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LIBRARIANS' ROLE OUTSIDE THE WALLS

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

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*This roundtable
discussion was
conducted at the
2002 Conference of
the Association of
Christian Librarians,
Trevecca Nazarene
University,
Nashville, Tennessee*

As librarians, we have many opportunities to make an impact beyond the confines of the walls of the library if we can look past the daily demands on our time. In this roundtable discussion participants explored a variety of ways to impact both the library and academic institution.

There are a variety of reasons that librarians and others in a collegial setting need to see beyond the confines of their daily routine. In a career college setting (though this is also true at four year colleges and universities), the author learned that we all have responsibilities in the area of admissions and retention. One does not need to move in academic or business circles too long before one realizes that budgetary constraints are an issue that affects us all. It does not mean that we "moonlight" in those departments but it does involve looking for opportunities to serve students in new and different ways. Another reason to find new ways of connecting with patrons in an academic setting is simply the joy of relating to students and their interests, for example sports, music, drama.

Twenty-three individuals came together at our ACL roundtable to learn from and share with one another on this topic. In addition, there is a list of suggested readings following this article with additional "food for thought".

What follows is a list of the ideas that were shared during roundtable discussion:

- Learn the names of the students you come in contact with most frequently i.e. student workers, students you provide assistance to on a regular basis.
- Get involved with everything on campus... Each of us has a niche.
- Eating lunch with athletes, international students...noticing who might be "at risk" and going out of your way to befriend them.
- Going to games, concerts and plays...acknowledging a job well done.
- Have librarians set up liaison relationships with incoming students. A letter welcoming them and introducing you gives them an initial point of contact in the library.
- Initial days on campus are the toughest... host a family group comprised of new students, missionary kids, international students.
- Introduce yourself to students and their parents during Admissions tours,

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freshman orientation, etc.

- Convince your administration regarding the value of having librarians serve as advisors for students with undeclared majors or as mentors.

- Offer area clergy/pastors full library privileges including checkout, interlibrary loan and reference.

- See relationships with student workers as an opportunity to encourage and inspire the next generation of librarians by giving them exposure that is both broad (many departments) and deep (i.e. train student workers to handle basic reference).

- Build partnerships with middle and high schools. Invite them to utilize your library...find out how you can assist their librarians.

- Make an effort to serve parents who are home-schooling their children. Connect with a local home-schooling association.

- Use National Library Week as a time to have an open house for faculty and staff...honor your student workers during this annual event. Have a more intimate party in your home over Christmas to celebrate Jesus' Birthday with your student workers.

- Plan some unusual events in your library, i.e. Easter egg hunt, quilt show, story hours for children. Amnesty in exchange for food donations.

- Don't forget your former alumnae.

Participants found this roundtable discussion refreshing and each person came away with ideas worth implementing. Suggestions for further reading follow.

SUGGESTED READING

Brantz, Malcolm H. (2002). "Library-Sponsored Faculty Book-buying Trips: A Look At A Different Approach To

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