Volume 23 Issue 4 Introduction

Esther Moberg
Seaside Public Library

From the Guest Editor

ESTHER MOBERG is the current vice president/president-elect of the Oregon Library Association. Esther is the Director of the Seaside Public Library and serves on the Clatsop Community College Board. She is the current chair of the Oregon Digital Library Consortium and the past chair of the board for Libraries Reading Outreach in Clatsop County. She earned her MLS from Emporia State University and her BS in Organization Administration from Northwestern University (St. Paul, MN). She has worked in public libraries, academic libraries, and an elementary school library. Her work in libraries has spanned over 19 years. She is a member of ALA and OLA, and she is also a public information officer for the City of Seaside.

Llamas, Adulting 101, Henna Art, Raptors, and Trivia. Most people in Oregon typically would not think of these words in connection with their local library. Yet, all of these are programs that have been served up in our local libraries just in the past year alone. With hundreds of programs covering even more diverse topics than these, perhaps the more typical things people think about when it comes to programs are an author talk, storytime, or book talk in the library. These are still staple library programs, but with this *Oregon Library Association Quarterly* issue we will be sharing some unique ideas that you can replicate at your library. From coffee and conversations to build community relationships to llamas (yes, llamas!) to encouraging upcycling, the common thread of all of the programs in this edition of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly* is that they are replicable and they come with "Here's what worked, here's what didn't work," feedback from your colleagues to hopefully help you jump-start your own ideas of what is possible at your library. Each community is unique, and most librarians typically know their own community and what may or may not work well.

The library as a community center has been a widespread concept for libraries in Oregon as well as on the national and international front for decades, and it is one of the myriad of reasons libraries are simply not going away. Most programs are tied to literacy while others serve to fit a niche or gap in the community served. Programming in libraries today includes a literacy aspect that fits the core tenet of the library as a place where learning and developing literacy take place side by side and most libraries also include STEM, art, and other cultural programs that are important for the community both educationally and holistically. More often than not, programs fill a gap that the community may not have an option for otherwise. In my small town, the library often acts as a hub for cultural community experiences. Last year we had 8,000 attendees at our programs, which included diverse programs such as author talks, trivia nights, storytimes, and environmental events from the local Necanicum Watershed Council and North Coast Land Conservancy about our unique watershed and wildlife areas to teens learning to cook to building Raspberry Pi computers.

The American Library Association (ALA) has a branch called the Public Programs Office devoted specifically to public library programs. The ALA considers cultural and community programming an essential part of library services, and nowadays any library one enters has some level of programs on display, whether a preschool storytime, a trivia night, or passive crafts such as adult coloring page events. Holding a passive craft event means there is no set time frame to the craft; the crafts are left out and folks just help themselves and figure out the craft on their own.

Classic programming in the library is the preschool storytime. Even the smallest, most rural library typically has a preschool storytime of some kind, although the smallest libraries typically have these programs run by volunteers or retired librarians since a staff of one part-time person is often too busy just running the
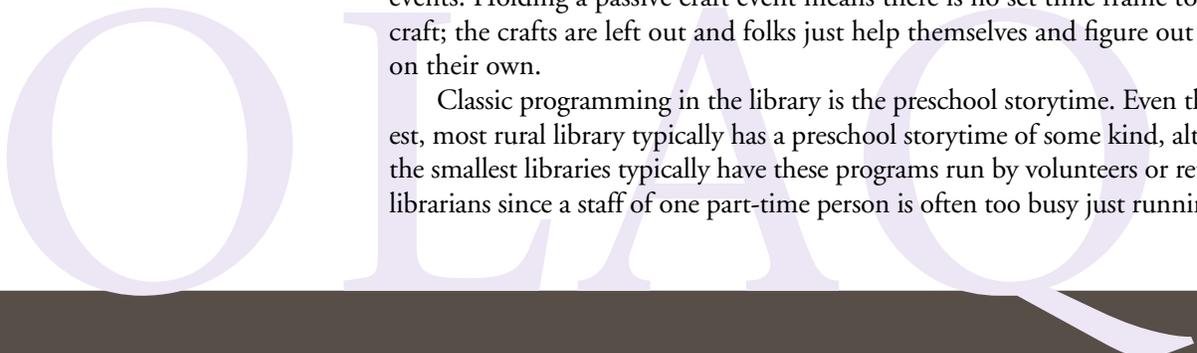
general library services to do any programs. Storytimes in the library began as early as 1896, according to an article titled "The History of Preschool Storytimes" (Gerber, 2014). According to this article, the Pratt Institute Free Library started a story hour in 1896, and in 1900 the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh also started a weekly story hour. From there, many programs were developed over the next 60 to 80 years that catered specifically to the preschool or teen demographic. Perhaps the biggest push for programs began in the late 1990s to early 2000s. During this time, adult and tween programs were developed as libraries realized that the cradle-to-the-grave viewpoint in library services couldn't just focus on collection and reference but must also include programs for all ages.

While a few may view programs in the library as a "fluffy" addition to reading without much substance, many would agree that library programs are here to stay, filling a hole left where arts and crafts programs have been cut due to budgetary constraints in other areas of educational and community life. Programs serve many concrete educational purposes including learning, engagement, social connection, and the ability to try many things in a safe environment. They also may engage community members who otherwise do not fit the traditional reader mold. Programs are almost "pop-up" resources, if you will, adding more resources with a stand-alone or series of programs to complement what is typically already a full of complement of services. Libraries offer everything from job resource centers, tax forms, small business centers, homework helpers, reference questions, and more.

We hope you enjoy the sampling of programs in this *Quarterly*. Keep in mind that the Children's Services Division of the Oregon Library Association does an excellent job of sharing its programming ideas both at their annual meetings and the Oregon Library Association annual conference. Oregon Young Adult Network also does the same. For adults, programs may be a little harder to come across, but don't be afraid to borrow creative ideas that pubs, nursing homes, parks and rec, and other community centers across the United States use, tweaking them to fit the library mold. The American Library Association's programming and exhibitions page also does a good job of sharing some great programming ideas.

References

Gerber, R. (2014, December 1). History of preschool storytimes. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/tools/history-preschool-storytimes

Learning opportunities. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.programminglibrarian.org/learn

Programming & exhibitions. (2011, December 14). Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/tools/programming

Programming resources. (2016, June 13). Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/pla/resources/tools/programming-instruction/programming-resources

www.pinterest.com

—Esther Moberg
OLAQ Guest Editor
Director, Seaside Public Library
emoberg@cityofseaside.us