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A dream come true — an academic Friend’s first ALA Annual Conference

BY ESSRAA NAWAR

Development Coordinator, Leatherby Libraries, Chapman University, Orange, Calif.

It all started when I was first introduced to the library profession in 2005. I had just again relocated with my husband and family to Alexandria, Egypt, my home town after moving back from Fairfax, Va. While I was sorely missing my U.S. style of life, I quickly readapted to my own culture and it did not take me long to land a job at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, keeping in mind the work experience I gained while I was living in the U.S.

As an employee of the Bibliotheca’s technical services department at the time, between gifts and acquisitions, I quickly fell in love with the atmosphere, the profession and the world of libraries. It did not take much time for me to learn about ALA from a simple Google search. At that point in time, young and full of energy, I told myself a secret. “I will be part of ALA, I will attend one of the conferences and I will be part of the program too.” I had no plans at that point to move back to the U.S. nor knew where or how my career path will go.

Fast forward a few years and surprisingly enough, life has taken me and my family to Orange County, California. A year later, I got a full-time job at Chapman University’s Leatherby Libraries, where I have been for almost the past four years. This is when I felt like the dream of being part of ALA was getting closer but not easy.

Few years later, and as it happened, thanks for the generosity of SAGE publications, I was thrilled to receive the news that I was the inaugural recipient of the 2014 United for Libraries/SAGE Academic Friend Conference Grant to attend the 2014 ALA Annual Conference June 26 to July 1 in Las Vegas. A day later, I received a notification from ALA that my poster titled “Library Annual Reports Made Easy,” was accepted for presentation.

Between the fact that I was the

inaugural recipient for the United for Libraries grant and that my poster session was accepted (only 23% of poster session submissions are accepted), I could not have been more excited.

Yes, I have always been a believer in the power of dreams, but this could not have been perfect.

I arrived to Las Vegas excited and overwhelmed. I was excited for the opportunity and overwhelmed by the honor and the responsibility that this grant has bestowed upon me. As much as the program was huge and intimidating in the beginning, I managed to take advantage of the conference scheduler and navigated my way through it. I honestly could not get enough.

I attended United for Libraries’ “Nuts & Bolts for Friends, Trustees, and Foundations” program, where I was officially recognized and got a chance to say few words about myself. I also went to the program “Ask the Experts: Discover Key Strategies for Successful Academic Library Fundraising” panel, along with several ACRL programs, Stan Lee’s keynote speech, the exhibits hall (which I could not get enough of), and the very well prepared poster presentations. I was overloaded with information and ideas that could last for few years.

I was also very excited about the personal connection both the United for Libraries staff members Jillian Kalonick and Beth Nawalinski, and SAGE Publications members Camille Gamboa, Ed McBride, and Jim Brace-Thompson have made with me. As the grant benefactors, their role did not stop at just sending me the money. Ev-



everyone was eager to learn more about me and listen to my story and professional interests.

I also got a chance to attend a Random House reception at the Venetian Hotel, where I checked out the Da Vinci Exhibition on display. A highlight of my trip was when I was invited to be a guest of honor at “The Laugh’s On Us,” sponsored by SAGE, where I was sitting at the head table next to Paula Poundstone. (As I am Egyptian, you can only imagine how Paula turned in the last 15 minutes of her show to an interactive conversation between me and her — it was hilarious and I could not stop laughing!)

My poster session went very well; the 150 copies of my handouts were all gone in less than 30 minutes. I also received wonderful comments, thoughtful questions, met old friends who stopped by to see my poster, and even saw some of the Egyptian librarians who were at the conference as international visitors. These poster session conversations intrigued me to take my research and methodology about library annual reports to the next level, and make it more quantitative rather than just qualitative, which I plan to do in the next year or so.

The experience was really worth it right from the time I got off the plane



at McCarran International Airport to the time I went back to Orange County, California. I have built and strengthened some new and existing connections with librarians and library professionals from all over the U.S., and I have built a network that will last a lifetime.

I am really grateful to have been the inaugural recipient for the United for Libraries/SAGE Academic Friend Conference Grant. It was truly the highlight of my professional career this year and it reaffirmed my decision in transforming my marketing and fundraising skills into becoming a development and outreach librarian.

Nawar's article for SAGE Connection is titled In the Library, Marketing and Development go Hand in Hand:

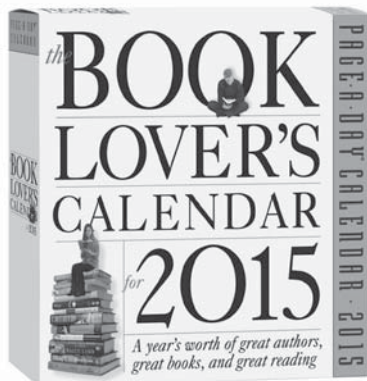
Part 1:

<http://connection.sagepub.com/blog/2014/06/23/in-the-library-marketing-and-development-go-hand-in-hand>

Part 2:

<http://connection.sagepub.com/blog/2014/06/24/tips-for-bringing-marketing-and-development-together-in-your-library>

2015 Book Lover's Calendars available



United for Libraries members can purchase the 2015 *Book Lover's Calendar* at a greatly reduced price, while supplies last. Sell these calendars at a deep discount to Friends, use them as an incentive for joining your group, in recognition of volunteer hours, or as prizes. A great fundraiser, these calendars are so popular they practically sell themselves.

The retail price for the 2015 *Book Lover's Calendar* is \$13.99; the discounted rate for United for Libraries members is \$3 per calendar. There is a 30-copy minimum order (no maximum), and calendars are non-returnable.

Shipping and handling is included in the cost of the order. Other Workman calendars may be added to your order at 50% off the suggested retail price (plus 5% shipping and handling). A wide selection of wall and Page-A-Day calendars can be viewed online at www.workman.com. Stock your book store with a selection of calendars offered at a special discount.

For more details, including ordering information, log into the Friends & Foundations Zone or the Trustee Zone at www.ala.org/united.

Information for Friends, including past issues of *The Voice*, archived issues of *News Update*, special offers, publications, and toolkits, is available to United for Libraries personal and group members. To log in to the Friends & Foundations Zone and access resources, visit www.ala.org/united and click on "Friends & Foundations Zone." If you need your login or password, email United for Libraries at united@ala.org or call (800) 545-2433, ext. 2161.



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