

SOURCES

want to develop a numeric information program will find the cost worthwhile. Highly recommended for academic librarians interested in learning about or implementing a numeric data services program.—*Eric Petersen, Librarian, Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library.*

Reference Sources and Services for Youth. By Meghan Harper. New York: Neal-Shuman, 2011. 306p. paper \$65 (ISBN: 978-1-5557-0641-8).

With this book, author Meghan Harper sets herself a tall order: She intends

to provide a comprehensive overview of providing reference service and resources . . . for school librarians and public librarians serving children and young adults, for use as an in-service training tool for paraprofessionals and aides and nondegreed staff working in children's and young adult services or current reference librarians who are new to working with children, as well as a textbook for library science courses. (xiii)

Phew!

In general, Harper achieves this goal admirably. The book is packed with information, resources, links, standards, and guidelines—a great deal of fodder for development. However, her audience may, at times, feel frustrated with the back-and-forth between school librarians and public librarians, experienced professionals and novices; the lack of focus may put readers off track. In some instances, the author includes more explanation of basic concepts than professionals require; in other places, not enough explanation is included for beginners. In some ways, this project might have worked better as two books rather than one.

The textbook is divided into ten chapters (plus a bonus chapter on core reference collections). First, of course, is the introduction to reference service. Other works such as, *Twenty-First-Century Kids*, *Twenty-First-Century Librarians* (ALA, 2010), provide a better and more thorough history of children's services. Other chapters cover developmentally appropriate practice in reference service, services for children with special needs, communication techniques, information literacy development, selection techniques for reference sources, ways to promote online search tools, and government resources for youth. All of these should pave the way to “positive and failure-free” (33) library experiences for young customers.

In the final two chapters, Harper covers evaluation, best practices, and management principles for providing reference service, including policy development and ethical considerations. Stressing that “an individual reference transaction can determine a child or young adult's perception of the library or librarian as a helpful resource or one that should be avoided” (33), Harper highlights all of the elements that can make library services successful, and child-centered, and transformative.

As part of each chapter, the author begins with a scenario featuring “Lilly the librarian,” and each chapter ends with exercises and scenarios for consideration or application to personal experience. Both an index to resources and a subject index are provided. This will be a useful resource for anyone working with children in libraries, as it offers much support and guidance for both staff and service development.—*Sarah J. Hart, Acting Children's Services Coordinator, Brampton Library, Brampton, Ontario, Canada.*

A Strong Future for Public Library Use and Employment. By José-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King. Chicago: ALA, 2011. 138p. paper \$70 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-3588-0).

During these economically challenging times for public libraries, authors José-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King provide arguments for continued public funding and support in *A Strong Future for Public Library Use and Employment*. Libraries have weathered recessions before and have shown consistently that when revenue sources decline, operational adjustments are made to deal with fewer resources. In addition, public libraries provide services that are particularly needed during recessions, so the use of many services increases. Griffiths and King use evidence from Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) studies, statewide return-on-investment data, and survey results to demonstrate the value of public libraries. The book synthesizes research from many sources and provides easy-to-understand statistics, charts, and graphs, all of which are valuable advocacy tools for explaining—to boards, funders, stakeholders, and the public—why libraries still matter.

Further, the book contains a comprehensive assessment of public librarians' education and career paths to date and includes trends in public library employment, such as staff structure and educational level of staff. Early chapters highlight expanded service trends and increased library visits (both in-person and online) during economic recessions. The authors' studies show that, interestingly enough, a rapid increase in online visits has not negatively affected the number of in-person visits and may actually increase them—important data to present to those who say libraries are no longer relevant!

The second half of the book details public library employment trends. During the past three recessions (1980s, 1990s, and 2000s), the number of MLS-level librarians increased, and staff structure remained relatively consistent, yet the type of work done by MLS librarians decreased in reference and research services. Although this information is certainly of interest, the real value to public library administrators, library schools, and the ALA is contained in chapter 8's ten-year forecast of the number of MLS librarians in the workforce. Measures used to forecast include the number of MLS librarians who are expected to remain in the workforce, the number lost through attrition, and the number of current vacancies. These data come from a variety of sources, such as economic models, census information, surveys, and IMLS studies. The