

# Circle of Service

Crust of the Snow Month or Onaabana-Giizis

by Loriene Roy

Librarianship is remarkable for the range of services we provide to our diverse communities. Service is the keystone of our work. Many LIS programs provide opportunities for graduate students to test, develop, and deliver services directly to patrons. These experiences in project management and citizen engagement not only assist students in preparing for interviews for their first professional positions but also provide the framework for career-long commitments.

A number of LIS educators, students, and recent graduates are contributing chapters to *The Service Connection*, coedited by Alex Hershey, a master's student in the University of Texas at Austin School of Information, to be published later this year by ALA Editions. The book provides historical coverage as well as content on students, faculty, and field supervisors. Required and optional service-learning experiences in selected LIS programs are provided by Sara Albert, a recent graduate of UT Austin's School of Information.

Prospective school librarians have long completed structured practica, often in alignment with state requirements. Students at San Jose (Calif.) State University's LIS program can complete one or more internships. They prepare an Electronic Portfolio of written documents and evidentiary items that document how core competencies were achieved, including the ability to "contribute to the cultural, economic, educational, and social well-being of our communities." Syracuse

(N.Y.) University's School of Information Studies MSLIS students must complete an internship or cooperative educational experience. Master's students at the University of Michigan's School of Information in Ann Arbor must complete six of their 43 credit hours to accrue Practical Engagement Program points, including completion of a required Contextual Inquiry and Project Management class. Students complete internships during summers and may participate in an alternative spring break.

One graduation requirement at UT's School of Information is the completion of an integrative Capstone. Those pursuing certificates in conservation, preservation, or school librarianship complete practica or internships. Other students complete Professional Experience (fieldwork) Projects, master's reports, or theses. At the end of each semester, students highlight results in a public Capstone Fair. Key to these experiences is discussion, evaluation, and student reflection.

Students in my fall 2007 Public Libraries graduate course wrote essays that reflected on what they hoped to learn from retired/retiring librarians. They acknowledged the limitations of learning through formal classroom-based education and are concerned about an institutional memory loss resulting from retire-



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ments. They desire to connect with experienced mentors. One student observed: "I am a firm believer in the power of cultural identity to give strength, focus, and unity to a group of people, whether it is a nation, race, organization, or profession. The stories and anecdotes of retiring librarians can give us a sense of who we are as a profession and bring us together through our professional organizations. They can inspire us to work together in the challenges that lay ahead."

These comments help inform a task force, led by Arro Smith, that will design a national oral history program of librarians exiting the profession.

This month I look forward to seeing ALA members at state library conferences in Alaska and Louisiana as well as at the Public Library Association national conference in Minneapolis, Freedom of Information Day in Washington, D.C., and a meeting of the National Center for Family Literacy. March also brings the Young Adult Library Services Association's Teen Tech Week. Join YALSA in the celebration and "Get Connected @ your library." ■

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