



Member Day Report

IHLS Member Day 2020: Beyond All Limits

When the books were closed on the 2019 IHLS Member Day, none of those involved with the planning and execution of that event imagined a virtual event in 2020. The decision to host a virtual Member Day was made in late spring 2020 and plans for *IHLS Member Day 2020: Beyond All Limits* began! It took a village, and IHLS staff came through with flying colors.

The programming was developed with the intent of keeping this virtual event manageable as staff navigated new waters. The silver lining, we discovered, was the fact that virtual events are not bound by geography. So, in addition to our members who contributed their expertise, we also had presenters based in Seattle, Washington; South Carolina; Iowa; and Kansas! We were most fortunate that all our presenters were willing to offer their expertise pro bono. We were also fortunate to work with the Illinois State Library again to offer Professional Development Hours for school library participants.

A snapshot of Member Day session attendance (excluding IHLS staff):

Academic Libraries:	7 individuals representing 5 agencies
Public Libraries:	152 individuals representing 98 agencies
School Libraries:	18 individuals representing 17 agencies
Special Libraries:	10 individuals representing 8 agencies
Other:	1 University of Illinois faculty member 2 staff members from the Illinois Library Association 1 staff person from the Illinois State Library 1 staff person from Reaching Across Illinois Library System

Total Attendance: Total Attendance: 192 individuals from 132 unique agencies

Attendance by session (excluding IHLS staff):

<i>Keynote Address: Building the New Normal:</i>	172 attendees
<i>What A New School Librarian Needs to Know:</i>	27 attendees
<i>When Health is At Stake: Quality Resources to the Rescue:</i>	70 attendees
<i>Moving Library Boards to the Next Level:</i>	67 attendees
<i>What Is a Collection Audit and Why Do You Need One?:</i>	70 attendees
<i>COVID, Community, and Coping:</i>	53 attendees
<i>Managing Stress:</i>	53 attendees
<i>Closing Keynote: Creating Pathways to Civil Legal Justice:</i>	158 attendees
<i>Library System Lunch and Learns: Statewide Programs:</i>	66 attendees

This is what Member Day looked like from the programmatic side. However, system staff realized that it was important to incorporate some sort of networking opportunity. According to past Member Day evaluations, networking with library peers is one of the most valuable aspects of Member Day for attendees. Therefore, the team decided to offer video chat networking rooms to mimic some of the conversations that would have taken place during the breaks between live sessions and which would otherwise be lost. Rooms were open during the Sponsor Cookie Break in the morning, during the lunch hour, and during the afternoon break between sessions. Members and IHLS staff were able to enter the rooms, turn their video cameras and microphones off and on, and use the chat feature to communicate with each other and with IHLS staff members. In total, 92 attendees and 25 staff (total) joined the three networking rooms throughout the day.

To add a little fun to what could have been an overwhelming day of virtual programming and to simultaneously promote our sponsors, the Member Day team developed a vendor passport-like game called *Where's Willow?*. Like the 2019 live *Where's Willow?* game, this year's virtual *Where's Willow?* involved hiding copies of Willow, our Member Day team's unofficial mascot. Digital images of Willow were hidden among our Headline and Partner-level sponsor's virtual booths, as well as within a few system-affiliate displays. Members collected each of seven codes displayed alongside Willow and submitted them for a chance to win a prize sponsored by IHLS. We also gave away [nine attendance prizes](#) valued between \$90 and \$500 each. Each prize was sponsored/donated by one of our supporters (our Member Day sponsors plus one additional corporate donor, &Classroom by Barnes and Noble Booksellers). Attendees who signed up for Member Day by the priority registration deadline were sent a two-pack of cookies promoting our Sponsor Cookie Break, a 30-minute time dedicated to our sponsors and their virtual booths, and later registrants were encouraged to join us with their favorite cookie or snack.

A few months before Member Day, IHLS and RAILS staff began monthly meetings to discuss cross-promotion of each other's statewide programs, such as IHLS's Cataloging Maintenance Center and RAILS' Explore More Illinois attraction program. We used Member Day as an opportunity to promote these statewide programs by holding a lunchtime session titled Library System Lunch and Learns: Statewide Programs. The session featured three speed presentations to highlight some of the IHLS and RAILS resources already available statewide to libraries and library patrons. These sessions included descriptions of Explore More Illinois (RAILS), Cataloging Maintenance Center (IHLS), and BiblioBoard Library of Illinois and Inkie.org (RAILS). Even with the session being held during the lunch hour, 66 library members attended.

A [robust website](#) was created to provide prospective registrants and attendees information regarding all aspects of the day, from session descriptions to where to buy Member Day apparel. There was even a [playground page](#) containing the prize sign-ups and souvenir virtual backgrounds!

Not enough can be said for the IT support that was provided to the Member Day Planning Team. The IT team thought of questions and developed solutions before the issues had even crossed the radar of the rest of the team. When challenges did come up, they were always

proactive about resolving the issue. Practice runs were offered to all presenters, and those were immensely successful. The bullpen from which they ran things on Member Day was certainly the room in which it happened.

Sponsors for this event generously contributed \$2,423.90. That means when all the final invoices are in, the cost of this event to the system will be less than \$1,000. Evaluations have been sent to all participants and a summary of those findings will be shared at a later date.

None of this would have happened without the help of a skilled project manager, and our hats go off to Stacie Bushong for filling that role for us.