**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**FROM:** Kathleen M. Hughes, Editor, Public Libraries Magazine/Manager, PLA Publications (khughes@ala.org)

**RE:** Publications and Products

**DATE:** January 7, 2018

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:** Report

**ACTION REQUESTED BY: N/A**

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**  N/A

**OVERVIEW**

This report covers *Public Libraries* magazine; *Public Libraries* Online, FYI: The *Public Libraries* Podcast; and PLA Publications.

**KEY CURRENT ACTIVITIES/METRICS**

* ***Public Libraries* Magazine**

*Public Libraries*, published six times a year, is the official magazine of the Public Library Association (PLA) and the only ALA magazine devoted exclusively to public libraries. Each issue includes important industry news, PLA and ALA updates, and columns and feature articles. Circulation as of today’s date: Member: 9,260 (double-checking on this number) + Subscribers 501 = 9,761 total. Our subscription numbers are creeping upward after a downward trend. In September 2018, we reported 493 subscribers. We will focus this year on improving subscription numbers with a targeted marketing campaign including advertising and social media. We are aiming to stabilize numbers and also to gain at least fifty new subscribers in the next fiscal year.

* ***Public Libraries* Online**

The online companion site to ***Public Libraries*** continues to thrive. Like the print iteration [PL Online](http://www.publiclibrariesonline.org) focuses on issues and topics that matter to public libraries and public librarianship. Updated several times per week, the site features selections from the print magazine as well as unique content from our team of writers. Posts are comment-enabled so readers can share thoughts, as well as their own stories and experiences. The site attracts nearly 50,000 readers per month; 588,127 individual page views from January 3, 2018-January 3, 2019. This is up from the previous year which saw 47,000 readers per month and 568,437 individual page views for the year.

* **FYI: The *Public Libraries* Podcast**

In 2016 *PL* embraced podcasting as another way to explore a variety of topics in-depth and to also bring great information to our members and readers. To date we have recorded 35 [podcasts](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/category/media/podcast/). From January 1, 2018-January 1, 2019 these podcasts garnered 9,598 listens, in the previous year we had 7,044 listeners. 7,829 persons are currently subscribed to the RSS feed for the podcast. Since we 2016, the podcasts have had 23,300 listeners. Our top three podcasts this year were: *Evaluating Health News* *with Sally James*, with 995 listens; *Free Library of Philadelphia Culinary Literacy Center,* with 980 listens; and *Serving Persons Experiencing Homelessness with John Spears*, with 889 listens.

* **Quick Reads**

Digital downloads in the PLA Quick Reads cover important topics in public librarianship in a quick, practical, and direct way. The goal is to shed light on an essential topic quickly, as such, each of the publications is under 100 pages. This product is available free to members as a member benefit and for sale to nonmembers. Books in the series include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Book Title | Sold | Member Download |
| The Bed Bug Guide for Public Libraries – released 2016 | 120 | N/A – Is only available for sale. |
| Weeding Manual – released 2016 | 27 | N/A – Is only available for sale. |
| Get Inside: Responsible Jail and Prison Library Service – released 2017 | 1 | 442 |
| Building and Operating a Digital Media Lab – released 2018 | 3 | 340 |
| Taking Care of Business in the 21st Century: A New Library Service Model – released 2018 | 2 | 363 |
| PLA 2018: Ten Essential Programs - released September 2018 | 1 | 486 |
| Teaching Early Literacy to Teen Parents – released November 2018 | - | 56 |

* **Every Child Ready to Read**

The updated and expanded 2nd edition of Every Child Ready to Read incorporates simple practices, based on research, to help parents and other caregivers develop early literacy skills in children from birth to age five. Sales of the product have slowed in recent years. Here is a sales report of the last two fiscal years:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Product Name | 2018 fiscal year | 2019 to date |
| Every Child Ready to Read 2nd Edition Kit | 99 | 33 |
| ECRR Brochures | 472 | 118 |
| ECRR Bookmarks | 147 | 37 |
| ECRR Childcare Provider Module | 17 | 6 |
| ECRR Posters | 184 | 46 |
| ECRR Spanish Toolkit | 7 | 0 |
| ECRR Spanish Brochures | 82 | 23 |
| ECRR Spanish Poster | 43 | 2 |
| ECRR Spanish Bookmarks | 45 | 2 |

At the 2018 Midwinter Meeting, ALSC and PLA decided to conclude Every Child Ready to Read as an active initiative. As a result, the Every Child Ready to Read project will continue under the Family Engagement umbrella, and they are planning to a subgroup to focus on related products and publications.

* **New Product**

We have recently released a [2019 Early Literacy Calendar](https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/pla-2019-early-literacy-activities-calendar—pdf-download). The download, available for sale via the ALA store as of January 4, 2019, includes reproducible calendars that offer fun early literacy activities for every day of the year. Based on the Every Child Ready to Read practices of reading, writing, singing, talking, playing (plus counting), each download contains twelve months of learning activities, book lists, nursery rhymes, and more. On one side is a calendar with a fun skills-building activity for each day and the other contains supplementary content like nursery rhymes, early literacy tips, song lyrics, or suggested reading material.

**BUDGETS**

* *Public Libraries* Magazine and *Public Libraries* Online

*Public Libraries* ad sales in fiscal year 2019 are on target, though this is not reflected in the November report. At this point in the year, we are budgeted to be at $3,750 and we have actually sold $4,133. The revenue will appear in the December report. We intend to focus on improving our ad sales and meeting the targeted budget for FY19. We are exploring Google ads, promotional mailings to vendors, and other ways to improve advertising. Subscription revenue is $9,129, also behind the budgeted figure of $10,000. We are also planning to work to improve subscription numbers this year, with targeted mailings, social media advertisements, and more. In terms of expenses, we are at $14,453 against the budgeted figure of $31,658, so we are currently behind budget but that is also a timing issue and we will meet targeted expenses as bills are paid.

* Quick Reads/Publications:

Total revenues in the publications line are $365; against a budget of $906. This shortfall is mainly due to royalties not being collected and we should catch up to our budgeted goal soon. The Quick Reads are available for free to members, so sales numbers are currently small on those. With the goal of improving revenue we will continue working to improve sales of all products. In addition, we have other books and products in the pipeline which will improve revenue in FY19 (the Early Literacy Calendars are an example). As far as expenses, we budgeted $1,589 for expenses, but we spent $3,924. This is also a timing issue, as we spent money in the expenses line sooner than it was allotted, this will be corrected as the year goes on.

* Every Child Ready to Read:

As mentioned, sales in the ECRR line have slowed. So far this year we have collected $4,171 in revenue against a budgeted figure of $7,000. Expenses were $1,109 against a budget of $4,215. We are working on ideas for publications and products to be released in FY19 in this line.

**ASSESSMENT**

In October we conducted a reader survey of *Public Libraries* magazine; *Public Libraries* Online; FYI: The *Public Libraries* Podcast and the Quick Reads Publications series. We aim to use the results to improve current products and guide product creation, in addition we are working on a redesign of *Public Libraries* magazine and will use input from the survey to guide our work. You can see a summary of the results [here](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/reader-survey-results-2018-final.pdf).

**PLA STRATEGIC GOAL LINK (check all that apply)**

x TRANSFORMATION x LEADERSHIP x ADV. & AWARENESS x E.D.I.S.J. xORG. EXCELLENCE