County Library Association
- n. Consultation: Jodi Fernandes, Millbrook Library
- o. Path to System Membership Joint Committee
- p. MHLS Central Library / Collection Development Advisory Committee
- q. Dutchess County Directors Association
- r. Bravery in Literature Awards Ceremony, Bard College
- s. Ulster County Library Association
  - i. Facilitation: Plan of Service Focus Group
- t. Resilience Hub Cohort Kick-Off Event
- u. Presentation/Facilitation: New Directors Forum (Topic: Working with your Board)
- v. 2024 Board Committee Chair Kick-Off Meeting
- w. Putnam County Library Association
- x. Meeting: The Library of Local Program Participants
- y. MHLS Directors Association Meeting
- z. Consultation: Sarah Grinberg, Vice President, D.R. Evarts Library (Athens)
- aa. Consultation: Millbrook Library Board and 414 Campaign Committee (w/ Laura Crisci, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator)
- bb. MHLS Incentives Committee
- cc. Meeting: Nate Hill, Executive Director of METRO to discuss their new [Library Field](#) project
- dd. MHLS Bylaws, Policy and Procedures Committee