**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

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

**RE:** Publications and Products

**DATE:** October 16, 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 (Quick Reads, ECRR).

**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: Member: 9,258 + Subscribers 491 = 10,123 total. Our subscription numbers continue a downward trend (last year at this time we had 536 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; 598,002 individual page views from October 15, 2017-October 15, 2018. This is up from the previous year which saw 46,000 readers per month and 556,996 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 32 [podcasts](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/category/media/podcast/). From October 15, 2017-October 15, 2018 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. Our top three podcasts this year were: *Evaluating Health News* *with Sally James*, with 895 listens; *Library Service to Jails and Prisons with Nick Higgins*, with 775 listens; and *Serving Persons Experiencing Homelessness with John Spears*, with 761 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 | 116 | N/A – Is only available for sale. |
| Weeding Manual – released 2016 | 22 | N/A – Is only available for sale. |
| Get Inside: Responsible Jail and Prison Library Service – released 2017 | 1 | 402 |
| Building and Operating a Digital Media Lab – released 2018 | 3 | 283 |
| Taking Care of Business in the 21st Century: A New Library Service Model – released 2018 | 2 | 160 |
| PLA 2018: Ten Essential Programs - released September 2018  | - | 109 |

We plan to release another Quick Read this month, “Teaching Early Literacy to Teen Parents.”

* **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** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Every Child Ready to Read 2nd Edition Kit** | **108** | **99** |
| **ECRR Brochures**  | **500** | **472** |
| **ECRR Bookmarks** | **177** | **147** |
| **ECRR Childcare Provider Module** | **60 sales began 2/2017** | **17** |
| **ECRR Spanish Toolkit** | **210** | **171** |
| **ECRR Spanish Brochures** | **109** | **82** |
| **ECRR Spanish Poster** | **33** | **43** |
| **ECRR Spanish Bookmarks** | **8** | **45** |

At the 2018 Midwinter Meeting, ALSC and PLA decided to conclude Every Child Ready to Read as an active initiative. We are focusing on continuing the ECRR work under the PLA Family Engagement initiative and are organizing a subgroup within the Family Engagement umbrella to focus on early literacy publication projects.

**BUDGETS**

*Public Libraries* Magazine and *Public Libraries* Online

*Public Libraries* ad sales in fiscal year 2018 are behind budget. We budgeted $40,000 for this year and we actually sold $20,366. 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 $37,154, also behind the budgeted figure of $40,000. 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 $116,270 against the budgeted figure of $153,554, so we are at $37,284 less than budgeted.

Quick Reads/Publications:

Total revenues in the publications line are $1,919; against a budget of $7,250. This shortfall is mainly due to no new products. 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 embark on a quest to improve sales of these products. In addition, we have other books and products in the pipeline which will improve revenue in FY19. As far as expenses, there was no money budgeted for expenses, but we spent $3,194. This is an oversight that will be corrected for FY19.

Every Child Ready to Read:

As mentioned, sales in the ECRR line have slowed. This year we saw $19,710 in revenue against a budgeted figure of $65,000. Expenses were $10,291 against a budget of $47,425. We are formulating a number of ideas for products to be released in FY19 in this line; which will improve sales.

**ASSESSMENT**

This month we are conducting a reader survey of Public Libraries magazine; Public Libraries Online; FYI: The Public Libraries Podcast and the Quick Reads Publications series. Results of the report will be provided when they are available. We aim to use the results to improve current products and guide product creation.

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

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