

Workshop on Public Library Administration Was Very Successful

by Shannon Roy, Continuing Education Coordinator

The first Reaching for Excellence Administrative Training Program was held in Salina on June 6 and June 7. The topic was Public Library Administration and it was very successful, partly because the class was lively, talkative and merry without being silly. They came from a wide range of public libraries, yet showed a very similar commitment to their profession.



Cynthia Berner Harris works with public librarians from all over Kansas.

The keynote presenter was Kate Marek. Kate is now a Professor of Graduate Librarianship at Dominican University but she has had very broad professional experience, including work in Nebraska and Kansas. Kate spoke on some of the trends in society that will have an impact on public librarianship. They included communication, information access, consumer patterns, world problems and generational issues. Her reading list is posted on the WebJunction blog.

The workshop was taught by three staff members from the Wichita Public Library. Cynthia Berner Harris is the highly respected director. Jean Hatfield is the Branch Manager at Alford Branch Library and Jaime Prothro is the Director of Customer Services. Some of the materials in the manual were also prepared by Tammy Penland, who works with Human Resources.



Cynthia Berner Harris (l.), Jaime Prothro (c.) and Jean Hatfield (r.) are from the Wichita Public Library.

The Wichita Training team took turns presenting on such topics as planning, effective teamwork, budget, planning tools and customer service. The classmates really enjoyed working with them and the discussion was sometimes hard to stop. The evaluations were very positive, but not without pointers for the future. The classmates expressed deep appreciation for the extensive manual and detailed handouts. But they still said they needed more time on every topic, suggesting a need for more focused programs with more definite parameters.

The State Library staff was very impressed by the commitment the Wichita librarians brought to the program. They contributed not only talent and expertise but a lot of planning time.