NORTHERN TERRITORY LIBRARY RECEIVES ACCESS TO LEARNING AWARD

The Northern Territory Library has been awarded the Access to Learning Award. The award was presented to the Director, Northern Territory Library at the World Library and Information Congress during the 2007 International Federation of Library Associations’ General Conference. The US$1 million award recognises the library’s work to provide free computer and Internet access and training to Indigenous communities. See Cate Richmond’s update in this issue for more details.

SUCCESSFUL FORUM HELD IN DARWIN

The annual Community Library Officers’ Forum was a great success with 26 Community Library Officers attending the four day program. Fifteen communities were represented which showed the commitment and support by Councils and library staff for the Forum. People travelled in from Santa Teresa, Lajamanu, Groote Eylandt, Borroloola, Milingimbi, Ramingining, Barunga, Mataranka, Pine Creek, Elliott, Barunga, Milikapiti and Peppimenarti. The Forum provided Community Library Officers with the chance to meet other library workers, share ideas and experiences and develop new skills.

This year the program concentrated on early years literacy with six sessions looking at how early year’s literacy can be supported through libraries. Other sessions included multi-media, creating local books and posters, online resources, visit to NT Archives and book buying.
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The Libraries and Knowledge Centres team organised the Forum with help from NTL staff. Staff who worked on the Forum included Gibby Maynard, Jan Jones, Jay Gibson, Katie Au, Kristy Schultz, Gail Dous, Cate Richmond, Shirley Shepherd, Joy Cardona, David Murtagh, Inge Kral, Andrew Schulz, Koulla Giannikouris, Betty Griffin, Yeow Phang and Mark Crocombe from Wadeye Library and Knowledge Centre.

This year’s theme was: “A library is a place where you go to fill your mind with Knowledge”. Cate Richmond welcomed everyone to the Forum and to Darwin on behalf of the Larrakia traditional owners.

FORUM HIGHLIGHT

Early year’s literacy awareness and activities

Andrew and Koulla talked about the Libraries and Knowledge Centres “early year’s literacy program” and literacy kit. They explained how to run a session using the books and puppets and CDs out of the literacy kit. Koulla and Andrew showed how to start a session with an action song followed by a story. Everyone including the children enjoyed the singing, the story of 10 green crocodiles and the crocodile puppet. Other activities during the week included making a big book using photos and painting the Forum bag.

Inge Kral presented two sessions on pre-literacy and pre-reading ideas and how library staff can help little children develop early literacy skills. There was a lot of discussion about literacy in everyday life activities and how children learn from their parents. Other ways to develop literacy were discussed, including children’s play, drawing, writing and reading stories.

Leonie Norrington, local NT author and storyteller shared her story about growing up. Leonie talked about the importance of writing stories where children can see themselves in the story. She then read the story called “Crocodile Bait” and explained how she wrote it using a camping trip down the Daly River. Everyone then had the chance to write their own short story using the prepared page, which folded into a small booklet. Leonie gave instructions on how to get started. Many great stories were written and shared.
Edel Musco from ArtStories spoke about her work in schools and how a story can be told by using pictures. Participants had the chance to create their own story about a fish using paints, crayons and paper. The session was very creative and showed how pictures can tell many stories.

POSTER MAKING
Participants created a poster for their library service and region. Photos and information were added on to a poster template and then laminated.

SHARING STORIES AND TALKING ABOUT ISSUES
These sessions gave everyone a chance to share stories about their library service and recent conferences and also some of the issues they are experiencing with their Council and NTL.

MULTI-MEDIA
Jay, David and Mark talked about the different kinds of digital cameras and then showed everyone how to change the setting for taking different kind of pictures. Everyone then had the chance to take some of their own photos around the building and then downloaded the photos on to the computer. These skills were used again later in the week when everyone had to create a big book using photos.

USING DATABASES
These sessions included three activities which included presentations of the Our Story database by Community Library Officers and LKC staff, searching Online Resources using prepared questions and the Agama Library program.

VISITS TO NT ARCHIVES AND BOOKSHOP
Cathy and Francoise from NT Archives gave everyone information about NT Archives services and the kinds of material they hold. This information was important to know about when library staff start to find material for the Our Story database.
Book buying in Darwin city was enjoyed by everyone as they selected many new resources for their library.
MEET THE MINISTER
A dinner was held at Pee Wee’s at the Point where Minister McAdam gave a speech about the “Access to Learning Award” and praised the work by Community Library Officers and the LKC team in developing the LKC program in remote communities. Minister McAdam also presented certificates of attendance and participation for Community Library Officers. Library and Knowledge Centres staff also received a certificate of appreciation for their work on the LKC program.

LKC UPDATE BY CATE RICHMOND
As mentioned on the cover of this issue, NT Library is the proud recipient of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation 2007 Access to Learning Award. The award recognises NTL’s Libraries and Knowledge Centres Program, which is helping Indigenous communities to preserve their culture and traditional knowledge through locally managed Our Story databases.

The award was presented at the World Library and Information Congress: the 73rd General Conference and Council of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in Durban, South Africa. NTL Director Jo McGill, Pirlangimpi CLO Jacqueline Bourke and I accepted the award on behalf of NTL.

The award provides NTL with US$1 million dollars to further develop the LKC program. NTL will use the funds to focus on three key strategies:

- Preserving Culture and Indigenous Heritage through the Our Story database
- Building the Capacity of local library staff and community members through information literacy and computer literacy training
- Fostering Early Years Literacy and school readiness through appropriate library programs

The timing of the announcement of the award meant that NTL staff could share this achievement with all the Community Library Officers who attended the CLO Forum in Darwin. Once again, this success would not be possible without the wonderful services that CLOs provide to their communities, nor would it be possible without the ongoing support of Councils, so congratulations to everyone!

In the coming months we will provide details of the projects we plan to implement in 2008/09.