

Feria Internacional Del Libro de Guadalajara

By Heather Estrada

For Go! Eastern Oregon

Books, books and more books! Many librarians go into the field (me included) because at some level we love books. Even though the job seldom calls for librarians to sit around and read books, the joy of being surrounded by them is still a powerful force for many in the field.

Nowhere have I had the chance to experience this aspect of librarianship more than at the world's largest Spanish language book fair in Guadalajara, Mexico.

At the beginning of December, I traveled with Umatilla Public Library Director Susie Hansen to the book fair (FIL for short) to purchase books to bring back to Umatilla County for our libraries and the Intermountain Educational Service District.

In the United States, it is possible to find books that are translated from English to

Spanish on a small scale, but it is extremely difficult to find publishers that have books written originally in the Spanish language.

Original Spanish language books that better reflect the cultures of the countries they are published in. Because of this lack of access, the American Library Association has a program to encourage American librarians to travel to Guadalajara and purchase books to ship home. ALA helps with travel expenses and sets up shipping connections to make it easy to transport the books back for use here.

Susie and I were among about 10 other Oregon librarians engaged in the same work.

The idea for the trip was first brought to my attention by the UCSLD early literacy outreach coordinator, Monica Hoffman. Her job is to go into in-home daycares, Head Start preschools, other preschools and

libraries, to do story times and exchange book boxes with these centers. Many of the sites she sees serve Spanish-speaking families and she was struggling to find books that match their lived experiences.

In fact, 28% of the Umatilla County population speaks Spanish and yet our libraries have, at most, 5% of their collections written in Spanish.

The city of Umatilla has a Spanish-speaking population much higher than that, 47%, and the city enthusiastically supported sending Susie Hansen on the trip as well.

Because of two generous grants — one from Wildhorse Foundation, and one from the Roundhouse Foundation — we were able to purchase around \$9,000 worth of books that will go on the shelves in all 12 libraries in the UCSLD once they in January.

Additionally, Monica will have new sets

of books to stock her bins and to take to many sites around the county.

The book fair in Guadalajara was a site to behold. Not only for the massive number of books from around the world but also for the enthusiasm of the locals who flocked to the fair (actually ran) in huge numbers. We were amazed and gratified to see the enthusiasm and excitement surrounding a book fair!

Sometime around the end of January or first of February, be on the lookout in your local library for a new selection of excellent quality Spanish language books.

Just one more reason to take a trip to your local library whether you were there this week or haven't been in years. There is always something going on in these excellent spaces.

For more information, visit www.ucslid.org.