Notes from South Central Federation trustees discussion in Columbus, August 30, 2024

Questions from trustees:

* What are other libraries doing to advocate?
* How do we reach the people in the middle?
* How do we respond to someone who doesn’t understand libraries?
* How do we advocate through controversy without becoming political?
* When should we be political?

What does it mean to advocate for the library?

* Talking up the library; storytelling
* Relationship building (one-on-one)
* Building group support and coalitions
* Building awareness among the general public

What are your values? Which of your values connect with the library’s mission?

* Literacy
* Education
* Information access
* Lifelong learning
* The library as a community center
* Social justice
* Safety; a trusted resource during emergencies
* Public space for everyone
* Social infrastructure
* Connection
* Reducing isolation
* Trust
* Local history and culture
* Adapting to local needs
* Future-forward
* Partnerships
* First Amendment rights

What do your decision makers care about?

* Money/funding/fiscal responsibility
* Schools
* Infrastructure
* Housing
* Jobs
* Streets
* Emergency services
* Family
* Civility
* Local culture
* Serving all constituents within the city/county/district

How do we know?

Listening to decision makers and other stakeholders as we meet them throughout the community:

* City council meetings
* Senior center
* Grocery store, post office
* Social media
* Surveys
* Community events (fair, rodeo, etc)
* Rotary, Lions, etc

How do we appeal to their values?

* Find out if they are data people or story people or both
* Make a practice of sharing stories with the board where a person has been able to make a positive impact by using the library; in turn, the board can share these stories with the community
* Use interactive presentations, asking questions to get people involved.
* Think of libraries as social infrastructure
* Work on partnerships and think in terms of how we can make our partners (especially commissioners) jobs easier