

Speed mentoring for library professionals

By Anna Babluck.

On Saturday afternoon, established librarians and budding information professionals came together to learn about BCLA's new mentorship program at the session Speed Mentoring for Library Professionals (S13).

This casual and comfortable session was led by Tamarack Hockin, Youth Services Technician at Surrey Library, coordinator of LTAIG's mentoring program and member of BCLA's Mentorship Working Group and Amy Ashmore, Youth Services Librarian at Surrey Library and co-chair of BCLA's Mentorship Working Group. These enthusiastic ladies began with a collaborative discussion seeking to define what makes a mentoring partnership effective. We tossed around words like collaboration, respect, honesty and sharing as the group honed in on the roles and expectations of each member of the partnership. We used this discussion to identify best practices and we were reminded that we are all just human, despite age and experience gaps.

Then we moved into the speed-mentoring portion of the afternoon. After some shuffling of chairs, the attendees paired off so that each could have a chance at both mentoring and being mentored. As we made our way around the room and consecutively paired off with four different people, the mentor/mentee distinction seemed to disintegrate into what was simply a genuine conversation for most pairings. Even though some of

the pairings seemed odd as students attempted to mentor seasoned professionals, the take-away lesson was that we all have different experiences in life so everyone has something to give and, in turn, we all continue to learn throughout our careers. This exercise was truly valuable in that it allowed us to network with colleagues, assess our own strengths and weaknesses as mentors or mentees in relation to best practices and assess whether BCLA's program might be right for us.

This session was an inspiring taste of the value to be gained from involvement in BCLA's new mentorship program. The application deadline for the BCLA mentorship summer session has already passed, but another one is being planned for the near future. If the program proves to be successful, it will continue to run twice a year in the spring and fall. You can find out more about the program including criteria for involvement, future deadlines and the guidelines and expectations for mentors and mentees, by contacting the mentorship program working group through bclamentorship@gmail.com or by checking out their site at <http://www.bcla.bc.ca/mentorship/page/home.aspx>.

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