

**Marketing and Public Relations**  
**Prepared by Sara Groves**  
**For June 2011 Commission Meeting**

**Goal One – Content** - *Montana State Library (MSL) acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana library partners and patrons.*

**Ready 2 Read** – The new bins are being distributed to libraries. Libraries must have completed a survey, completed two trainings in early childhood, and completed a form outlining the trainings they have completed and their plans for a “Books and Babies” program. Our goal is to distribute 20 new bins to libraries around the state.

I completed the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation application and requested approximately \$100,000 from them to fund a wide variety of projects for Ready 2 Read, specifically projects that support our long-term vision of the program and how we will continue to grow it. FIB asked if they could share our application with their friends at the Washington Foundation and of course, I said “Yes!”

The Washington Foundation asked us to submit an application with a quick turn-around time of less than a week. After speaking at great length with their director, I submitted an application for approximately \$10,000 to fund some marketing and PR materials that will help parents and caregivers understand the value of sharing literacy with their children.

I expect to hear from both foundations soon.

I was also asked to attend the statewide Early Childhood summit, which took place here in Helena, but was attended by organizations that support early childhood development from throughout Montana. Additionally, there were several state agencies represented, including the Office of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Cindy Christin, our early childhood services consultant for the State Library, also attended in her capacity as Director of Children’s Services for the Bozeman Public Library with the Bozeman Early Child Group. It was a great opportunity to network, specifically with other state agencies, and to remind organizations from around the state about how invaluable their local libraries are in terms of providing services to children. I have had several follow-up meetings with individuals I met and feel that it has resulted in the State Library really being included at the table in terms of early childhood services.

I attended and assisted with Linda Clark’s presentation at the Montana Library Association conference about all of the current research that is coming out on early childhood development.

Late last year, MontanaPBS approached me about a potential partnership between our two organizations to support early learning efforts. The first result of that partnership is the distribution of something called "Library Corners," which include an 8X12 foot colorful rug and two approximately two feet by eight feet banners featuring favorite PBS Kids characters. Libraries will also receive approximately 50 books to add to their children's collections. We currently have three of these Library Corners to distribute. I developed an application with MontanaPBS and distributed it to all libraries who have participated in the Ready 2 Read program.

Next on the horizon will be "Super Why Reading Camps", which are early literacy camps for preschoolers. These five-day intensive camps are geared to help low-income preschoolers develop some of the lifelong literacy skills they may be lacking. Using a multi-media approach with a focus on the show "Super Why", these camps have resulted in a 95% increase in students' abilities to identify letters and sounds at the end of the one-week timeframe! MontanaPBS wants to host these camps in libraries around the state.

More programs are in the works as well.

**Ready 2 Read Goes Wild!** – The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP), in partnership with the Montana State Library (MSL) and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Head Start division received a small grant from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Council for Environmental Education to help support the Read 2 Read Goes Wild! program. As part of this grant, trainings have taken place at Fort Peck and Fort Belknap, in addition to the one that already occurred at the Crow reservation. Plans are underway to conduct a two-day early childhood training in Ronan in June. The Ronan Public Library, Salish-Kootenai College Library, and the North Lake County Public Library have been asked to participate and would like to help.

**Treasure Hunt for the Treasure State** – The Montana State Library hosted the scavenger hunt, called Treasure Hunt for the Treasure State, which is designed to increase use of the statewide databases. There were four categories of participation: elementary, middle school, high school, and adult public. Two prizes were available in each category of participation. Because we assumed elementary classes would work on this as a class, we provided two pizza parties for the winning classes. In the remaining categories of participation, two iPods will be awarded in each category for a total of six iPods distributed. Prizes were provided using funds from our marketing budget with Gale Cengage.

Every day, the State Library posted new clues for which people had to access the Gale databases to find the answers. Players had to submit their answers with the database in which they found the answer. Unfortunately, we saw a decrease in our stats this year. We met and reviewed everything that happened with the game this year and

have decided to try the event at a different time of year because we believe that librarians are burnt-out after attending MLA. We are going to try the game in mid-September dependent on our vendor situation at the time.

On the plus side, this year I worked with the winners and their libraries so that the libraries could present the prize. Each library turned it into a media event, which resulted in great press for them, and more awareness of the event and our services for us.

**Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)** – I am part of the committee that is developing the new “Companion” series. The Fishing Companion was launched for the Montana Library Association conference with a host of new publicity materials including a new Web site, as well as a poster, a bookmark, postcards, table toppers, a Web button and banner, and a series of written materials, including a customizable news release, a statewide news release, and a newsletter article libraries can download and use.