Was it worth it? Was joining SHARE worth the massive amount of effort?

Oh my. One if the most satisfying aspects of it, is that Selmaville's collection is valid based on the items requested. When I weeded the collection last summer, I made some hasty decisions that have paid off. Libraries are requesting classic books like those by Jesse Stuart and 50 year old biographies. The collection does seem more manageable. I am able to get newly purchased items into circulation much more quickly. The only fall-out seems to be the decision we made about $25.00 for lost book. I will work through that though.

--Elizabeth Shuler, Selmaville School

Yes! My students are borrowing and reading more than ever. They are so excited by all the books they have access to now. Since we don't have a public library in our town, I am glad that I can give them a taste of all the things libraries can do for them, so they will be motivated to seek them out after graduation.

--Kelly Friedlein, Fisher Junior/Senior High School

Yes! I have been working toward getting automated for 8 years. With the reorganizing of the library systems and funding I was finally able to jump on board and get our small library automated. The grant offered help to barcode all of our items, which was a Godsend! One piece of evidence I can share is that in years past, using a manual circulation setup, I would have between 50-150 missing books at the end of the year to try to reclaim or get reimbursement. Today, with one school day left, and fingers crossed for more returns to come tomorrow, I only have 20.

--Renee Brown, Atwood-Hammond Elementary School

Was it worth it? YES!!! It was overwhelming and tedious to barcode everything but now that it's done, it's great. We're still learning but last week we had a new patron who applied for a card and the look on her face when we said Oh, you moved here from Granite City, it was the icing on the cake. (for the record, she didn't have any fines or overdues). Everyday we're learning something new.

--Gina Schwartz, Mt. Olive Public Library

Absolutely worth it!! We've put books in kids’ hands who normally wouldn't read by inter library loan!

--Sharla Thilker, Moulton Middle School

It was worth every angry and bad word I wanted to say. Our Home school patrons love to go online and order their own books. Our non-Residents has increased because we now offer E-books. We get books in faster that we have ordered. There are still times that it goes down and
I get frustrated but overall I am very glad that Johnston City Public Library joined.
--Cindy Pulsford, Johnston City Public Library

Yes, and I was the one encouraging Gilman and Hoopeston to go for it!!
--Linda Ash, Milford High School

Yes! Wish we had joined sooner.
--Mary Newman, Frank Bertetti Benld Public Library

Yes!
--Robin Geralds, Marissa Area Public Library District

We are still busy scanning, matching, and bar coding so I am not able to say for sure. I am thinking it will be totally worth it when everything is finished!
--Debby Lehman, Nokomis Public Library

We're just in the early scanning and barcoding process, but in my opinion, it'll be way worth it. Remember, Sesser has never had a scanning system. I'm afraid scanning the Juvenile and Easy Reader books may injure me, though. LOL
--Leandra Wilson, Sesser Public Library

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--Leandra Wilson, Sesser Public Library

Yes, it was worth it, especially given the grant, which provided the much needed extra help without extra cost to the library. I know our school library budget isn't as slim as other school library budgets, but we still have to really watch every dollar and cannot afford to buy everything our students and teachers want and need. Being part of IHLS helps us to stretch our budgets. Our high school students used the system primarily for books that they needed for their research projects; these types of nonfiction books can be expensive, so we cannot afford to buy them all. And it also felt good to lend books out to other libraries that would have otherwise just sat on our shelves.

I confess that having to transition two libraries during one summer break seemed a little overwhelming at first, but it went smoothly, and I appreciated all the help from Illinois Heartland!
--Kristen Oster, Wesclin Middle and High School

Iroquois West is in the anticipation stage. We're sure it will be when we get there.
--Diane Gustafson, Iroquois West School District

To the IHLS Board of Directors, SHARE Executive Council, and all of the IHLS employees who helped our SHARE membership happen:

Dieterich CU #30 could not be more thankful for all that we have been able to accomplish through Illinois Heartland's Dream Grant. Dieterich, Illinois does not have a public library for our students to utilize. So the students only access to library materials is here in the school. Finally - because of the Dream Grant - our unserved community is able to participate in loaning an
borrowing materials through SHARE!

The Dream Grant brought our library services to a level we never would have been able to provide on our own. As with any library, our budget is very tight. We just didn't have the extra cash, man hours or ability to take on the huge undertaking a conversion to SHARE would be. The Dream Grant provided funding & help to buy needed equipment, excellent training and help with all our problems & questions. Getting cataloging teams here to help us tackle the barcode conversion was a lifesaver! There wasn't a moment that we felt stranded or forgotten. The IHLS staff were there to help every step of the way.

When our first tote of books went out this school year, we were thrilled to be able to share our collection after many years of borrowing from others. Our students and faculty were overwhelmed with what was available to them through SHARE. So much so, that sometimes the delivery man would bring our small school's totes into school piled on a cart! And we spent a ton of time checking materials in that were borrowed from others. But we smiled. We smiled a lot. How could we not smile? IHLS and the Dream Grant gave us so much more than we have ever had before. And we are truly thankful for every bit of it.

Would we go back? NEVER! Our participation in SHARE is the best thing our school library has ever done. We thank you from the bottom of our Movin' Maroon hearts for providing everything the Dream Grant has brought to us.

Sincerely,
Mary Richards, Librarian
Donna McVicar, Library Assistant
the entire Dieterich CU #30 community