Art Librarian Parents and Caregivers Special Interest Group

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Leadership Update:
The membership agreed that Stephanie Fletcher (Art Institute of Chicago) should retain her role as Moderator for the 2018 calendar year. We will consider a new moderator at the 2019 annual conference. Gabriella Karl-Johnson (Princeton) is our social media coordinator.

2018 Activities:

- Annual Meeting: Fourteen members attended our annual meeting on February 27, 2018 at 6:00pm in the Morgan Room at the New York Hilton Midtown. At the meeting, we reviewed our 2017 activities and set goals for 2018. Anna Simon (University of Wisconsin) reported on the conference child care program; Gabriella Karl-Johnson talked about social media and Meredith Wisner (Barnard) suggested we test a Slack channel; Stephanie Fletcher reported on ALPACA’s 2018 conference session; and the membership discussed ways to publicize our work beyond ARLIS/NA and art libraries. Goals for the next twelve months included developing a discussion-based session for the 2019 conference; surveying and documenting parental leave policies at other academic institutions; gathering resources for job-seekers like interview tips and a list of family-friendly workplaces; and developing a webinar with the Professional Development Committee that examines work/life balance, parental leave policies, and related issues.

- Session at 2018 ARLIS/NA Conference: ALPACA coordinated a session entitled “Finding a Better Balance: Personal and Institutional Solutions to the Contemporary Work/Life Crisis in Libraries, Archives, and Museum.” Three speakers from beyond the ARLIS/NA organization presented on the topic of work/life balance: Kathleen Christensen (Program Director, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation), Rachael Ellison (Principal, The REworking Group), and Carla Moquin (President, Parenting in the Workplace Institute) (presented in absentia by Stephanie Fletcher). Amy Furness (Head, Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario) represented the art librarian perspective and Jill Luedke (Temple University) moderated the session.

- Conference Child Care: The conference child care two-year pilot ended at the New York City conference in 2018. Nanny Poppinz, a national nanny placement agency, organized the child care in New York City. Seven children from six families participated. Since the trial, ARLIS/NA has committed to this service and will
continue to subsidize the cost of child care. The organizers for the 2019 Salt Lake City conference are coordinating with a local child care company to provide care on March 27, 28, and 29, 2019. The cost to families will remain at $40 per day, per child. This remains an essential service that supports working families and enables parents to attend the conference.

- Conference Lactation Room: Stephanie Fletcher coordinated with the ARLIS/NA office and the New York City planning committee to secure a private lactation room in the conference hotel.

- Session Proposal for 2019 ARLIS/NA Conference: Stephanie Fletcher, Karyn Hinkle (University of Kentucky), Kate Joranson (University of Pittsburgh), and Gwen Mayhew (Metropolitan Museum of Art) organized the 2019 session, entitled “Caregivers in Sight: Normalizing Parenting and Caregiving at Your Library.”

- Poster Proposal for 2019 ACRL Conference: Amy Ballmer (Pratt), Stephanie Fletcher, Gabriella Karl-Johnson, and Marsha Taichman (Cornell) wrote and submitted a proposal for a poster entitled “Conference Child Care: Yes! It is Possible” for the 2019 ACRL conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The proposal was accepted.

- Social Media: We tested a Slack channel in March-April 2018. A small group of members joined and participated. We will continue to discuss modes of communication and outreach in 2019.

Upcoming Events:

- 2019 ARLIS/NA Conference: The ALPACA session, “Caregivers in Sight: Normalizing Parenting and Caregiving at Your Library,” will take place on Thursday, March 28, 2019 at 9:50am in the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City. It will feature a keynote by local child care expert Kat Martinez and a panel of ARLIS/NA librarians representing a variety of caregiving experiences. Ms. Martinez will address the topic of child interactions in public spaces, exploring how caregivers can model positive guidance, establish clear boundaries, and set realistic expectations in different public spaces. The panelists will discuss efforts to normalize caregiving and parenting in their own work spaces by developing family-friendly programming, establishing lactation spaces, and balancing caregiver responsibilities with professional work, while recognizing that the needs of LGBTQIA+ caregivers and children, as well as caregivers and children of color, must be central in this ongoing effort.

- Annual Meeting: The next annual meeting is Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at 12:30pm in the Versailles Room at the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City.

- Poster Presentation for 2019 ACRL Conference: Amy Ballmer and Gabriella Karl-Johnson will represent ALPACA and present a poster about our conference child care program, entitled “Conference Child Care: Yes! It is Possible,” at the 2019 ACRL conference held in Cleveland on April 10-13, 2019. The poster will detail the process of developing, piloting, and establishing the ARLIS/NA child care initiative and will present comparative information about similar initiatives developed by other scholarly and professional organizations.

ARLIS/NA Strategic Directions:

Diversity and Inclusion: ALPACA’s core values are equality, commitment, diversity, and inclusion. Members of this group are committed to fulfilling their roles as librarians and parents/caregivers to the best of their ability, simultaneously. Our goal is to support and enable one another to navigate these roles more successfully while advocating the development of institutional policies that promote the well-being of families through
adequate flex and leave time. Many parents and caregivers benefit from the professional support this group provides, promoting inclusion. The existence of a parenting and caregiving group within a professional organization is nearly unheard-of, so we diversify the Society through our efforts to challenge our profession to develop institutional policies that promote and support childbearing, childrearing, and caregiving.

Leadership and Advocacy: ALPACA promotes leadership and advocacy by offering peer mentoring, sharing stories of successes and failures when negotiating for better working conditions and family-friendly policies, and teaching our members how to advocate for themselves and their dependents. A large swath of the art librarian workforce contends with work/life balance. Many of us aspire to hold leadership positions in ARLIS/NA—and we will, with the right support. ALPACA provides that community of support necessary for parents and caregivers to achieve leadership roles within the Society and at their own institutions.

Examples of 2018 initiatives that align with these Strategic Directions are the successful completion of the conference child care pilot project and the adoption of this project as a permanent fixture at the annual conference; securing a lactation room at the conference hotel in New York City; hosting the 2018 conference session on establishing a work/life balance; organizing a session for the 2019 conference on caregiving in the workplace; and the successful submission of a poster session for the ACRL conference.