

Powerful Partnerships Conference Report

By Lynn Heath

First of all, a big thank you to SLANZA for supplying the funds for my registration.

The Powerful Partnerships described, discussed, and encouraged have already been actioned to some extent since my return!

The keynote speakers focussed on the need for us to seek partners so we can mutually benefit both partners, as well as the information literacy of the children and staff in our schools. We need to show enthusiasm for our work, be proactive, and make ourselves seen and heard as vital and interesting members of the school community. It was what Louise was talking about at our Professional Development Day earlier this year, what she calls "Fishnet Stockings and Trumpet Blasts!"

Dr Penny Moore and Jane Edgar gave particularly useful addresses. Penny spoke about her research into powerful partnerships in schools. She suggested that instead of gatekeepers of knowledge, we are mavens (who accumulate and share knowledge). I understand that the slides from her presentation will be on the SLANZA web site soon. Jane told us about some of the innovative and people-orientated things she does in her school library, from Arty Crafty Wednesdays to becoming the frail granny who wasn't sure about flying and encouraging the children to find out about the things that were worrying her! Tim Snyder from the USA gave us some ideas about meeting challenges and making a difference using a positive attitude.

I attended the following workshops:

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| Liz Probert | -On-line learning ...it's coming! Good learners can be good e-learners. |
| Jim Ferguson | -Access-It software ...I have this in my school, so wanted to learn some more about it and some of the different features I could use. |
| Glenda Fortune | -Web sites for literature study. I have a list of the web sites (including book review chat sites). |
| Glennys Hill & Lis Stevenson | -Infolink learning programme in a school. |
| Penny Moore | -School Library Team ...working together, collaborative planning-more needed! |
| Pauline McCowan & Anthea Hamlet | -Information literacy |

Fiona Mackie -Fiction to support Social Studies. I have her list of fiction (senior/junior/picture books) with social studies themes. A great resource!

The SLANZA AGM was held on Tuesday afternoon.

There were the usual President's and Financial reports, which were well received. The membership report stated that our Central Region had grown from 58 (last year) to 69 members, and that the New Zealand totals had gone from 522 to 620. The national executive have authorised several awards, and these, along with certificates of recognition, were given to a number of members.

Mention was also made of the web site. It contains a number of items of interest, including "representative" job descriptions – if you don't have an official job description already, look on the web siteit will give you a starting point for negotiation, at least.

The highlight of the AGM for the Central Region came when Louise was elected to the position of President Elect. Congratulations Louise!

Later that evening we adjourned to the Chateaux on the Park for the conference dinner. We had all been given identities, and we had to find our partners. (I was Dick Whittington's cat! ...I found him eventually!!) Then we enjoyed a lovely meal and an entertaining speaker.

We were invited to attend one special breakfast session. I went to Dr Simon Pollard's talk about spiders and insects and other creepy crawlies....and memorial art! ...with breakfast! (He wrote, "I am a spider" and the new "I am an insect".)

Speaking of food....our breakfasts and lunches were really nice. There was quite a bit of variety, and it was clear that provision had been made for special dietary needs. The accommodation at Rangī Ruru was very comfortable – sometimes too comfortable! The evening meals were our own responsibility and it was good to try various places.

The closing keynote speaker, Lyn Hay from Australia, also had some positive and encouraging comments to make. She said that her research had shown that regular communication between library staff and the principal, a shared trust and vision, and a collaborative approach to learning and teaching seemed to enhance a school's success as an information literate school.

I left the conference with a new enthusiasm to put into practice some of the ideas I had heard. Some are in place already, some are in the planning stage, and some are just glimmers of ideas that need a bit more thought and time.

If you would like to know any more about any of the things I have mentioned here (or any other aspect of conference), please feel free to contact me at lynnh@carncot.school.nz