Apps in Storytime Project - Youth and Family Services Manager, Mary Fellows has developed an exciting initiative to connect storytimes to the latest technology. Pulling together some “year end money” from various sources in her budget, Mary was able to fund the “Apps in Storytime Project.” This project involves iPads (currently two) loaded with apps (currently 17) that member library youth services staff can use to add variety and quality to their storytimes. As part of this project we also purchased a projector, speaker, and the various cables needed to make everything work together in a program. We will loan the iPads and related equipment to member libraries, accompanied by detailed suggestions for incorporating each app. One iPad will be used by the presenter and the other will be shared among participants during the app-related program segment. Mary will also offer demos and training at Youth Services meetings. From Mary’s description of the project - “While the human interactions of an excellent storytime will always be primary, apps can deepen children’s learning. One example is for the words to songs sung to be displayed on the screen so that parents can sing along and also learn the song to use at home. Using apps in storytime also reinforces to parents that the library is contemporary and a source of guidance for quality information of all types.”

Horizon upgrade completed - On December 19 the UHLS Automation Team successfully completed another major upgrade of the Horizon ILS. The most visible change as a result of this upgrade is several improvements to the functionality of the KidsPac in Horizon. The upgrade was a virtually seamless process for the member libraries and users and all the libraries were up and running as normal by mid to late morning on the day of the upgrade. It is a testament to Joe Thornton, Rawdon Cheng, and Rob Carle that Sirsi Dynix, our current ILS vendor, allows UHLS to handle most of the upgrade work on site which helps to minimize the downtime for our libraries. As a note, we are one of only a handful of clients that Sirsi allows to do this. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented team working for UHLS and the member libraries.

Additional NYS Construction Grant Funding - As a result of unused Public Library Construction Grant Program funds returned from library systems across the state, additional construction funds in the amount of $26,250 were offered to the Upper Hudson Library System to be used to provide additional funding for current 2013-2014 construction project applications. The allocation decision for the additional funding needed to be made on a very short timeline before the end of December, so the Services Committee was consulted via e-mail and the committee “agreed virtually” on a recommendation for the allocation as detailed below:

East Greenbush Community Library - $10,806 (total revised award of $37,820, 49% of their total project cost)

Troy Public Library - $15,444 (total revised award of $52,194, 49% of their total project cost)

The allocation of the additional funds was communicated to DLD, the applications were revised to reflect the additional awards, and the impacted libraries were notified of the additional funding, all before the holidays. At the January 2014 UHLS Board meeting the board will be asked to retroactively
approve the Services Committee’s recommendation for the allocation of the additional funds. Thanks to the Services Committee for their quick work on the "happy problem"!

**CORE Trustee Training Module: Long-Range Planning now available** - After working with several member libraries on individual long-range planning consultations, we have developed an advanced module for the CORE training module focused on long-range planning. The session is designed to take 60-90 minutes and will be presented for member library boards at their library, using the “on-demand” model that was so successful with the initial CORE training. This presentation reinforces the importance of having a long-range plan and breaks down the steps of creating a plan in a way that will encourage boards to tackle this very important responsibility. I have presented the program in its finished form at Altamont and Westerlo with positive feedback. I will be sending out an announcement about the program to member libraries shortly, but if you think your library board would be interested please let me know or have your board contact me. I’d also like to thank the Grafton Community Library, the Brunswick Community Library, and the Castleton Public Library for input and their patience as we “beta tested” the program with them.

**Kohl’s book donation for member libraries** - A few weeks before Christmas we were contacted by a representative from the local Kohl’s department store to donate a supply of brand new cookbooks to the public libraries in the area. We received the books in two separate deliveries and were able to send anywhere from 3 to 5 books out to each member library as an early holiday gift. We expressed our appreciation to Kohl’s when the books were dropped off and we plan to follow up with them to see if we can stay “on their radar” for future donations.

**New York Libraries Trustees Online (NYLTO)** - All 23 Public Library Systems in New York will soon have access to the New York Libraries Trustees Online website (www.nylto.org). The NYLTO project was originally funded in part by a federal LSTA grant to a group of NYS Public Library Systems to conceptualize and develop an online resource for library trustee training. At the end of the funding cycle, PULISDO (Public Library System Directors Organization) voted to join forces with LTA (Library Trustee Association of NYS) to fund the continued development of this resource and make it available to all Public Library Systems in New York State. The tool compliments and supplements the trustee training resources available to libraries through local library systems, DLD, NYLA, and LTA. In early 2014 UHLS staff will receive training in using and presenting the NYLTO resource to member libraries, after which the tool will be shared with member library trustees and directors and incorporated into our trustee training plans going forward.

**NYLA Library Assistant Training Program offered at UHLS** - UHLS will be one of the host sites for the newly revised NYLA Library Assistants Training Program in January of 2014. This program, which has been offered by NYLA since 2007 is targeted generally to library support staff who would like a bigger picture of the library landscape (different functions, different library types) or "career explorers" looking to learn more about libraries and library work in the 21st century. I have been one of the instructors in the course since its inauguration and when NYLA expressed an interest in hosting the classes at public library systems (they were formerly offered through community colleges) I volunteered to have UHLS be one of the first sites along with the Mid-Hudson Library System. As a host site UHLS will be paid for the use of the facility and we were also given two complimentary full program registrations, which have been awarded to library staff members from COLN and EGRN. For more information about the program please visit the NYLA website at:
Open Meetings Law program recap - Our first CORE Special Session trustee training program was a great success. Approximately 25 trustees and directors attended the program on Open Meetings Law and FOIL presented by Committee on Open Government Executive Director Bob Freeman. The feedback from attendees, both informally after the program and through a next day e-mail survey, was 100% positive. We also received a few suggestions for future CORE Special Sessions in the survey, but please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions for topics for one of these trustee training programs.

ILS Investigation Update - As the next step in the process, the ILS committee is hosting two all day demonstrations here at UHLS by the representatives of the two ILS products being most seriously considered (III and Polaris). These demos are designed to be an opportunity for the member library staff to learn more about the products and to get their specific questions and concerns addressed by the vendors. The demos are scheduled for Thursday 1/9 (III) and Thursday 1/16 (Polaris). In order to ensure the maximum opportunity for staff to see both products we wanted to schedule them on consecutive weekdays. I will continue to keep the board updated on the progress of this important process.

Library Advocacy Day Reminder - This is the first of many reminders that the 2014 Library Advocacy Day is scheduled for **THURSDAY, February 27**. Please mark your 2014 calendars and make sure your library’s trustees, staff, friends, and supporters are reminded of the date, particularly because it’s been changed from the typical Tuesday event. Although the date and some of the NYLA activities scheduling will be a little different, our tradition of bringing a strong and vocal contingent of UHLS representatives to our meetings with our state elected will not change. I’ll keep you updated on the Advocacy day plans and please continue to explore new ways to connect to your local NYS Assembly and Senate representatives.

Member Library Support - Since the last Board meeting, I have worked with several member libraries consulting with them on specific projects/issues, providing advice and support on local issues to trustees, directors, and/or staff. For this reporting period those libraries include Berne, Cohoes, Guilderland, and Brunswick. This is in addition to my CORE Long-Range Planning presentation for the Westerlo Public Library Board of Trustees, my attendance at the Berne Public Library Ribbon cutting ceremony, and the retirement celebration for Joyce Laiosa, long-time Head of Youth Services at Voorheesville Public Library.

UHLS Information Technology Update – The Automation Services Report for the last reporting period is attached for your review.