

August 6, 2014

**Proposal to Hire Consultant to Lead Fall Fundraiser Campaign
for OLA's MLIS Scholarship Program**

Dear OLA Executive Board members,

Since 2006, OLA's MLIS scholarship program has awarded 79 scholarships to promising future librarians, with funding primarily from an annual \$25,000 LSTA grant. Since the grant ended June 30, OLA's leadership and members of the OLA MLIS Scholarship Committee have been working to find replacement funding.

On June 12, Gary Sharp, Penny Hummel, Candice Watkins, and Janet Webster met in Portland with Betsy Priddy of the Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation and former State Librarian Jim Scheppke, in an effort to develop a plan to raise funds for MLIS scholarships. We concluded that it would be very worthwhile to hire a consultant to help produce a fall direct mail campaign, aimed at securing donations from current and past OLA members. Betsy Priddy has very generously pledged \$5,000 to pay for most of the expenses of this campaign in the first year.

In early July, we discussed engaging the services of Sharon Leighty, a very well-regarded fund development consultant, who has successfully raised funds for library projects in Oregon, including the new library in Lakeview.

For your consideration here is Sharon Leighty's Proposal, including her OLA 2014 Scholarship Committee Fundraising Budget, and a fine tuning of that budget by Jim Scheppke, which projects a higher rate of income from donations. Jim's budget projections are for 3 years of an annual OLA scholarship fundraising campaign, and is attached here. Our committee feels that Jim's projections are very sound. And we feel Sharon Leighty and Company will run an attractive campaign that will be delivered on time in October, well before the end of the year. OLA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and donors may qualify to receive a tax deduction.

Sharon's budget predicts income of \$8,000, with a net income, after expenses, of \$2,522. I believe Jim's estimates are more viable, because he will actively challenge the OLA Past Presidents group to contribute more substantial donations. His budget estimates \$6,650 in donations from current and past members, and \$3,000 from OLA's Past Presidents Group, or \$9,110 in net income from the October 2014 fundraiser. Jim's projections for the first three years of this fundraiser project predict that Year 1 could generate \$5,000 for scholarships, \$6,000 in Year 2, and \$7,000 in Year 3.

OLA's MLIS Scholarship Committee recommends to the OLA Executive Board that OLA engage the services of Sharon Leighty & Co. to perform a direct mail fundraiser. The mailing will go out to 2,662 current and past OLA members in October 2014. This will be a pilot project, to hopefully generate sufficient funds to help OLA restore funding to the scholarship program. The consultant will design a personalized appeal letter and provide all supplies and launch the campaign. If the campaign is successful, we highly recommend that OLA make this a long term project for the association.

We recommend this approach to you, so the fundraising materials will be professionally designed and create a solid template for future scholarship fundraisers. By hiring an experienced fundraiser, at a very reasonable cost, OLA will conduct a very attractive appeal. The fall fundraiser will help the

association find out if this approach achieves the level of donations needed for OLA to do an annual appeal for the scholarship program.

OLA's MLIS scholarship program aims to help MLIS students graduate and improve their ability to secure professional positions, and to help improve the quality of library staff in Oregon's libraries. OLA's MLIS Scholarship program supports OLA's Mission Statement: "OLA provides advocacy, education, leadership and collaboration to continually strengthen Oregon's libraries and the communities we serve."

By giving financial support to MLIS students who may become future leaders in Oregon's library community, OLA's scholarship program supports OLA's Vision 2020, which states that, in 2020, our libraries will be staffed and supported by:

"People who are educated and empowered to effectively advocate for their organizations, their communities, and the information profession."

Thank you very much you for considering our proposal. I look forward to a lively and productive discussion at the August 22 board meeting.



Gary Sharp, Chair
OLA MLIS Scholarship Committee

Committee:

Terry Ann Rohe, Portland State University (retired)
Debbie Brodie, Director, North Plains Public Library
Carol Ruggeri, Newport Public Library Library Foundation
Anne Pearson, Multnomah County Friends of the Library