

Take Five!

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An Ohio Youth Services Dialogue on Challenges, Solutions, and Emerging Best Practices

If you're familiar with Highlights for Kids magazine, you know the slogan "Fun with a Purpose". That could also have been the tagline for a recent professional development event for librarians and their allies: "[Take Five! An Ohio Youth Services Day of Dialogue on Challenges, Solutions, and Emerging Best Practices](#)".

Over 70 teen and youth services librarians, museum educators, school librarians, arts educators, and other youth advocates gathered on May 16, 2012 for a day of structured conversation at the Columbus Museum of Art (CMA). The agenda blended formal presentations with time for small-group discussions, networking, exploration and play. We discussed new ideas in teen services, advocacy, youth empowerment, 21st century learning, STEM, collaboration, and the user experience in informal learning environments. Attendees were challenged and encouraged to "Take Five": by taking five hours to participate in the event, each attendee would take away at least five new contacts, five new ideas, and five action steps.

The day started with a "[Technology Bingo](#)" icebreaker which encouraged attendees to introduce themselves to one another and to learn what technological innovations other attendees have adopted into

their workplaces or personal lives. Cindy Meyers Foley, CMA Education Director, led an opening session which blended a presentation on "Creating the 21st Century User Experience" with a memorable hands-on tour of the Museum's Center for Creativity, an interactive space for experiences that foster imagination, critical thinking, and innovation. Attendees created art from simple materials such as twist ties and aluminum foil, and received an object lesson in creating an engaging, participatory user experience.

In the afternoon, Julie Scordato from Columbus Metropolitan Library encouraged attendees to build an Advocacy Toolbox and develop mentoring relationships. Robyn Vittek and Jennifer Stencil, from Akron – Summit County Public Library, spoke on transforming customer and employee experiences to encourage active engagement. Between the presentations, we gathered into small groups to reflect and brainstorm on topics from empowerment to collaboration. Several attendees stayed on after the event to tour the nearby Columbus Metropolitan Library's Center for Discovery, the largest library children's space in Franklin County.

The planning team's ambitious vision for this event included several intentions and innovations

that set *Take Five!* apart from most traditional workshops or conferences. Among them:

- De-emphasize formal, structured instruction in favor of informal conversation, idea-sharing, and serendipity.
- Bring together professionals from formal and informal educational settings – museums, libraries, schools, arts organizations – who have similar concerns and serve the same universe of young people, but who rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to meet and dialogue across institutional types.
- Create not just a one-time or even recurring event, but the beginning of an ongoing dialogue and network that could be influential and helpful to attendees long after the day ended, and that could draw in additional participants over time.

In most respects, the event was a resounding success, particularly for a new and untested format. Feedback was overall enthusiastic; attendees reported that they took away inspiration, a sense of empowerment, and renewed energy from the day. Many said that they hope to gather again for a similar, perhaps annual event: "Take Five, take two!" *-continued on page 23*



Photos by Sharon Leali, Youth Service Director,
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Research Databases & Tools

State Agency Wiki – Useful Information from All States

By Audrey Hall, Government Documents Consultant
State Library of Ohio

In every U.S. state and the District of Columbia, agencies are creating interactive databases of useful information - information on businesses, licensed professionals, plots of land, even dates of fish stocking. Some of this content is available on search engines, but much of it is part of the invisible web. Since July 2007, librarians and other government information specialists have been working on identifying and annotating these databases in one place. Subject-specific lists of state agency databases are in the process of being compiled.

GODORT, the Government Documents Round Table of the

American Library Association, is the sponsor of the State Agency Databases Across the Fifty States wiki. Statistics have been compiled since May 2011. Ohio has the fifth highest number of hits from May to December 31, 2011 at 2,437. Total visits to all state database pages for this period were 73,606. State volunteers check the viability of the database links each quarter.

The annotated list of databases produced by Ohio state agencies is listed alphabetically by the producing agency. To add a database to this list or to fix a broken link, you may choose to either do it yourself

Visit the wiki at http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/State_Agency_Databases for the list of links to all the states.



as this is a wiki, editable by anybody, or send an e-mail to Audrey Hall, the documents specialist for this page, at ahall@library.ohio.gov.

Take Five! *continued*

A follow-up event would draw on the success of, and on the excitement and goodwill around, *Take Five!* It would also give the planning team an opportunity to act on lessons learned from the less successful aspects of the event. For example, the topic-specific but otherwise unstructured small-group session was an unusual activity format, but we didn't give detailed instruction on the "ground rules" for choosing tables, participating in conversations, and reporting back. Next time we'll better establish the environment during the small group discussion time, so that attendees feel freer to move about tables and conversations and more motivated to bring forward their tables' ideas to the large group afterward.

We also have not experienced robust participation in an ongoing open dialogue, as we'd hoped. The [Take Five! Facebook page](#) is available for attendees and others to continue to play, brainstorm, share experiences, and report back on new ideas they have tried

out as a result of the *Take Five!* event. The page has a healthy following but not a lot of activity. It may be not the optimal forum; perhaps an old-school electronic mailing list would be a more accommodating and productive place for people to participate in discussion.

Or maybe awesome side-conversations are taking place all across this newly-developed network, so it's working, just not publicly. And maybe everyone is just really busy implementing new ideas and building new coalitions. We hope for that. It would be a great outcome, and would fulfill the intention of *Take Five!* to promote and validate creative approaches for professionals who work with teens and youth in learning environments.

The *Take Five!* event was sponsored by the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science, the Columbus Museum of Art, and the State Library of Ohio. Planning team members included: Belinda Boon, Amy Brown, Janet Ingraham Dwyer, Sharon Leali, Emily Rozmus, Jennifer Lasky Russell, Julie Scordato, Mandy R. Simon, Jennifer Stencel, Robyn E. Vittek, and Gretchen Yonata.

For more information or to participate in an ongoing online dialogue and/or future events, please see the *Take Five!* website and "like" the *Take Five!* Facebook page. To volunteer to help plan future events, or to discuss planning and logistical aspects of the event, please email [Janet Ingraham Dwyer](mailto:Janet.Ingraham.Dwyer). If you know any potential speakers/partners for future events, please suggest them to Janet. We are seeking transformational/motivational participants, particularly those with experience in innovative informal educational environments inside or outside the library world.