



February 2014

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## WLA Legislative Day: An MLIS Student's Reflection

By *Chelsea Nesvig*



Libraries change lives. The public library is a place for all. Lifelong learning begins at your local library. As librarians and information professionals, we hear these important adages and taglines regularly, though often in a “preaching to the choir” sense. We all know they are true and important, but who else needs to know? One group that might not come to mind immediately is our local legislators and politicians. These individuals working in Olympia on behalf of their constituents are not often part of the choir. They have myriad issues to think about, and sometimes need reminding. This is what a group of us (including myself and five other UW Information School students) went to do during WLA’s annual Library Legislative Day on Friday, January 24.

This year’s event began at the United Churches with a welcome from Jennifer Wiseman, WLA President and then a keynote address by Danielle Miller, manager of the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library. Danielle spoke about the library’s service and patrons, and how important it is for this work to be well funded as we march further into the 21st Century. Following Danielle on the agenda were brief statements by Sara Glass, WLMA Legislative and Advocacy Chair and Carolyn Logue, WMLA Lobbyist. They were followed by brief words from Washington State Librarian Rand Simmons and finally SLA Legislative Consultant Steve Duncan. This moved the discussion into the legislative issues affecting libraries in Washington State, including Senate Bill 6105, which will redefine school libraries for their role in 21st century education. Simmons discussed the necessity of an upcoming capital budget request for a pre-design of a new state archives building. Armed with this

information, and an overview of the process for speaking with legislators, we headed to the legislative buildings. [read more...](#)

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## Review of Leah's Voice for Autism Awareness Month Coming in April

*To anticipate Autism Awareness month coming in April, this issue of Connect features an abridged version of Mary Lavers' review for Leah's Voice, a fictional story inspired by two sisters, one of whom has autism. The Bellingham Public Library recently added the children's book to their collection of juvenile fiction. The Seattle based organization, The Sibling Support Project, has also added the book to their recommended reading list and to their on-line resource store.*

"I like children's books that try to tackle difficult subjects, but ultimately they still need to be good children's literature. Lori DeMonia clearly agrees. Her book, *Leah's Voice*, isn't just a "difficult subject" book. It isn't just about Autism. And her goal isn't just to help kids "cope with" an Autistic sibling.

In the book, a little girl named Logan is excited for a play date with her new friend Abby. But when Abby doesn't want to play with Logan's older sister, Leah, because she talks differently and plays differently, Logan gets mad. Why can't Abby understand that Leah *is* different, but that they can all play together? Logan understands that her sister has Autism, but she doesn't know how to explain it to her friend. Eventually Abby comes around and realizes that she should be patient and take the time to get to know Leah. [read more...](#)

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## WLA Member Profile: Caitlin Maxwell



Caitlin is the current iSchool Representative for the Washington Library Association at the University of Washington. Meet Caitlin!

How do you like your job as a Graduate Reference and Instruction Assistant at University of Washington Suzzallo-Allen Libraries?

When I accepted admittance into the University of Washington iSchool, I knew that I wanted to gain work experience at an academic library as early and as much as possible. When I saw an opening for a Graduate Reference and Instruction Assistant at Suzzallo-Allen Libraries at UW, I immediately jumped on the opportunity. I'm very glad I did. I love this job! My dream job is to work as a reference and instruction librarian at an academic library. The experience I'm getting at Suzzallo-Allen Libraries is invaluable to a career as a reference and instruction librarian. By the time I graduate, I will already have two years of experience working on the reference desk, teaching library instruction sessions, and answering virtual chat and e-mail questions.

What do you enjoy most about your studies at the University of



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I definitely enjoy classes that can be immediately applied to the services I would provide as an academic librarian. I learned a lot from the humanities reference class I took last quarter, for example, and I am looking forward to taking collection development this fall.

How long have you been a member of WLA?

Since October 2012.

How have you been personally involved in WLA?

Last winter, I attended Library Legislative Day and met several WLA members. I also attended the WLA conference in Vancouver, WA last spring. I am currently the iSchool representative to WLA. [read more...](#)

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