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Announcements

There is still time to be considered for the upcoming **MLS Board elections**. Petitions for Inclusion on the Slate of Candidates are due this Friday, April 3, 2009. The current slate which was presented to the Board at their March 16, 2009 meeting can be found at <http://www.mls.lib.il.us/board> along with candidate applications and further information. Four positions are to be filled (3 Public and 1 Academic). Electronic voting will be opened to the membership in the next issue of *MLS E-nnounce* on April 15, 2009.

MLS Public Libraries are invited to participate in the **Museum Adventure Pass program** sponsored by MLS, NSLS, DLS and Macy's. Full details on the benefits of the program and a sample participation form can be found at <http://www.mls.lib.il.us/consulting/pdf/MAPLetter.pdf>. Participation forms are due to Kathy Roegge by May 15th, 2009. For more information, please contact Kathy at roeggek@mls.lib.il.us.

The next **MLS Orientation** for new library staff at member libraries will take place Thursday, April 23, 2009, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Tour our suburban Burr Ridge office, meet the staff in SWAN, Consulting, and more. See Delivery first-hand. Learn about the networking groups that MLS supports and hear about upcoming Continuing Education opportunities. Register at <http://www.librarylearning.info/events/?eventID=5281>.

Registration is open for the **MLS Summer School Institute: Assessment**, Thursday, August 6, 2009, MLS Burr Ridge. This full day program providing 6 CPDUs, will include keynote speaker Jane Sharka, on "Why Assess Learning in the Library," and other sessions on how to identify, measure, and assess your library's impact, and communicate your library's value to administration. Register at <http://www.librarylearning.info/events/?eventID=5028>. Questions

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MLS member library staff and trustees, who are not personal members of ALA, can sign up for a **discounted rate to attend the ALA National Conference** in Chicago. Save 15% off the non-member registration rate when using this special MLS discount. For early bird registration pricing, visit <http://www.librarylearning.info/events/?eventID=6189> and register before May 15th, 2009. Pay by credit card or send a check to MLS offices Attn: ALA Pricing. Regular pre-registration rates will also be available after March 5th, and will be announced at a later date. Questions contact consultants@mls.lib.il.us.

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MLS Strategic Plan 2009-2012 Highlights

At the February 9, 2009 MLS Board Meeting, the MLS Board approved the 2009 – 2012 Strategic Plan. This article highlights four of the seven new growth projects and the impact these projects will have on the future of MLS and its members.

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http://www.mls.lib.il.us/enounce/2009/03_07/mlsstrategicplan.asp

Continuing Education Events

[Basic Reference](#), Jerry Dachs, Thursday, April 16, 2009, 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 – p.m., MLS Burr Ridge

[Futureproofing Your Library](#), George Needham and Joan Frye Williams, Wednesday, April 22, 2009, 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., MLS Burr Ridge

[Public Library Security](#), Paul Timm, RETA Security, Inc., Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., MLS Burr Ridge

[Basic Collection Development](#), Jerry Dachs, Thursday, April 30, 2009, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., MLS Burr Ridge

[Flash Mentoring: Connecting New Library Staff and Seasoned Professionals with only a 2 Hour Commitment](#), Friday May 15, 2009, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., MLS Chicago **Note: deadline to register is April 15, 2009**

For more information and to register, visit the MLS CE Calendar at <http://www.librarylearning.info>.

[Permalink]

Grants & Awards

The **full LSTA grant application** is due Friday, May 1, 2009. MLS library members with questions or interest in having their applications reviewed should contact the MLS Consultants at consultants@mls.lib.il.us. Draft applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 23, 2009 to be reviewed by the consultants.

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Technology: Library Applications for Social Networking

It seems like everyone is joining Facebook, MySpace, and other social networking tools, including libraries. Why are libraries joining these social networking sites, how are they managing their online presence, and what impact are they experiencing? This article visits a few MLS libraries to learn what being a Friend @ Your Library really means.

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http://www.mls.lib.il.us/enounce/2009/03_07/facebook.asp

From the Director's Desk

Alice Calabrese-Berry, MLS Executive Director recently vacationed with her grandchildren on a Disney Cruise. "I was anticipating a pretty standard cruise with a lot of Disney characters around to entertain us. What became apparent right away was what is coined as The Disney Difference. Every experience was imbued with the core value of focusing everything they did on the client." Read how Alice's trip caused her to reflect on MLS's desire to create its own "MLS Difference" and be a dynamic and responsive center of communication, collaboration, and education for member libraries.

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http://www.mls.lib.il.us/enounce/2009/03_07/directorsdesk.asp

Member Spotlight: Philip D. Armour Elementary School

In 2008, Heart of America partnered with Target in their Volunteer Library Makeover Projects, providing paint, new furniture, carpeting, and new books for libraries across the country. MLS School Library member Philip D. Armour Elementary School was one of the libraries selected for the makeover. Read their story, see the before and after pictures, and learn how your library could be made over next.

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http://www.mls.lib.il.us/enounce/2009/03_07/armourschool.asp

Next Issue

The next issue of *MLS E-nounce* will appear April 15, 2009.

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MLS Strategic Plan 2009-2012

by Su Bochenski, MLS

MLS is pleased to present its new strategic plan, approved by the MLS Board on February 9, 2009. The new plan covers the upcoming three fiscal years, beginning July 1, 2009 and ending June 2012.

The plan is organized by six high level strategic initiatives, with core operations and new growth projects categorized within the initiatives. This article highlights four of the seven new growth projects and the impact these projects will have on the future of MLS and its members. To read the entire strategic plan, including the MLS Mission, Vision, and Guiding Values visit <http://www.mls.lib.il.us/aboutus>. The full plan also includes a brief introduction that explains the strategic planning process.

Empower Learning

Under the Empower Learning initiative, the new growth project is “Provide programming in alternate formats, potentially through online classes, blended learning, podcasts, and recorded programs.”

Through feedback from our members, and with an eye to the future, MLS is planning to expand our current Continuing Education program (<http://www.mls.lib.il.us/consulting/ce.asp>) by offering events in alternate formats. While many people like to learn in a face-to-face environment, it is often difficult to get away from the library for a half or whole day event. Offering alternative formats allows MLS members to receive training in a variety of ways, often at a lower cost and with much more flexible timing. MLS does not plan to eliminate in-person events, but rather to supplement them with more options.

Facilitate Knowledge Sharing

Under the Facilitate Knowledge Sharing initiative, the new growth project is “Develop ‘Knowledge Central’ online tool to facilitate member to member and member to system information sharing.”

During the member and staff focus groups, a consistent theme was the desire and need for a repository of information, knowledge, and expertise on a variety of topics. We realized that most, if not all, of the specific request could be consolidated into a single online tool for both staff and members to contribute to and use. Examples of some components of the tool (preliminarily named ‘Knowledge Central’) are member areas of expertise, library technology footprint, a vendor list, best practices, trends, mentor connections, and communities of practice. MLS expects that a knowledge repository like this will free up some staff time currently spent on answering routine questions (What online catalog do all the schools use? Who has a recommendation for a roofing contractor?), allowing staff to concentrate on creating and delivering new projects and services.

Harness Technology

Under the Harness Technology initiative, the new growth project is “Study the feasibility of providing technology-related services to members.”

Constantly changing technology coupled with the continually increasing demand for technology services makes this strategy a hot topic for many of our member libraries. MLS plans to complete a study that proposes solutions to member technology requests, which may include technology consultants, planning assistance, technology group purchases, implementation assistance, a technology “sandbox,” etc. MLS recognizes both the importance of technology in libraries, as well as the fact that many libraries simply do not have the appropriate staff to implement and maintain even the minimum to meet their technology needs.

Enhance Resource Sharing

Under the Enhance Resource Sharing initiative, the new growth project is “Explore and design a group purchase program that balances benefit and expense.” MLS understands that one of our greatest strengths is the purchasing power we potentially have with our 500+ members. However, an excellent group purchase program requires a significant time commitment as well as skilled support.

Group purchases for MLS typically include:

- Seeking out opportunities that are desirable and beneficial to our members
- Negotiating pricing
- Marketing the service
- Coordinating contracts
- Implementing the product or service
- Providing financial, billing, and administrative support
- Providing ongoing service support
- Managing renewals

MLS will take all the above factors into consideration as we investigate and plan a group purchase program that will leverage our purchasing power and benefit our members.

To all of the library staff members who contributed their time, energy, and input towards the development of the new strategic plan, MLS passes along its appreciation and gratitude. Questions about this article or the MLS strategic plan, contact Alice Calabrese, MLS Executive Director at calabresea@mls.lib.il.us.

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Technology: Library Applications for Social Networking

by Christina Stoll, MLS

Become a Fan of my Library on Facebook! Will you be my friend on MySpace? It seems like everyone is joining Facebook, MySpace, and other social networking tools, including libraries. Why are libraries joining these social networking sites, how are they managing their online presence, and what impact are they experiencing? This article visits a few MLS libraries to learn what being a Friend @ Your Library means.

Last year, the staff at the Oak Lawn Public Library (<http://www.oaklawnlibrary.org>) took part in a free class called *GSU Library Web 2.0 Tools*, offered by Governor's State University <http://www.govst.edu>. Within the class they created Blogs, Flickr, YouTube, Delicious, and a page on Facebook, which resulted in the staff initiating a desire for the library to have its own Facebook account.

The OLPL staff use their library's Facebook account to promote upcoming programming, new services, and to connect with what they see as a community in itself, where some of their own patrons may exist. Their hope is by having a presence in Facebook, this will encourage patrons to visit their physical building one day. Patty Lerner, Computer Center Supervisor at OLPL, is the administrator of the library's Facebook page. OLPL's 82 Facebook fans come from all over the state as well as AZ, CO, NY, and the Netherlands.

To set up and manage a library Facebook account, Patty reports that in the beginning she averaged of an hour a day for 2 weeks, her work including researching new applications or other Facebook information. "It takes a lot of work to get it started but when it is done it was worth the effort. You need to keep up on the information. Keep looking for new ideas, [with] Facebook always changing". Questions contact Patty Lerner at plerner@olpl.org.

New to Facebook, the Downers Grove Public Library (<http://www.downersgrovelibrary.org>) joined earlier this year, as part of their Library 2.0 staff training movement. A prelude to going public with a new web site later this year, the library created a Facebook profile so staff could learn more about it.

Several library staff contributed to their page, including reference, teen, and the library's publicity staff member. They use their Facebook profile to post links to new books and other readers' advisory information, list upcoming programs, and feature photos of library happenings. With 40 fans, the Downers Grove Library's Facebook page can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Downers-Grove-IL/Downers-Grove-Public-Library/65026684936>.

Advice from the Downers Grove library staff to other libraries thinking about joining Facebook or a similar tool includes being aware that users expect dynamic content. Libraries need to update their Facebook information frequently or patrons will not view it as a reliable source of current information. Determining who is responsible for updating content and even setting a goal of how many updates per day or week may be needed. Questions, contact Carol Kania, Publicity and Program Coordinator, at ckania@downersgrovelibrary.org.

The Indian Prairie Public Library (<http://www.indianprairielibrary.org>) joined Facebook last summer. With 48 fans and growing, their page offers a RSS of the library's weekly events, the latest teen Flickr photos, and discussions from teens regarding the library's game tournaments. Questions contact David Bunn at bunnd@indianprairielibrary.org.

Debbie Griggs, Head of Reference at the Brookfield Public Library (<http://www.brookfieldpubliclibrary.info>) is trying a different twist with Facebook and other social networking tools. The library will debut online networking classes during National Library Week (www.ala.org/nlw). The library staff intend for these classes to aid their patrons during the current economic situation, as another facet for job searching. Questions, contact Debbie Griggs at dgriggs@brookfieldpubliclibrary.info.

Academic libraries are also joining Facebook. Northeastern Illinois University's Ronald Williams Library has a fan page on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Chicago-IL/NEIU-Ronald-Williams-Library/7250437773>. With 58 fans, the

library's page offers live chat via Meebo during library hours, the LibGuides (research guides) module, a slideshow tour of the library featuring Sock Monkey, and photos. Questions, contact Lisa Wallis, Web Services Librarian, Northeastern Illinois University at L-Wallis@neiu.edu.

Social Networking isn't just for entire organizations. Individual departments within a library are finding uses for joining Facebook and MySpace. Here two Youth Services Departments and an Adult Services Department in three different public libraries share their stories.

The Homewood Public Library Youth Service's Department (<http://homewoodlibrary.org/kids>) has a profile on Facebook, which the staff say is easy and fun! With 73 friends, the Homewood YS Department uses their Facebook profile to publicize their story hours. The staff post the books they read in storyhour, pictures of the kids (a photo permission request is included with storyhour registration), and links.

While several staff at Homewood use Facebook personally, the idea to create a library profile resulted from staff attending a tutorial given by the computer services department. "This [training] made us realize what a great opportunity [Facebook could be] for us to share books we were reading, publicize events, and get to know our community," states youth services librarian Sarah Mercier.

The reaction by staff and the community has been very positive. Parents enjoy interacting with each other as well as getting updates on youth events. The library's presence on Facebook has also brought the staff together by becoming friends with each other online, and allows the staff to get to know their patrons better, which has an impact on the programs they create and offer, providing a much better fit based on community needs.

To promote their presence on Facebook to their community, the library staff offer tutorial sessions, hang flyers at the Youth Services Desk, and spread by word of mouth to parents signing their children up for events at the library. To other libraries thinking about joining Facebook or MySpace, the staff at Homewood did have reservations about privacy issues, but they have yet to receive any complaints.

Sarah adds "The outcome is worth the effort. It is such a valuable, free and easy tool that libraries can use to publicize events and their collection, as well as answer reference questions. It also builds a sense of community between staff and patrons. As a librarian I really feel that we have to embrace using social networking technologies in an informed and relevant way in order to serve our patrons to the best of our abilities." Questions can be directed to Sarah Mercier at sarahm@homewoodlibrary.net.

The Forest Park Public Library's Youth Service Department (http://fppl.org/stuff_to_do.aspx) went with a MySpace profile. The staff average two posts a week, which comes to a couple hours of work a week to update. Managing their page also includes having a disclaimer regarding the posting of inappropriate language which gives the library the right to not add you or drop you as a friend. The staff also made the decision to approve all comments posted to their MySpace page. As an incentive to increase traffic to their MySpace page, last summer the library provided extra coupons to teens during their summer reading program, to those who added the library as a friend. Susan Kunkle, Youth Services Outreach Librarians reports that this effort was very successful. "It got a bunch of kids to go to our page that hadn't been there before and they kept us on their lists." Questions, contact Susan Kunkle skunkle@fppl.org.

The Adult Services Department at the Alsip-Merrionette Park Library (<http://www.alsiplibrary.net>) signed on to Facebook at the end of September 2008. With 43 fans of their library you can check out their page at <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Alsip-Merrionette-Park-Library/34136341834>.

The staff at Alsip-Merrionette credit a MLS workshop they attended on teen websites in getting them to join Facebook. At the training session they also learned to set up their page as an institutional account, so the staff had fun and created a "fun mascot" in the library's name - Alsi-Merri Brary. The library sees their presence on Facebook as a way to stay connected with their patrons, and to share library news, upcoming programming, and post pictures. A recent connection made through their account was a former staff member who moved out of state got back in touch with the library by becoming a "fan"! Questions contact Colleen Dearborn, Reference Librarian / Adult Services Department at cdearbor@sslic.net.

Questions about this article can be sent to the MLS Consultants at consultants@mls.lib.il.us.

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From the Director's Desk

by Alice Calabrese-Berry, Executive Director

I had the opportunity recently to take some time with my grandchildren on a Disney Cruise. We went with Disney both because of an excellent discount from a friend of my daughter's who works for the cruise line, but also because of the activities for the children. I was anticipating a pretty standard cruise with a lot of Disney characters around to entertain us.

What became apparent right away was what is coined as "The Disney Difference." From the moment we stepped off the plane, we were greeted personally by Disney staff. They knew us by name, and made everything simple. Every experience was imbued with the core value of focusing everything they did on the client. Each staff person who we passed on the ship, regardless of what they were doing, stopped to greet us. I sensed that they took great pride in their work, from the cleaning staff to the concierge.

This focus on the client was apparent in the arrangement of the ship as well. The rooms were bigger, and there were less people on board than a standard cruise. No one had to wait in line for programs or services, and they made changes based on the needs of those on board. We even found our boarding passes printed out for us on our beds the night before we were to disembark. The orchestration of these services was incredible.

As happens often, contemplating my cruise experience connected to thoughts on the library profession. I've heard Joan Frye Williams speak on making the patron in your library feel like they are the most important person in the room. She found that library patrons felt that they were "card-carrying members," and felt that they had special benefits as a result. Libraries can capitalize on this mentality to make "The Library Difference" obvious to patrons so that we can stand out, drive service, and continue to be viable to our communities.

Also on my mind is what lessons I can learn from the deep-set cultural values of Disney and how that translates into service to their "patrons." In the five years that I've been at MLS, we've had tremendous change in the culture of the organization. I feel that staff are more empowered to serve the membership, feel like they can ask questions, and are true colleagues with all fellow staff members. I also believe we've made tremendous strides in listening to member needs and meeting them through networking, broader CE training that reaches many levels of library services, and staff owning the relationship between themselves and the membership. We've worked hard to break down silos and encourage communication across departments so that the member ultimately gets better and more efficient service.

I also acknowledge some of the challenges we've had in meeting all members' expectations, especially in terms of communication. I feel we've made strides in delivering our message, in listening, and being present. We now need to work on how we can incorporate feedback on our services and be even more transparent in how we operate. It's a delicate line to walk, and I ask for your patience and input as we move forward. I am committed to learning from our experiences and moving forward in a positive manner.

In the recently developed strategic plan (http://www.mls.lib.il.us/aboutus/MLS_FY2010_FY2012_Strategic_Plan_Full_for_Members.pdf), the board wrote down for the first time the cultural values they feel we hold as an organization. It is my challenge now to make sure we are living these values, incorporating them into our internal processes, and communicating them to members and staff alike. I feel that we can craft the "MLS Difference" to build on our strengths and keep focused on our vision of being a dynamic and responsive center of communication, collaboration, and education for member libraries.

Questions about this article can be directed to Alice Calabrese-Berry at calabresea@mls.lib.il.us.

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Member Spotlight: Philip D. Armour Elementary School

by Karen Blair, Armour Elementary School & Christina Stoll, MLS

The Heart of America Foundation's (<http://www.heartofamerica.org>) "programs focus on literacy and community service, utilizing a series of connected programs to accomplish our mission: to teach the values at the heart of America and to teach people, particularly children, that they help themselves when they help others. We identify and reward inspirational young people and adults, and we send them into schools across the country - public, private, rural and inner-city - to inspire others to emulate their good work and commit to public service."

In 2008, Heart of America partnered with Target in their Volunteer Library Makeover Projects, providing the paint, new furniture, carpeting, and new library books for libraries across the country.

The Target Volunteers Library Project

(<http://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031766>) supports "local schools by donating books and volunteering to help with school library makeovers. These makeovers utilize the design and construction expertise of the Target Property Development team. In 2008, more than 500 Target stores took part in the program. In 2009, every Target store in 49 states will participate."

One of the libraries selected for a makeover was the MLS School Library member Philip D. Armour Elementary School (<http://www.armour.cps.k12.il.us>). Library Media Specialist Karen Blair, who has worked at Armour for 14 years, shares the experience of being selected for the project and its impact on the school and the library.

Profile on Philip D. Armour Elementary School

The two schools served by Armour Elementary support over 360 students Pre-K through 8th grade. The school buildings reside in a campus park in the Bridgeport neighborhood, a high poverty multi-ethnic community. The school focuses on helping its students become functioning citizens in a global society, by balancing education with cultural experiences. Other opportunities that the school has participated with include a Joffrey Ballet dance program and a partnership with the Boy's and Girl's Club of Chicago. Students have several clubs to get involved with such as Student Council, Science Club, Drama Club, Dance Club, and several Reading Clubs.

The entire school's faculty, staff, and student body focuses its efforts on improving the schools learning environment. Up from the 30th percentile in Reading and Math just a few years ago, the students are now in the 60's and climbing.

Karen oversees both school libraries. The school's main building serves grades 4-8, while its branch building serves grades K-4. Within both buildings, the collections hold close to 4,000 books, half of which was provided by Target. At the branch library Karen's focuses her time "instilling a love of reading in the students, and creating an environment conducive to reading and research."

Since her collection is not yet automated, she assists students with finding books by educating them about the classification system. Using the library's three computers she schedules students for 20 minute sessions. Given the library's small size, seating is limited, so she groups the students with half working on projects or checking out materials, and the other half participates in story-time.

In the main building, the library is combined with a computer lab, Karen's ideal dream for a school library. The students are given formal computer training, conduct research using both books and Internet resources, and have a flexible schedule for checking out books. When their school work is completed for the day she encourages students to relax with a book. The library provides a quite relaxed environment which the students love.

Getting Involved in the Target Volunteers Library Project

Karen first learned about the Heart of America Foundation's Target Volunteers Library Project through another group Chicago Cares with whom she has partnered with in the past. She applied and her library was selected as a finalist, which then involved being interviewed by a group of executives from the companies involved in the

makeover. Together with the school's principal Shelley Cordova, and assistant principal Jane Sims, they put in an impassioned plea, and then let their old, dilapidated library rooms do the rest.

They were ultimately chosen as of the library's receiving a makeover, with the remodeling starting in July 2008 and completion September 8, 2008.

In the branch building, the library was moved to a brighter, cheerier room, which was then plastered, painted, carpeted, and given new shelves and furniture.

The remodel of the library in the school's main building was more extensive. Walls were removed to combine two rooms to accommodate a computer lab and library. Painting, carpeting, plastering, new furniture, new electrical connections, and a mural painted by Cecelia Washington, a renowned Disney artist, completed the project.

Pictures of the remodeling project can be found on the Heart of America's web site at http://www.heartofamerica.org/READesign_Chicago.htm.

Karen says that both libraries still take her breath away. They have become the focal point of the school. Most meetings are now held in the main library and the students are so comfortable in their new environment she has a difficult time getting the students to leave. Karen feels that students are reading more and she senses a new found pride and ownership over the school and the library. Students are especially careful not to leave trash and she has yet to find any graffiti.

Want to have your library made over?

Karen provides tips to other libraries interested in applying for the Target Volunteers Library Project. She says start by assessing your space. The Target / Heart of America team only does a few schools in the country in a year. If your library only needs a facelift, you probably won't qualify. Once you do apply, make sure you are able to convey your needs clearly. Use pictures and make it clear that you and your principal and other key staff will be committed to the project.

Visit the Heart of America Foundation's web site at <http://www.heartofamerica.org/READesign.htm> to download an application and contact information.

Karen remarks that she used to be one of those skeptics when it came to corporate giving, doubting the signs she saw posted in Target stores claiming they helped the community. This project has changed her thinking. "Not only did [Target] provide most of the funding for this project, but they are continually providing volunteers to help out at the school. I am incredibly touched by all Target has done for us and can't sing their praises loudly enough! I am now their biggest fan!"

Questions about this article or the Armour Elementary School contact Karen Blair at kablair@yahoo.com.





The re-modeled library at the main building, doubled in size for the addition of a computer lab being used by students.





One of the Cecelia Washington murals, and a group of students in the branch building's library along with librarian Karen Blair and school principal Shelley Cordova.

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