

## **Update on CAL's Bulgarian Library Project, June 2010** **Printed in the Colorado Association of Libraries Newsletter**

After the end of the federal funding for our Bulgarian Library Partnership Project, activities have been primarily communication among partners and collecting books to send to Bulgaria.

However, recently I went to Bulgaria for two exciting events: a visit to an innovative library with a new director who wants a partner library in Colorado and a presentation on Colorado's BHAG campaign.

I was asked to present at the conference of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bulgarian Library and Information Association (formerly the Union of Library and Information Science Officers – ULISO). The two-day BLIA conference had multiple speakers and ended with a reception and celebration where I was honored to receive a certificate of appreciation for our work with Bulgarian libraries.

My presentation was on BHAG, Colorado's new approach to advocacy. I began with a story about an unemployed, under-educated young man and how the library helped him learn about computers, get a job, and get his high-school degree. I had them hooked from the beginning. I went on to talk about BHAG and its goals and process. My power point has become an article for their *Official Proceedings*.

My second activity was to visit the Iskra Public Library in Kazanluk, Bulgaria. Kazanluk sits in the middle of the Valley of Thracian Kings and the Valley of Roses and the library collection is rich in documents reflecting the archeological (going back 5000 years) and business (producing rose oil for centuries) history.

I was attending the International Rose Festival and the new director of the library, Anna Kozuharova, asked if I would visit the library and meet her staff. What I didn't know was that the library was closed for the festival. Anna opened the library for my visit and all of her staff and the Assistant Mayor for Cultural Affairs, Yuliana Palazova came to meet me. I got a tour; coffee, cookies and chocolate (a staple at these meetings); and a chance to talk to staff.

Anna has worked for the library for several years (I had actually met her years ago) and now was the director, full of ideas for how to further develop the library. She is one of the libraries that will receive computers from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. They will get 14 computers and Anna says that they will offer classes to library users. She wants to apply for a grant to work with children, particularly Roma (Gypsies) children.

Our federal project has a long tail as well. Anna attended the training we did four years ago on becoming a Community Information Center and with the new computers, she

wants to begin a CIC. She wants to do a program for senior citizens and start a volunteer program and begin a Friends of the Library – all ideas that were unthinkable to Bulgarian libraries before CAL began our project, now 10 years ago.

This is what Anna says she wants for the future of the Iskra Library:

*Today an indispensable part of the future of the library is the creation and execution of a coherent management plan for the successful execution of our mission statement. A coherent plan should consist of the following major guide points: a modern management attitude with the goal of successful creation of additional funding resources, reassertion of the positive library image in the community, seminars for professional and motivational workflow for the library personnel, the search for balance between the traditional library functions and the novel information functions of modern libraries, the creation of a partnership network between the library and other professional outlet of industry. The role of the library director is of crucial importance with respect to the efforts committed in these transitional stages of library management.*

Anna is looking for a partner library in Colorado, particularly one that would like to facilitate communication between the children of both countries.

For more information about the Iskra Library in Kazanluk or about being a partner library, please email me at [nancybolt@earthlink.net](mailto:nancybolt@earthlink.net).