On Having Vision Part II

Last week, in Part I, I promised in this article, Part II, to speak to five big visions within the Westmoreland Library Network and, in particular, how they came to be nucleated. Each is quite different from the others in terms of origin, but all share common attributes. Here they are.

1. **Westmoreland Information Network (WIN™), or Polaris Integrated Library System**, as it is otherwise known: This is all the computer hardware and software in the background that gives you the patron access 24/7 to all the books in the WLN of 23 public Libraries. The vision for building the WIN came out of a presentation to the WLN Board by the Executive Director of the Allegheny County Library Association (ACLA). ACLA had already made the transition away from local card catalogues. The WLN did so in December 2007.

2. **Murrysville Community Library (MCL) Children's Room**: A respected Strategic Planning and Space Consultant in the world of PA Libraries provided final reports to MCL in 2008-09 with lots of data about our own facility, which is all he really promises. Somewhere in those pages he told us that the existing Children's Room of the time occupied 16% of the MCL's footprint, while children's circulation amounted to 40% of total. That was all that the MCL Board needed to justify a project to add space and use the existing footprint more efficiently. The expansion/reconstruction project was completed in 2013.

3. **Storytime STEM-packs™** are "all-inclusive educational kits introducing young learners to science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts."   They were developed by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Math & Science Collaborative (AIU MSC) while training WLN Library staff, under various grants, to bring standards-based STEM education to PreK-3 children.   The project was envisioned in 2014 by an MCL Library Board Trustee who was also a member of the AIU MSC Steering Council. It was started shortly thereafter under the leadership of the then Program Director of the MSC.

4. **Public Resource Center – Digital Literacy & Workforce Development:** The vision for this area of focus originates with the Commonwealth's intent to build workforce capacity and opportunity within the state. To that end, generous grant funding has been made available. Other, local funders share in the vision and also are welcoming of grant applications. Greensburg Hempfield Area and Delmont Public Libraries, together, have had the vision to participate, and have gotten several grants. New Library programs have been offered since 2022.

5. **Public Resource Center – Special Needs (Autism)**: In April, the CDC reported that one in 36 American children is diagnosed with autism. One relatively new Library Director in the WLN, based on her own personal life experience seeking guidance on the matter, and the difficulties involved, saw the need to respond professionally, and had the vision to translate that into an action plan. Grantors

have been eager to support this brand new initiative. Look for new programming to come in 2023, from Delmont Public Library especially.

What I can promise you is that this story is not at its end. The models developed merit your attention, and I will have a lot more to say about them in future columns.

Charles B. Greenberg
Board Director, Murrysville Community Library Foundation