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New Jersey State Library

Throughout the year, the New Jersey State Library engaged in various community activities across the state. Selected highlights from the year are summarized below.

Awards and Honors. The New Jersey State Library received a National Innovation Award from the National Council of State Governments for its “New Jersey Knowledge Initiative Program.” State Librarian, Norma Blake, was named Librarian of the Year by the national publication *Library Journal*. She received her award at the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association

Events. The 2007 statewide Summer Reading Program was successful again this year, with 135,000 children reading more than one million books. The third annual Library Appreciation Days, a partnership with Barnes and Noble and the New Jersey Library Association, generated over \$3,000 to help support next year’s statewide program.

The fifth annual Library Trustee Institute was held in September, with almost two hundred library trustees in attendance. In similar activities, an orientation for public library directors and workshops on the preservation and conservation of library materials and disaster preparedness were held this past year. Workshops on outcomes-based evaluation (a new method to assess the impact of library service on users), were also presented to library staff, and JerseyCat training for library staff on the statewide interlibrary loan system was delivered via webinar format for the first time this year.

Resources. An additional database, GreenFile, was added to JerseyClicks, the State Library’s Web portal, at no additional charge to our users. More than twelve million searches were performed on JerseyClicks, and some four million documents were viewed, printed, and downloaded. JerseyCat, the statewide interlibrary loan system, was also a popular resource, and 136,208 requests were filled.

New Jersey Knowledge Initiative. As a result of the Governor’s budget recommendation, \$1 million was eliminated from funding for the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative, which resulted in the State Library’s having to curtail this important program at the end of February.

New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped

The New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped (NJLBH) provides services to New Jersey residents of all ages who cannot easily read standard printed materials because of a visual impairment, a physical handicap, or a learning disability. Resources, partnerships, programs, and grants are described below.

Programs. In partnerships with state agencies and local organizations, NJLBH hosted and sponsored nine American Sign Language Children’s Story Hours in FY 2008. One program,

with Kindred Souls Canine Center owner Pete Campion, was filmed by MTV. Students from the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf and other children with disabilities regularly attend the Story Hours. NJLBH also initiated a Book Club for its customers, and Book Club programs were held in September, December, and June.

The New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped (NJLBH) also hosted the Wordskills Program providing summer jobs with on-site job training for high school students with visual impairments and multiple disabilities. The program was sponsored by a partnership between NJLBH, New Jersey Department of Human Services Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), and the College of New Jersey's School of Education.

NJLBH celebrated its 40th anniversary by hosting its biennial Fall Festival in October 2007. The theme, "Accessibility in the Arts," celebrated the perspective and abilities that individuals with visual impairments bring to the arts. NJLBH celebrated 25 years of Audiovision service with a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Awards Ceremony in April 2008.

Grants. Under a grant from the New Jersey Division for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, NJLBH continued to lend assistive devices such as TTYs and baby-cry signalers and maintain a special collection of books and videos on Deaf culture, American Sign Language, and other relevant topics. The Library has established 18 Regional Resource Centers in public libraries throughout the state that lend assistive devices to the public.

Technology

The New Jersey State Library Information Technology team continued to improve, and add new library customers to, the Jersey Connect statewide network. JerseyConnect builds on the Hub Libraries program, which was established in 1998 to help to bridge the digital divide by providing low-cost Internet access and related services to public libraries in New Jersey. Launched in February of 2006, JerseyConnect features next-generation infrastructure and services that allow for improvement of the services previously provided through the Hub Libraries program. In addition, the JerseyConnect infrastructure and service model are designed for maximum flexibility, scalability, and redundancy. During the past year, several new infrastructure elements were introduced, including a new blade server and Storage Area Network (SAN) environment. JerseyConnect currently serves over 320 public library entities in New Jersey.