



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

The Illinois Library Association's Youth Services Forum is presenting the 2018 Golden Ticket Award to Marissa Elera, Youth Services Librarian II and Children's Program Coordinator, at the Berwyn Public Library. This award is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution in library services to young people in her or his local community.

Marissa's passion and love for literature lead her to the completion of a 2009 Bachelor's Degree in Creative Writing from Columbia College. Awarded the William R. Gordon Scholarship, one of ALA's 2011 Spectrum Scholarships from the Office of Diversity, and the Sylvia Murphy Williams Award from the Illinois Library Association (ILA), she received her MLIS from Dominican University in 2013.

A member of the American Library Association and the Midwest Chapter of REFORMA, Mrs. Elera has also served on the LACONI YSS Board since 2016. Along with her colleagues, Marissa presented a program on kickstarting bilingual programs at the 2014 ILA Annual Conference and the 2015 Reaching Forward Conference. She collaborated with the other members of her iLEAD USA 2015 team, whose long-term project focused on bringing technology and innovation into Illinois libraries. Marissa also participated in the first two Illinois Youth Service Institutes in 2016 and 2017, with presentations on offering fun programs in Spanish and on how to plan and present a fairy tale event for your entire community. She will be serving on the 2019-2021 Monarch Award Committee.

As the Children's Program Coordinator at the Berwyn Public Library, Marissa's hard work and dedication has elevated the library's annual *Fairy Tale Ball*, transforming the

library with sets that bring familiar fairy tales to life and where staff and volunteers dress as favorite characters adding authenticity to each setting. With more than 500 patrons in attendance, each is able to spend an afternoon transported into the realm of stories. Every spring, kids in Berwyn break out their fancy clothes and bring their loved ones to attend Marissa's high tea party where she utilizes her storytelling ability. Thematic sensory experiences for toddlers are offered to patrons through her uniquely created program *Totally Untidy Toddlers*, which she later expanded into an offshoot program for teens entitled *Totally Untidy Tweens*. Marissa has also taught a bi-weekly teen writers group at the library.

As stated in her letter of nomination written by Hannah Rapp, on behalf of the ILA Diversity Committee: "Marissa's dedication and attention to detail have made the Berwyn Public Library into a regular source of wonder for the children in the community, and allowed her to promote literacy to children from birth onward."

The Golden Ticket Award will be presented at the Awards Luncheon to be held on Tuesday, October 9, at the Illinois Library Association's 2018 Conference in Peoria. Marissa will also be honored at the Youth Service Forum's Author Breakfast held on Wednesday, October 10.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release