

**MONEY MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND – LIBRARIES TOO  
OR  
TECHNIQUES FOR OUTREACH AND RAISING FUNDS FOR YOUR  
LIBRARY**

*Bracha Weisbarth*

**Description:** This final session of the Freshman Seminar will guide attendees toward setting effective library administration goals and present strategies for achieving them. We will share techniques for obtaining, maintaining and building institutional support, assuring an adequate and growing budget, and promoting enthusiastic backing for various fundraising projects. We will discuss such public services as reference work, lively programming, community outreach and bibliographic instruction. If there's time, we'll talk about library space planning and use within the organization. Then, after we solve the problems of supervising or recruiting personnel and/or volunteers and discuss how to get your backlog of books processed without enough staffing, we'll conclude by convincing you that applying for and getting AJL accreditation is your best not-so-secret weapon for accomplishing your goals. Come with questions.

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**Bracha Weisbarth** is the Director of Library Services, Waldor Memorial Library of the Jewish Education Association of MetroWest, Whippany, NJ. Holder of a teaching degree, a BA in Jewish History and Political Science, and a MLS from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, she worked at Haifa University Library and the Jewish Theological Seminary Library. She is Past President of AJL-NJ Chapter, Past President of the Associated Libraries of Morris County, and later its Membership Chair. She served as AJL Publicity Chair and as a member of the AJL Council. Currently, she is editor of *Etone*, the New Jersey chapter's newsletter. She edits the *Book Mark*, the Waldor Memorial Library's newsletter. Bracha writes book reviews for the New Jersey Jewish News, and her story was published in *Detective Stories for Jewish Kids*. Two chapters of her as yet unpublished book, *To Live and Fight Another Day: The Story of a Jewish Partisan Boy*, were included in the State of New Jersey Holocaust Curriculum, recommended to be used by 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. Recently she supervised the inclusion of the Waldor Library's catalog on the Internet, and she is in charge of establishing a community library, a branch of the Waldor Memorial Library at the Hebrew Academy of Morris County.

In April 1992 the Jewish Education Association Library moved into its new, and what seemed at the time, spacious home in the Aidekman Family Campus in Whippany, NJ. The location was geographically to the west of the large Jewish population centers in Livingston, Caldwell, West Orange, etc.

I was hired as the director of the newly named Waldor Memorial Library. Until that time I had worked in large academic libraries, where each librarian had a specific job description. Mine happened to be Public Services and Reference, which instilled the deep conviction that the focus of library services should be on

the end user, the patron. Providing needed materials and making them easily accessible, came next in the order of importance. Nothing in my professional experience prepared me for my new job.

At the job interview it was made clear to me that on top of my administrative duties, I would have to be heavily involved in promoting the Library as well as fund raising. So, I knew where I was headed but I did not know exactly how to get there.

Without going into the particulars of moving two libraries from two different locations and consolidating them into one without handling each book twice, the Waldor Library's collection was on the shelves and I was free to assess the needs of this new library. To recognize the Library's immediate needs, and find solutions to fulfilling them, to outline the Library's goals, and create a workable plan to achieve those goals.

What did the Waldor Memorial Library have?

- \* Ten thousand volumes, cataloged according to the Library of Congress classification system, thanks to my late colleague Richard Hazen who was dedicated to upholding the highest standards of librarianship, periodicals, audiotapes, 150 videos and a lot of empty shelves.
- \* A well-organized card catalog,
- \* A highly motivated and trained staff.
- \* All expenses for the physical plant and salaries included in the JEA budget.

What did the Library lack?

- \* Library users. Up until 1992 the JEA library served a handful of teachers and adult education students.
- \* Recognition of its very existence by the Jewish and general population in the area.
- \* A Library Board
- \* A vision of the Library's mission.
- \* A children's library and a children's librarian
- \* An active Friends of the Library group.
- \* Automation

My list included such items as

- \* Establish a Library Board
- \* Get to know the MetroWest community, its demographic make-up, geographic location and needs of the community members. A survey to find answers to these questions was indicated, and eventually conducted.
- \* Institutional support – get to know the Federation departments and institutions, community leaders, educators and rabbis, determining who among them can be of help in obtaining and maintaining financial support for the library and assuring an adequate and growing budget.
- \* Raise funds for acquisition and other Library programs.
- \* Establish a Children's Library, find a children's librarian capable of creating an appropriate Jewish children's collection and present various children's programs.
- \* Automate the Library, catalog materials and circulate them on-line. The estimated cost for this project was over \$40,000.
- \* Double the size of the collection within the next ten years (this was achieved after eight years, consequently, we ran out of shelf-space, so now we needed money to acquire more shelves).
- \* Promote the Library and turn it into a Jewish public library – with the best and largest collection in New Jersey.
- \* Publish a library news- letter to disseminate news about the Library among its patrons.
- \* Create a Waldor Memorial Library web site, which would enable searching our OPAC.

As an avid “To Do” list maker, I recall creating a list of 16 items that needed to be done. Some were short term “To Dos” and others were very, very long term, sort of a dream wish list.

Two items on my list appeared to be of major importance and required immediate action. First, we had to fulfill the obligation to serve the community as a full fledged Jewish Public Library, which necessitated reaching out into the community and bringing the Library’s existence to the awareness of people in our area. Basically, putting the Waldor Memorial Library on the map.

How do you do that? How do you turn around a library that loaned out only some 150 books per year, to a library with a vastly larger circulation as possible, taking into account that potential users did not know that it existed, and many lived a distance away. This meant that they had to make a relatively long drive in order to get to the library. After all they had public libraries in their own communities, and could borrow a limited number of Judaic materials at the synagogue libraries.

Creating a great Jewish public library, one that serves the needs of a large Jewish and general population with material that can’t be obtained elsewhere would be the goal – and would hopefully bring in the users and make it worth their while to travel the distance. In essence we had a closed circle problem: acquiring library users necessitated putting the library on the map, which required an excellent collection, which required funds, which required donors, who in turn had to be made aware that the library existed, and needed their support.

The answer to this problem was Publicity with a capital “P”. We had to try to bring the Waldor Memorial Library as much and often as possible into the public eye. Striving for excellence and depth of the Library’s collection making it the best and largest in New Jersey was one way of going about it. Reaching out into the community and offering our potential patrons interesting Judaic programs and exhibits was another way. Being ready to speak in synagogues and schools about the Library was yet another means to achieve the goal. The children’s librarian went to schools to present story hours and tell them about special children’s programs offered by the Library. I was ready and willing to write book reviews for the New Jersey Jewish News, thus establishing a good relation with our local Jewish newspaper.

The second major item on my list was the need to raise funds.

Raising funds for acquisition of new materials for our collection and for presenting programs was of utmost importance. After all, one must bear in mind, that a library is a living entity and the addition of new materials keeps it alive, keeps it from stagnation, and keeps the library users coming because the best collection without users is missing its mission.

On a practical level the time had come to take the first step – to create a Waldor Memorial Library Board. This is a very important step because the right make-up of the board can impact on many of the Library’s major decisions. The members of the board should have an ongoing interest in the Library, a love of books, and be able to commit

financially to support the Library. They should be well versed in the lore and make-up of the community, have influence with the leadership, and possess many other sterling qualities, which will be beneficial to the Library. The right mix of such qualities in different members of the group is essential.

Once our Library Board was created, their duties were discussed and specified. The Board was essentially to act as an advisory body, dealing with formulating effective library goals on the strategic policy level and suggest ways and means to raise funds. It did not however have the mandate of getting involved in day-to-day running of the library, hiring of personnel or acquisition of materials.

Next, the Board formulated the library's Mission Statement, and a Goals and Objectives policy (see enclosed hand out). An acquisition budget was approved and long-range five-year development plans, as well as short-range goals, were mapped out. One of the first objectives of the Board was to establish a "Friends of the Library" group. Suggestions for ways to raise money for library acquisitions and programs were made and pursued.

The sub-title of my presentation reads "Techniques for Raising Funds for Your Library." Actually I do not have a magic formula on how to do this. I have no proven magical steps that can be imparted to you on how to find the needed financing. One must remember that raising funds is not a one-person show. It needs the integrated effort of a number of interested parties to locate donors and obtain the needed funds. Therefore, it is advisable to let the members of the board do their share of fund raising as per their standing in the community and their personal abilities. At the same time it is up to the librarian to do his or her share, which needs a lot of personal involvement and hard work. One golden rule should always be observed: work with the board and get their support. Try to execute their suggestions, and report back to them on a regular basis. Altogether it is a good policy to keep good statistical records. My monthly report discloses statistics on the number of patrons who used the Library, how many books and media materials were borrowed, how many teachers used the library's resources, and how many students benefited from that (the ripple effect). Report the monthly income and expenses, how many new books and videos were processed and how many volunteers worked in the library. Produce yearly reports as well, this will help you and your board to appraise what was done during the previous year, and help to appreciate the library's achievements.

Let me share with you a short list of some of the things I had to do, which enabled me to achieve my goals and raise more money for the library.

- \* Befriend community leaders and potential patrons.
- \* Project as user friendly an image as possible to the patrons and make them feel welcome in the library.
- \* Display professional know-how in helping library users. Know your collection to help patrons find what they need.
- \* Establish endowment funds that will contribute money on a regular yearly basis.
- \* Have used book sales and sell tribute cards it all adds to the Library's income.
- \* When needed, learn how to beg and how to be pushy in order to raise more money.

\* Write grants to various organizations to fund lecture series or purchase of library equipment.

\* Communicate to the Federation's foundation department your needs; they know where to find some hidden and unknown funds.

\* Plan programs that might bring in income, and find underwriters for programs, Back in the Library I have four scrapbooks, which contain our invitations to programs, concerts and exhibits. Many flyers, newspaper ads, articles about the Library, pictures from various programs. Did we raise any funds this way? Sometimes, but it sure put us on the map.

\* Enlist volunteers and train them to perform various library tasks.

\* Create an environment where it becomes an honor to be listed as a "Friend of the Library"

Other activities helped to bring the Library to the notice of the local population.

\* Networking with Jewish Libraries (and volunteering my time as president of the NJ Chapter and the newsletter editor) and non –Jewish libraries.

\* Joining the regional library cooperative (Highlands Regional Library Cooperative-HRLC) and the Morris County Library Association – ALMC) and volunteering my time in those organizations. The result; the regional cooperative financed the purchase of the Bar Ilan CD for the Waldor library, and by hosting a legislators breakfast in our facility while I served as president of ALMC, the Library received a grant of \$25,000 from the State of New Jersey.

\* Answering all Judaic reference questions whether from individuals or libraries as a major contribution to the local population.

\* Becoming a resource center for Holocaust materials is another service that the library provides to the general population, especially high school and college students.

\* Cooperating with other departments of the Jewish Education Association allowed the library to become the recipient of monies from the New Jersey Health council, which in turn helped us to establish an outstanding Special Needs and Pedagogical collection.

\* Getting to know local reporters and alerting them about newsworthy stories concerning the library is another way to focus the spotlight on the library.

The last subject I want to mention briefly is the library budget. Once a steady flow of funds had been established, I had to learn to prepare a viable budget, and to stretch every dollar to the maximum. Above all I tried to keep within the boundaries of the budget.

In conclusion, in the past ten years I learned a lot, I made some mistakes, but never repeated them. I am proud of the Waldor Memorial Library and its growth, I am proud of my own achievements. I crossed off most of the items on my ten-year-old "To Do" list, and I am busy creating a new one.