Plan of Service Focus Group Session
Millennium Users Group @MHLS | March 8, 2011

Challenges & Issues:

- **Keeping Up**
    - A big theme during this group was the struggle to keep up with increasing demands on staff time:
        - Patron demand for materials; holds on the increase
        - Patron demand for assistance with technology
        - Patron expectations that we can continue at the pace and level of service we are currently managing; "We have done a good job and patrons expect that this is the baseline and then want more."; "Standard is **very** high."; "If we do more, they want more."
    - Many staff reported they are at their limit. "There are not enough hours in the day to do what is expected of us."
    - Staff are concerned they are not keeping their technology skills up to par in the area of ebooks/ereaders
    - Perception that patrons are placing an excessive amount of holds
- **Funding**
    - Stagnant/reduced funding is resulting in insufficient staffing levels
    - Staff are concerned about the financial stability of libraries given cuts to the System from the state and the proposed Property Tax Cap
    - Concerned about how to balance the needs of small and large libraries in the System (in terms of training and collection development)
        - Worried that collection development is too skewed to popular materials because with limited resources we are just responding to the area of highest demand rather than building healthy collections.
    - Feeling we are not keeping up with the demand for ebooks and other newer formats, including gaming equipment.; "How can we keep up with the format explosion?"
    - Fears that we cannot afford to keep up with changing technology
- **Training / Helping Patrons**
    - Perception that inconsistencies among libraries concerning the application of Resource Sharing Standards are causing time consuming problems at other libraries.
    - Perception that there is not enough customer service training in member libraries; that a lack of training in general leads to poor customer service
    - Staff report serving a more diverse and a more stressed out community of patrons and are seeking support for dealing with this.
    - Staff are seeking training that helps them help patrons with technology, specifically with:
        - downloading content and using ereaders
        - basic computer skills – searching, email

- o Training on how to do coordinated collection development; how to fine tune collections when space is at a premium
- **Millennium Specific**
  - o Concerned about recent crashes of the Millennium server
  - o Reported patron difficulty with creating their own online account
  - o Seeking optimization of the search engine in the online catalog
  - o Infrequent use of offline client leads to confusion during the time the system is down; how can we bridge the training / retention gap?
- **Technology**
  - o Concerned about adequate bandwidth and internal network connections
  - o Some libraries with the SAM product reported that the product is not ideal
- **Management**
  - o General feeling that library boards are out of touch with day-to-day operations at the library; would like to see every trustee have a library card and use it regularly, attend programs
  - o Lack of clarity of how budgeting decisions are made locally
  - o Would like to see more tech savvy staff recruited to work at the library
- **Outreach**
  - o Staff want to be able to be in touch with their community so they know the right things to offer in the collection and as programs.
  - o Always seeking new ways to get the word out.
  - o Want to attract and retain children and young adults as patrons
  - o Need help identifying who isn't using the library to better target them. Best guesses: high school age teens, the under privileged, people in their 20s, commuteres

What do you hope people are saying about your library?
- Essential
- Helpful
- Money well spent
- Fun
- Can't live without it