

2020 Annual Conference: Public Library Association
Nashville, Tennessee (USA) – February 25-29, 2020
From Trustee Riley Brockington

Report to the Board of the Ottawa Public Library

I had the privilege to represent the Ottawa Public Library Board of Trustees at the 2020 (American) Public Library Association (LPA) Annual Conference in Nashville, the final week of February. Please find enclosed my notes about my experience and some background information about the PLA.

Public Library Association

(From their website)

The Public Library Association (PLA) is the largest association dedicated to supporting the unique and evolving needs of public library professionals. Founded in 1944, PLA serves nearly 10,000 members in public libraries large and small in communities across the United States and Canada, with a growing presence around the world. PLA offers continuing education opportunities, unique public library initiatives, and a conference that welcomes public library staff into meaningful partnership. In collaboration with its parent organization, the American Library Association, PLA strives to help its members shape the essential institution of public libraries by serving as an indispensable ally for public library leaders.

2020 Public Library Association Annual Conference

The conference, held at the Nashville Convention Center, in downtown Nashville, offered an unmatched opportunity for library professionals, municipal leaders, library board members and others to gather, share ideas and learn best practices. The conference included 100+ education programs, inspirational and entertaining speakers, author luncheons, career and wellness centres, networking receptions and a diverse and colourful exhibits hall.

My Experience

I took full advantage of the various workshops and plenaries. Over two and half days in attendance, I attended the following programs:

- Serving Immigrants Beyond the Citizenship Centre
- Environmental Literacy for Children and Families
- The Bookstore Model of Customer Service

- Closing Opportunity Gaps Through School-Literacy Partnerships
- Recruiting and Engaging Friends and Trustees Under Age 40
- Bringing Technology and Arts Programming to Senior Adults
- Growing New Library Patrons

On the final day of the conference, I attended two plenary sessions as follows:

- Big Ideas with Soledad O'Brien
- Closing Sessions with Samantha Bee

I will provide a brief (verbal) overview / highlights of these workshops at the May 12, 2020 Ottawa Public Library Board meeting.

My Thoughts

No question, the choices of workshops to attend (at least eight every sitting) provided significant scope and choice for every delegate.

The sharing of best practices and opportunity to ask questions of each presenter was worthwhile.

This conference is a marathon. So much information is shared, in the confines of the convention center with approximately 5,000 other delegates, requires some advance organization and planning. That said, it is well worth it.

My recommendation to the Board and CEO is to consider various initiatives led by the OPL that could be shared as a future workshop/presentation at the national conference. Perhaps, simply as an example, a presentation on how the OPL and LAC came together to build our new central library.

My Appreciation

Thank-you to the Board of Trustees for the opportunity to attend and to Julie Tremblay for the assistance provided with the booking and other administrative matters.

Submitted by Trustee Riley Brockington