

November 2009

Federation's Key Accomplishments in the Past Year

During the past year, the Federation can point to a number of deliverables that demonstrate the value of membership.

i) Advocacy

- Achieved consensus among our diverse membership on an Advocacy Plan that identifies the priority issues, and specifies the target audience, messaging and approach for dealing with each issue.
- Hosted a well attended reception at Queen's Park for MPPs, which provided an excellent forum to voice issues directly with policy makers. Developed a handout describing our key messages.
- Issued a frequently quoted media release and letter to the Ministers of Finance and Culture, which stressed the importance of safeguarding funding to public libraries because their utilization increases dramatically during periods of economic downturn.
- Advised members on dealing with Bill 128 and Bill 202, private member's bills that propose mandatory Internet screening in all public libraries.
- Submitted recommendations to government on a proposed Information and Communication Accessibility Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which have since been incorporated in the revised standard.
- Consulted members at a very early stage on how the \$15 million grant flowing through Southern Ontario Library Services should be spent, and shared their comments with the Ministry.

ii) Marketing

- Cultivated partnerships and increased the Federation's profile in the sector through frequent meetings with stakeholders, regular communiqués to members, and participation in collaborative projects such as Knowledge Ontario's Advocacy Campaign, Libraries 2020 Symposium, and Accessible Technologies Study.
- Invested in a consulting study to develop a marketing plan that targets funders and policy makers.
- Received approval from the Ministry of Culture to take responsibility for the dates, themes, promotional material and celebrations of Ontario Public Library Week, a key lever for profile-raising. Coordinated preparations for 2008 and 2009.

- Was an exhibitor at the conferences of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in 2008 and 2009, which served as efficient vehicles for connecting with hundreds of municipal funders and potential members and for promoting the value of public libraries. Developed new promotional materials specifically for these conferences.
- Developed plans to reorganize the Federation's website in order to provide easier access to news and reference materials for members and the general public.

iii) Research

- Conducted a research study to determine the scope of literacy programs currently being delivered through Ontario's public libraries. Secured financial support through the Library Services Development Fund. .
- Organized a pre-conference session at the 2009 convention of the Ontario Library Association, which examined funding models used in other provinces and states in North America. Identified several best practices that could be used in future recommendations to government.
- Conducted a membership survey to quantify the increase in library utilization caused by Ontario's recession, which legitimized our claim that public library utilization increases dramatically during periods of economic downturn.
- Oversaw a study that analyzed why public library utilization by those over age 55 dropped from 64% in 2000 to 58% in 2005, according to previous market research commissioned by the Federation. Explained the decline as replacement behaviour due to this population's adoption of the Internet.

iv) Operations & Member Services

- Negotiated the transfer of responsibility for the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council from Ontario Library Services North.
- Negotiated with chief executives of large urban libraries to reconstitute their networking group as a working committee of the Federation's Board.
- Compiled and circulated a list of potential sources of capital/infrastructure funding and how to apply. Convinced Infrastructure Canada to reverse (in our favour) its original ruling on members' eligibility for the not-for-profit intake.
- Conducted membership drives that increased the number of paid up Federation members from 175 to 180, despite the current economic climate.
- Conducted an assessment of alternative models for the membership fee structure, which concluded that the current model, while not perfect, is the best option.