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Board Historian

When you have been on a Board as long as I have been on the Murrysville Community Library (MCL) Board, 20 years, whether you like it or not, you become historian. Having just completed my last term and retired, I am going to play historian here as a challenge to those remaining on the Board by naming the big accomplishments in those 20 years, not mine alone, but of the leadership as a whole. At the same time, it must be said, to avoid confusion, that I remain on the Murrysville Community Library Foundation Board, which is the very vital fundraising arm of the Library. It shares in the bows for two of the three big successes since 2004 that follow.

First is the Westmoreland Information Network (WIN™), or Polaris Integrated Library System, which joins all 23 public Libraries in the Westmoreland Library Network and their collections, approaching one million items, into one on-line Library serving the entirety of Westmoreland County and all its citizens. Access to it is available 24/7 from any place, home or at work. It replaced the old wooden card catalogues that prior to 2007 served only patrons who went to the home Library in-person. This was a huge advance, done with no small effort and a spirit of cooperation. It was led by Murrysville Community Library and then Library Director Denise Sticha.

Second is the renovation/expansion of the Children's Room at MCL. Prior to completion in 2013, that room had been a cramped, cluttered and inflexible space for both children and their accompanying parents. Parents had to sit in chairs intended for the children amidst surrounding bookshelves in a somber ambience, joyless even. There was nothing inviting about the area, no feeling of being welcoming. That it is so different today is in no small part due to the contribution of architect Bill Snyder, recently retired MCL Foundation Board Director, and his company Design 3 Architecture. They were generous both in inspiration and in-kind support.

Third is Storytime Stem-packs™, now a product of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Math & Science Collaborative (AIU MSC) and marketed nationally, but then a collaborative adventure of the AIU MSC and the MCL, at first, and then of the WLN as a whole. The effort, begun in 2014, was intended to build capacity for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programming for Library staff, to impart early STEM learning for PreK-4 children. That it succeeded in a lasting way to various degrees is tangibly evident by the robot (Bee-Bot and Sphero) programs that are today still being offered within the WLN. This project was my personal dream project, and Jamie Faló, then Library Director at MCL, now Director at Greensburg Hempfield Area Library, worked in commitment with the AIU MSC and me to make it happen.

For all of these successes, grant awards too numerous to recount here were essential. I thank those grantors, both large and small, for making the journeys with us.

As "historian," I suggest that these are models to follow for the future. Perhaps my most satisfying reflection now is how closely they are still being followed at some leading Libraries within the WLN as I write. And I am pleased to continue to work with a couple

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of them even as I have retired in my formal role as Trustee. That is surely a good way to retire.

Charles B. Greenberg
Board Director, Murrysville Community Library Foundation