TO: PLA Board of Directors

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

RE: Publications and Products

DATE: June 3, 2019

**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, regular columns and feature articles. With the May/June issue we unveiled the magazine’s new design. In addition to the new design, we’ve also added some new voices inside -- Stephanie Chase tackles challenging library world questions in Insights; Krista Riggs is our new Best Practices columnist; and Nick Tanzi is taking on The Wired Library. Another new regular column is Info-Graphic, compiled by PLA staffers Larra Clark and Emily Plagman which breaks down data of interest to the library world. Related, this summer we are planning to make design updates to the magazine’s companion website, [www.publiclibrariesonline.org](http://www.publiclibrariesonline.org).

Circulation Numbers

Members 7985 + Subscribers 468 = 8451 total. Our subscription numbers are in a downward trend. In September 2018, we reported 493 subscribers. We are currently running three subscription promotions, which began May 24 and run through July 5. These offer discounts on subscriptions to trustees, public librarians who are members of ALA but not PLA, and *Public Libraries* Online subscribers who are not members of PLA or ALA. We are aiming to stabilize numbers and also to gain at least fifty new subscribers in this fiscal year.

*Public Libraries* Online

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 48,000 readers per month; 545,651 individual page views and 45,470 reader per month from June 1, 2018-June 1, 2019. This is down a bit from the previous year which saw 47,000 readers per month and 568,437 individual page views for the year. This could be timing issue based on dates of reporting, but we will work to ensure viewership remains strong.

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 38 [podcasts](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/category/media/podcast/). From June 3, 2018-June 3, 2019 these podcasts garnered 13,108 listens, in the previous year we had 7,044 listeners. 10,576 persons are currently subscribed to the RSS feed for the podcast, 7829 at this time last year. Overall, since we first began podcasting in October of 2015, the podcasts have had 30,600 plays. Our top three podcasts this year were: Whole Person Librarianship with 1,616 listens; The Free Library of Philadelphia Culinary Literacy Center with 1,142 listens; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion with 1,063 listens.

Quick Reads

Digital downloads in the PLA Quick Reads series 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 was available free to members as a member benefit and for sale to nonmembers. After a review of the effectiveness of the product as a member benefit, it was determined that only about 5% of PLA membership has taken advantage of the series, so it has been decided the series will be discontinued.

Books in the series include:

The Bed Bug Guide for Public Libraries (2016); Weeding Manual (2016); Get Inside: Responsible Jail and Prison Library Service (2017); Building and Operating a Digital Media Lab (2018); Taking Care of Business in the 21st Century: A New Library Service Model (2018); PLA 2018: Ten Essential Programs (2018); and Teaching Early Literacy to Teen Parents (2018).

We are working on an a new (as yet unnamed) series of books which will be available for sale per usual procedure.

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. 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 focus on related products and publications. Here is a sales report of the last two fiscal years:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item Description | FY 18 Qty | FY 18 Revenue | FY 19 Qty to date | FY 19 Revenue to date |
| Every Child Ready to Read 2nd edition Kit 2011-001 | 104 | $19,420 | 88 | $15,855 |
| Every Child Ready to Read Brochures 2011-002 | 499 | $11,270 | 277 | $7,710 |
| Every Child Ready to Read Bookmarks 2011-003 | 189 | $1,191 | 36 | $489 |
| Every Child Ready to Read - Child Care Module 9780838989272 | 21 | $2,010 | 10 | $960 |
| Every Child Ready to Read Posters 2011-004 | 184 | $758 | 45 | $404 |
| Every Child Ready to Read Spanish Toolkit 2014-001 | 7 | $663 | 7 | $683 |
| Every Child Ready to Read Spanish Brochure 2012-002 | 102 | $2,804 | 81 | $2,226 |
| Every Child Ready to Read Spanish Poster 2012-001 | 55 | $510 | 5 | $46 |
| Every Child Ready to Read Spanish Bookmarks 2012-003 | 54 | $739 | 5 | $68 |

New Product

In January we released the PLA [2019 Early Literacy Calendar](https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/pla-2019-early-literacy-activities-calendar%E2%80%94pdf-download). This download, available for sale via the ALA store, 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. Since being released in January we have sold 83 of the calendars, for $2267 in revenue. This summer the calendars will be placed on sale, and the accompanying attention should improve sales for the end of the fiscal year. In addition, we plan on getting the calendars out earlier next year -- so they can be purchased in November/December as well as the early months of the new year.

**BUDGETS**

*Public Libraries* Magazine *and Public Libraries* Online

Public Libraries ad sales in fiscal year 2019 are ahead of budget. At this point in the year, we are budgeted to be at $8,750 and we have actually sold $11,095 in ads. Subscription revenue is $21,168, behind the budgeted figure of $23,333. We launched three subscription promotions in the past week, one targets public librarians who are members of ALA but not PLA, one targets library trustees, and the other Public Libraries Online readers who are not members of PLA. In terms of expenses, we are at $74,707 against the budgeted figure of $74,469.

Publications

Total sales revenues in the publications line as of the May report are $3,072; against a budgeted figure of $2,040. As far as expenses, we budgeted $3357 for expenses, but we spent $7,796. This includes the start-up costs for the early literacy calendar design - which we won’t have next time as we can use the same template. There will not be any more large expenses in this line for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Every Child Ready to Read

As mentioned, sales in the ECRR line have slowed. So far this year net revenues are at $7,747 against a budgeted figure of $14,292. Expenses were $2,340 against a budget of $9,718. As mentioned earlier, the Every Child Ready to Read project now resides under the Family Engagement umbrella, and they are planning to focus on related products and publications.

**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 used the results to guide the magazine’s redesign and will also use the input in future product creation. 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