

President's Update - April 13, 2017



When challenges arise that leave you scratching your head, where do you turn? My involvement in MLA and other organizations has helped me to build a network of people to whom I can turn when I have a question or an issue where an outside viewpoint or a specific expertise can help. This network has changed and evolved over the years because people come and go, but it has been invaluable in helping me to find creative solutions or just to think differently about an issue.

I strongly believe that a high-performing team can do so much more than any one individual can do no matter how talented that individual is. The more we learn to work together and share, the better everyone is for it. However, working together is not always supported in our culture when competition is high and trust is low. Sometimes working in a group or team brings more uncertainty and complexity into the process which can be intimidating and which may explain why some people have never been part of a high-performing team. While we have probably all been part of groups that have not performed well, strong commitment and leadership skills can help teams work better together and build a collective intelligence.

No one of us has the knowledge, skills, abilities, time, and resources to thrive in every situation. Leadership is usually learned and there is no better way to learn some of those skills than by joining a community of people in similar situations. Others in the community can help assist and sometimes lift us up when we feel overpowered by circumstances. By volunteering in MLA over the years, I have benefited greatly from relationships I have built with colleagues in other

libraries. When I am stumped, I will usually contact one of them who may be able to help or direct me to someone who can help.

MLA has issued the annual Call for Volunteers that creates numerous opportunities for Michigan library professionals to develop leadership skills, create professional development opportunities and facilitate networking and sharing of best practices. Volunteers also play a vital role in furthering the work of the Association and benefiting libraries throughout the state. For any member who wants to get involved with MLA, there is a place.

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