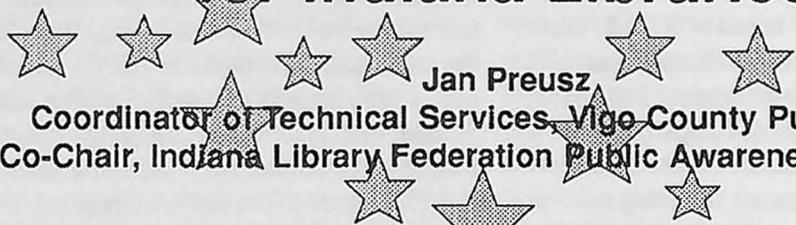



"Explore the Possibilities" An Award-Winning Campaign for Indiana Libraries



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The Indiana Library Federation (ILF) has been nationally honored as one of two major 1993 John Cotton Dana Award recipients. Presented by the H.W. Wilson Company during the 1993 American Library Association Conference in New Orleans, the John Cotton Dana Award honors outstanding library public relations efforts.

ILF was recognized for its development and implementation of "Explore the Possibilities: Support Indiana Libraries," a successful 1992-1993 statewide public awareness campaign. Spearheaded by the Federation's newly formed Public Awareness Committee and funded through Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) grants, this campaign was designed to increase both public awareness and support for Indiana libraries and their roles in this evolving information age.

In addition to raising awareness, the goals of this campaign included: 1) linking libraries to lifelong learning; 2) linking libraries to growing technologies; 3) creating a future-oriented vision of Indiana libraries; and, 4) expanding funding sources and opportunities by providing Indiana legislators with information about the roles and needs of libraries.

The focus of the campaign was statewide and designed to increase public awareness of all types of Indiana libraries. Over a period of one and one-half years, Linda Kolb, Executive Director of ILF, wrote two separate LSCA grant proposals, both of which were funded for a total of \$60,000. Kolb and the Indiana State Library formed an active

partnership which existed throughout the campaign. Participants from both ILF and the Indiana State Library contributed ideas and time, and volunteered services. A volunteer committee which included representatives from public and academic libraries, library trustees, Indiana library networks, and the ILF Legislative Advocate was formed along with ILF and State Library members to spearhead, plan, and provide direction.

In addition, Melissa Martin, a professional organizational media consultant, was employed to help design and implement the campaign. Initial considerations were given to timing—having the campaign peak during Indiana Legislative sessions—and to the development of a multimedia campaign which had the potential to be customized to meet individual library promotional needs. The ILF monthly newspaper *Focus* was used to keep Indiana librarians up-to-date on the campaign's progress.

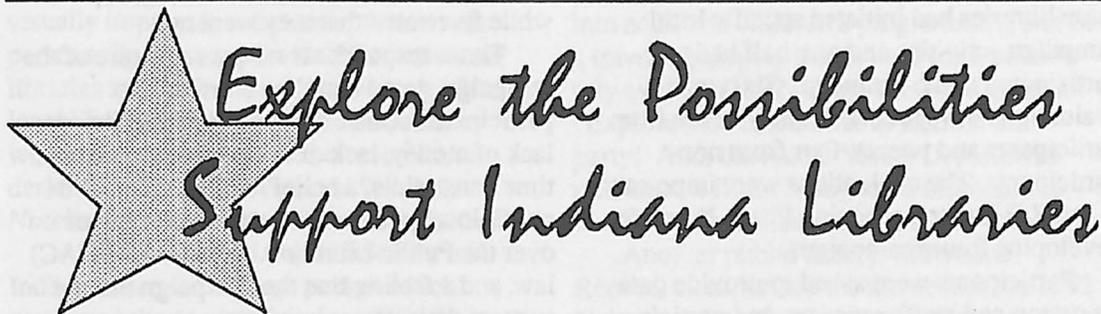
Phase I

Phase I of the campaign featured a thirty second television public service announcement (PSA) which was developed through committee input and was written and produced by the project's campaign and media consultant. This futuristic PSA promoted the importance of Indiana libraries in the information age, linked libraries and technologies, and equated libraries with lifelong learning.

Early in 1992 the PSA was released to over 100 Indiana television stations and was broadcast from February through May. A

network of volunteers telephoned stations to alert them to the upcoming arrival of the PSA, or personally delivered or mailed the tapes. Copies of the PSA were given to the eight regional Indiana Area Library Services Authority (ALSA) offices so that the tapes would be available for any Indiana library to

February 1992 while the Indiana General Assembly was in session. Representatives from state and local government, the governor's office, the press, and Indiana library leaders were invited. Key Indiana librarians kicked-off the campaign with speeches. Press kits promoting the campaign



use for fund raising or other promotional activities.

At the same time, approximately 100 billboards appeared in almost every county in Indiana, promoting the "Explore the Possibilities: Support Indiana Libraries" theme. Both the PSA and the billboards featured an 800 telephone number which connected callers to the Indiana State Library. Persons answering calls offered to connect callers to their local libraries or to send them information on how they might help support Indiana libraries.

Prior to the official launching of this campaign, the Public Awareness Committee prepared an "Explore the Possibilities" campaign booklet which was sent to every library director in Indiana. This booklet described the campaign and its purposes and presented a planning guide to assist local libraries in developing programs and activities utilizing the theme. Information was included to prepare staff and library friends in implementing local efforts along with methods to evaluate local campaigns. A list of 101 ways in which a community or campus might support its library was also included to assist these libraries in offering suggestions to their constituencies.

Phase I was officially launched through a news briefing at the Indiana State Library in

were distributed and the television PSA was viewed by the public for the first time. On the same day, news releases were mailed to every Indiana newspaper, and a special issue of *Focus* which proclaimed the commencement of the campaign, was delivered to each Indiana legislator.

At the same time, the Public Awareness Committee developed a number of products to assist libraries in promoting the campaign locally. At the beginning of the campaign, buttons, bookmarks, postcards, and two types of banners were available. Posters (which could be customized for special events) and mugs were introduced at the ILF State Conference in April, 1992 and balloons were available by that Fall.

During the 1992 ILF State Conference, the Public Awareness Committee highlighted the importance of the "Explore the Possibilities" campaign by providing information and encouraging library participation, by offering campaign products for sale, and by featuring a marketing program for library trustees led by Melissa Martin. "Explore the Possibilities" was later selected as the theme for each of the state's eight Fall 1992 ILF district meetings, for some division level special meetings, and as the theme of the 1993 ILF State Conference. The ILF membership directory and

other printed materials carried the theme with its graphics throughout 1992-1993.

Evaluation

During the Summer of 1992, the Public Awareness Committee undertook an evaluation of Phase I. Evaluation forms were sent to 112 selected Indiana libraries. One half of these libraries had initiated specific local campaign activities and one-half had not participated in the campaign. Sixty-one evaluations were returned, thirty-seven from participants and twenty-four from non-participants. The evaluations were important to the ILF for strengthening Phase II and for developing future campaigns.

Participants were asked to provide data on patron and staff responses and participation levels, on what they liked best and least about the campaign, and on ideas for improving it. Non-participants were asked about their awareness levels of the campaign, why they chose to not participate, and how the campaign might have been made more useful to them.

Participating libraries indicated that they received the largest number of positive patron comments on the campaign print materials, followed by the billboards. There were few negative patron comments, the largest number of which concerned the complexity of the television PSA. They reported that the bookmarks, buttons, information flyers, and banners were the most useful of the campaign materials to their libraries, while the post-cards, television PSA, billboards, and state library 800 number were less useful.

Respondents liked the art work, theme, bookmarks, and the 101 "things you can do for your library" best. In addition, they offered positive comments about the fact that the campaign occurred and that it was statewide. One librarian commented that the campaign allowed it to focus on the library as an information center, and another noted that as a result of the campaign, one person who had not been in the building for many years returned and was so surprised to learn all that the library now offers that he now comes

every week.

Participants reported the need for more billboards throughout the state and greater television coverage for the television PSA in future campaigns.

Of the nonparticipating library respondents, nineteen noted that they were aware of the "Explore the Possibilities" campaign, while five noted that they were not.

Those respondents who were aware of the campaign stated that they chose not to participate because of administrative changes, lack of money, lack of access to order forms, time constraints, a belief that the theme did not fit local public awareness needs, anger over the Public Library Access Card (PLAC) law, and a feeling that the campaign did not support their library's mission.

Some of the nonparticipating libraries suggested that the "Explore the Possibilities" campaign would be more useful to them if mass visibility were increased, if the campaign had been used to alert users to PLAC problems, if some materials had focused specifically on academic libraries, and if a ten to twenty minute video promoting libraries would be produced for use in circulating collections.

Phase II

Armed with the results of this evaluation and a second LSCA award, the Public Awareness Committee planned and began the execution of Phase II which ran from January through the Spring of 1993. Highlights of this campaign included the re-release of the television PSA throughout the state and the creation of radio scripts of various lengths to be used by local stations to promote local library collections and activities. Scripts written in late 1992 by members of the Public Awareness Committee were sent to all academic and public libraries so that each institution could customize them to reflect local services and then send them to local stations. The basic scripts were also mailed directly to selected radio stations throughout the state.

During the Fall of 1992, funds from this

grant were also used to create and distribute a *Media Relations Handbook*, designed to help individual libraries plan, execute, and evaluate local public awareness efforts. Also, the Committee, in partnership with the Indiana State Library, produced a *Special Services Notebook* which detailed information about the State Library's services to disabled, deaf, visually impaired, and other special needs persons. Space was provided for individual libraries to give information about specific local library special services. Bookmarks were designed to be placed on circulation desks to publicize the *Special Services Notebook's* value and usefulness to patrons.

All academic and public libraries in Indiana were sent a large packet which contained the *Media Relations Handbook*, the *Special Services Notebook*, and the book-marks, along with a table-top display which contained information on ILF membership and membership forms, order forms for "Explore the Possibilities" products, and a press release that could be sent to local media concerning the campaign and the availability of the *Special Services Notebook*.

During 1992 the Public Awareness Committee drafted its' first mission statement and presented information about its' long range goals to the ILF Executive Board, which was in the process of developing a specific long range plan for the Federation. The Public Awareness Committee will develop a public awareness plan based on the Federation's forthcoming long range plan.

Local Activities

A principal objective of the campaign was to encourage libraries to use and adapt the theme at their local levels. The returned evaluation forms indicated that a number of libraries did utilize the theme in various ways. Many purchased campaign products, displayed banners and posters, distributed buttons, bookmarks, postcards, mugs, or balloons to patrons or at community meetings or events.

Some libraries prepared and distributed lists of ways community members might

support the library, and some libraries reported that a number of their requests were met. The Vigo County Public Library used "Explore the Possibilities" as a year-long theme for library displays and exhibits and adopted the theme along with its graphics for use in its Annual Report and Friends' recruitment materials. It also incorporated the theme into adult and children's programming and in a traveling display that is used for a community event. A 1992 retiree was even given an "Explore the Possibilities of Retirement" party! And, the Audio Visual Department published a film catalog to be disbursed to local schools utilizing the "Explore" theme.

Another public library, Morrisson Reeves, incorporated the theme into the 1992 Columbus Day Celebration by filming a video which featured Christopher Columbus "sailing" into town to "Explore the Possibilities" at the library. Special emphasis was placed on employment-related literature in the library's collection. The video "premiered" at a local Chamber of Commerce meeting. Delphi Public Library entered a local parade with "Explore the Possibilities" as a float theme.

In November 1992 the Public Awareness Committee was pleased to learn that the Indiana Cooperative Library Services Authority (INCOLSA), a statewide library agency offering automation and computer support to Indiana libraries, had selected the theme for their 1992 Annual Report because of the theme's appropriateness to the rapidly changing world of networking.

These are just a few highlights of state and local efforts to increase the public's awareness of Indiana's libraries. Much remains to be done. But thanks to the foresight and partnership of the Indiana State Library and the ILF, and for the cooperation of numerous Indiana libraries and volunteer committee members, the "Explore the Possibilities" campaign has been a great beginning toward the larger goal of increased funding and support for Indiana libraries. The Public Awareness Committee is already at work planning the campaign for 1994.