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Dr. Scott Nystrom, Ph.d
Executive Director
White House Conference on Aging
4350 East-West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Dr. Nystrom:

On behalf of the American Library Association (ALA), I hereby transmit to you a final report with our recommendations to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA).

The American Library Association sponsored an "Independent Agency Agenda Event" on Friday, June 24th, in Chicago, entitled: "Libraries, Lifelong Learning, Information and Older Adults." This event was attended by 110 library representatives from around the United States.

Planning for this event began in June 2004 at the library's annual conference in Orlando, FL. Recognizing the significance of the upcoming WHCOA, a small steering committee was formed and Chaired by Allan M. Kleiman. Mr. Kleiman is the Chair, of ALA's Library Service to an Aging Population Committee. At this time, it was determined that two units of the Association would work on this project: the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) and the Office of Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS).

To attract a broad representation from the library profession and allied organizations, the date June 24th, 2005 was selected for the event to coincide with the next annual conference of the ALA in Chicago.

The steering committee determined that if the event was to be a success in terms of results, that more planning was needed. It was determined that a planning meeting was in order and was scheduled to coincide with the Midwinter meeting

of the ALA in Boston, on Friday, January 11th, 2005. The Chair contacted key library leaders who had an interest in this area of library services. In addition, allied organizations were contacted to attend this meeting as well.

Forty-five persons attended this planning meeting in Boston. Persons who attended this meeting to determine the structure and organization for the June meeting included librarians with varied backgrounds and interest in libraries services to the aging including library educators, outreach librarians, staff of State Library agencies and reference librarians. A coalition of organizations and agencies attending represented: The US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Friends of Libraries, USA (FOLUSA), Libraries for the Future (LFF), the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), Senior Services America, and Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA).

The outcomes of the planning meeting included the structure of the June event. The group consensus was to follow the themes of the WHCOA for discussion and recommendations, the establishment of a Listserv to create dialog prior to the event (open to anyone who wished to join), and finally to create a web site for background and documents for the library community. It was noted at the Planning Meeting that there would be more people interested in the event that could actually participate physically. By establishing and publicizing the Listserv and web site it would include many more participants. It was also decided that to attract the widest representation from the library community, the Forum event would be free.

Following the meeting, the Listserv WHCOA-ALA was established as well as the web site (http://cs.ala.org/ra/whitehouse/). The site includes background links to important sites on library service to older adults, aging issues, information on the boomers and the WHCOA web site. Individuals and organizations were encouraged to develop discussion papers that would be posted for all to read as well. Perhaps the most significant paper developed was that of the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Their position paper can be seen in its entirety at their web site at http://www.nclis.gov/info/WHConfAgingNCLISPositionPaper.pdf.

The ALA event was held from 8:30am to 12:30pm at the Chicago Hilton & Towers. The final attendance for the event was 110.

Introductory remarks were made by Allan M. Kleiman, Chair. He reviewed the process of a White House Conference, what would happen at the event, and logistics. Background was given on the 6 themes of the WHCOA (Marketplace, Social Engagement, Our Community, Planning Along the Lifespan, Workplace of the Future and Health & Long Term Living) to clarify for attendees.

Kleiman stressed that although there would be many ideas discussed at this event, none of them would be lost. Only the top 6 recommendations--one in each category would be sent in the final report. But, as a group we would also be

using this opportunity as the library community assembled to identify 6 additional library recommendations to be passed along to the ALA and the library community at-large for review and discussion.

Satia Orange, Director of the ALA's Office for Literacy and Outreach Services was next to speak. She stressed the point that we have developed a library community by this event that is indeed interested in services to seniors and that it is "an important and vital area for our profession and libraries, especially with the boomers set to enter retirement within the next decade."

Next the group was joined by Leslie Burger, the Vice-President Elect of ALA and Director of the Princeton, NJ Public Library. Leslie stressed that libraries are "a primary social, intellectual and technology contact for seniors." But part of the issue today is how we as librarians can, she noted, "better transform our libraries to take on this essential focus of service to seniors."

Julie Beth Todaro (Dean of Libraries, Austin TX Community College), who designed the sessions process for the event, wanted the attendees to "think about ideas that are realistic for now and what will be realistic in the next five years."

The attendees had previously determined their area of interest when registering. Each one of the theme groups had a discussion leader and recorder. The groups ranged from 10 to 26 persons in size. We encouraged attendees to stay in their group throughout the process. Susan DiMattia (Library Consultant/Author) was asked to be a roving reporter for this event and assist in documenting the individual group sessions. This final report has drawn extensively from her notes.

It was clear that in all of the group reporting that libraries are interested in being a "player" and "collaborator" and "partner" with other organizations that serve older adults. In addition, it was clear that libraries wanted to be specifically mentioned in legislation as eligible for funding under aging program (both federal and local).

These are the final six (6) recommendations that the American Library Association would like to transmit to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging:

1.   Marketplace
Recommend that: Community agencies, groups, and organizations interested in serving older adults market their products and services in cooperation with their local libraries, state library associations and the American Library Association to reach a wider audience of older adults.

2.   Social Engagement
Recommend that: Libraries ALWAYS be part of the collaboration to provide civic engagement opportunities for older adults (including Volunteering) and they be

eligible for funding from Aging Organizations and the federal government to do so.

3.   Planning Along the Lifespan
Recommend that: Libraries be included and eligible for funding in all projects and programs to be the "community's central information and program forum" and to facilitate the process for all Americans for lifelong learning, consumer & health information, entitlements, and disabilities.

4.   Health & Long Term Living
Recommend that: Libraries be eligible for federal funding and be a partner in providing consumer & health information for all Americans.

5.   Workplace
Recommend that: Libraries be included in being eligible for funding to retain and hire older workers as well as initiate model programs that encourage lifelong learning and inter-generational work forces.

6.   Our Community
Recommend that: Libraries be included as a "player" eligible for potential funding In all instances that concern older adults.

As part of this process, the library community has developed a set of recommendations for "us" to work towards to better serve older adults. These top 6 recommendations are as follows

1.   Marketplace
Recommend that: The American Library Association work with vendors to improve existing and develop new technology for library and information services for seniors

2.   Social Engagement
Recommend that: The American Library Association and other organizations develop continuing education and training for library staff on how to work with and serve older adults that includes other disciplines such as, social work, gerontology and geriatrics

3.   Planning Along the Lifespan
Recommend that: The American Library Association develops continuing education and training for library staff that address the physical barriers of library facilities (transportation, parking, layout), technology, emotional/ intellectual/physical/financial needs of older adults as we age as well as how we can be advocates for older adults not only in our libraries but also in the community with other organizations.

4.   Health & Long Term Living
Recommend that: The American Library Association encourage libraries to act as catalysts to provide information literacy, materials, programs, technology, training for older adults and their caregivers on issues of health care, consumer health, seniors rights & benefits both in the library and in the community with other groups and organizations.

5. **Workplace**
Recommend that: The American Library Association work with its membership and appropriate partners in helping to ensure Health Insurance for part-time workers as well as helping to assist in developing incentives for library employers to retain older workers and retirees.
6. **Our Community**
Recommend that: Libraries solicit partnerships with community agencies, institutions and groups on a local level and have ALA work on this collaboration at a national level to improve library and information services for older adults.

The day's events concluded with a speech by noted library educator and advocate for older adults, Betty Turock. A past-President of the American Library Association, Dr. Turock stressed that "we want to make libraries a part of the national plans for service to our aging society." She concluded he remarks with noting that "libraries must play an essential role in the outcomes of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging.

This final reports and its' recommendations will be disseminated to all those that attended on June 24th, the membership of the American Library Association, to library media, and to the general public.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan M. Kleiman
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& Older Adults"
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