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### **Public Resource Center: Special Services**

The Westmoreland Library Network, one of 29 PA state Library Districts, has 23 member Libraries. It serves all of Westmoreland County; and, unlike the neighboring Allegheny County Library Association, with Pittsburgh as its urban and cultural center, no one Library is of dominant size (as is the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh). The WLN cannot, therefore, host issue-focused Public Resource Centers in only one physical facility, but it can house them in and share them among individual WLN Libraries. Two WLN member Libraries are already exemplars of this model, for two different Public Resource Centers.

This column has already recently introduced the Public Resource Center: STEM/Digital Literacy and Workforce Development that is a joint project of Delmont Public Library (DPL) and Greensburg Hempfield Area Library; there are multiple, well appreciated grants supporting the effort. Now, we want to tell you about the Public Resource Center: Special Services that is being centered at DPL, and the grant awards recently received. This is an exciting story. It was initiated by Monica Smodic, new Library Director at DPL.

This is what DPL is planning to do: Make accessible informed resources and resource guides for women and mothers dealing with mental health, trauma, mindfulness, parenting, and teaching children about emotions, mindfulness, and dealing with big life events. A tangible example of prime interest is information services for those dealing with a diagnosis on the autism or neurodivergent spectrum.

Integral to all that, the goal is to host professionally certified programs, as well as to engage external professionals to process, create, and implement the materials, resources, and programs. The DPL plans on partnering with local supporters of such services, as well as shelters and other women's groups, and also to provide, promote, and distribute the resources and programs without the women having to come into the Library. The resources to be provided are books, videos, and other materials.

By providing free and easily accessible materials to women going through trauma, DPL is offering an invaluable resource to those who may have difficulty getting help for the mental health and parenting issues that arise during and after a traumatic diagnosis or situation.

Who are the service partners? Two have already written Letters of Support. They are: (1) East Suburban Citizen Advocacy Inc.; and (2) Inclusive Connections. East Suburban's Mission is "to provide advocacy and to build inclusive opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities." Inclusive Connections' Mission includes "to provide a safe space for families to connect to each other and the community they live in. We seek to find the best solutions and resources to help the autistic community feel welcome throughout all of Westmoreland County."

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This effort takes special funding, outside of a normal operating budget. Who wants to support with grant awards? Well, so far, grants have been awarded by the Community Foundation of Murrysville, Export and Delmont and the Eden Hall Foundation. We thank both awarders for their generous support. And, two other grant applications are pending.

The Public Resource Center model seems to have legs, as real needs are being addressed. We think that it may be a growth future for public Libraries.

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