

Ethnic Services Round Table
Combined Board/Membership Meeting Minutes
Friday, January 22, 2016
Harrison Public Library
Harrison, New York

Attendees: Grace Riario-RCLS, Galina Chernykh-Harrison, Fred J. Gitner, Queens Library, Manny Figueroa-Queens Library, Selina Sharmin-Queens Library, Wilma Glover-Koomson-HKDPL, Tracy Allen-FML, Xi (Cathy) Chen-Queens Library, David Nochimson-NYPL and Tata Canuelas-White Plains.

Absent: Brigid Cahalan

Meeting was called to order at 10:50 am. Manny Figueroa made a motion to approve the October 23rd ESRT meeting minutes with corrections; it was seconded by Tracy Allen. Motion passed.

1. **Treasurer's Report:** Fred Gitner submitted a Treasurer's report indicating revenue and expenses as of November 30, 2015. Our current balance is \$3,113.10 after a revenue of \$306 from raffle tickets sold at the 2015 NYLA Conference booth, a donation from Anne Hofmann for \$100 and the ESRT's donation of \$360 to the NYLA Capital fund. A thank you note will be sent to Anne, who has been a strong supporter of our round table for many years. Grace Riario made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Galina Chernykh seconded it. Motion passed.
2. **Publications:** The Board will make an effort to promote our publication, *Connecting Cultures*. Irina Kuharets will produce a new flyer to promote the book. The flyer will go to the System Outreach Coordinators. We will translate the flyer into different languages, as appropriate. Manny will distribute the flyer to REFORMA. Tata Canuelas will develop a Spanish and Bilingual booklist for the next NYLA conference.
3. **Upcoming meeting and activities:** The Board will research cultural and social events across the state for our members. Tata Canuelas will research the Museo del Barrio – elmuseo.org and Manny Figueroa will research Ellis Island as cultural event options. David Nochimson will research the possibility of having our May meeting at the new 53rd Street NYPL library location.
4. **The 2016 Annual New York Library Association conference:** Program Chair, Wilma Glover-Koomson presented three new programs to the ESRT members and Board that have been submitted to NYLA.
 - A. *Ukrainian, Spanish, Polish, Oh My!*

We all serve diverse populations in our communities. In many countries libraries are not free, nor are they open to all members of the community. Each community may require different kinds of outreach in order to motivate library participation, whether it be marketing to a religious group that you have a prayer space, or to the undocumented that you don't require citizenship. How can you be sure that you are not ignoring a growing minority community? How do you identify new

diverse patrons? How do you get the message to them? How can you tailor the program to appeal to that specific audience?

B. Unpleasant Everyday Language: Microaggression

Patrons approach a service desk often skeptical and hesitant when they see someone "not like them." "You look Indian/Chinese - you all look alike." "How did you get to the United States from your country?" "You don't look African - what language do you speak?" These statements are often heard, but are not meant to be hurtful. (Some staff are microaggressive, too!) They are curious statements and questions but, what is a staffer to do? How should you react? We will examine how microaggression has become a phenomena, and how to deal with microaggression @ the library.

C. How Do I SAY That?!

As libraries are evolving into community places, library staff are being increasingly challenged to assist patrons who are struggling emotionally. It can be hard to know what to say or do when someone you barely know is agitated or distressed. Learn how to best address and support such patrons, de-escalate tension, and support other staff in this endeavor. The two presenters will include a highly experienced librarian who has made compassionate and skilled response a part of her work and a licensed clinical social worker who has worked extensively in crisis intervention. Attendees will learn: why people with behavioral health issues are often drawn to libraries; how some libraries are creatively responding; when and how to engage individuals who are struggling emotionally; counter-intuitive signs that are cause for concern; how to de-escalate conflict; the real difference that libraries can make in someone's recovery; and why this is SO IMPORTANT

5. **New Business:** The NYLA Council asked what we can do to attract diversity to the librarianship field. The ESRT members and Board came up with the following suggestions:
- Develop a minimum Standard for Salaries in the profession, similar to New Jersey
 - Educating children about librarianship and the importance of the work librarians do
 - Follow Queens Library's example; they send out librarians to Career Days at the different high schools
 - Imitate Minnesota's Hennepin County program – Talk to community agencies that have connections with diverse communities to seek people who may be interested in becoming a librarian and give them monetary support
 - Encourage libraries to hire people who reflect their community
 - Develop a mentoring program for diverse people who are thinking about being a librarian or entering the field
 - Introduce an Information Study Program at universities in order for students to learn what librarians do
 - Tuition assistance
 - Library trainee program

Guest Speaker: Kiyoko Brown, Japanese Collection Development and Community Outreach

We had the honor to have Mrs. Kiyoko Brown speak about the Harrison Public Library Japanese Collection she developed. Mrs. Brown talked about the importance of education and how essential

books were to her and her family. She discussed the difficulties she experienced when moving to the United States and how critical it was to her that her library purchased Japanese language books. The Japanese Community started fundraising for the purchase of Japanese books in 1982 by selling yakitori (Japanese type of skewered chicken) at the Great to Live in Harrison Day. Mrs. Kiyoko Brown has donated \$127,300 to the Harrison Public Library since 1982. She also facilitates English as a Second language classes to the new Americans in her community.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m and followed by a tour of the Harrison Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Riario,
ESRT President