



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

**Illinois Library Association
33 W. Grand Ave., Suite 401
Chicago, IL 60654-6799**

**Phone: 312.644.1896
Fax: 312.644.1899
Email: ila@ila.org**

Press Release

Roz Topolski, Community Engagement Program Coordinator at Vernon Area Public Library District, receives the Illinois Library Association's 2019 Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award, which is awarded annually for sustained activity and contributions having a lasting impact on librarianship. The award is supported by the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Fund and by the Valerie J. Wilford Memorial Fund established in recognition of her enormous contributions to multi-type cooperation and resource sharing.

This year's Hugh C. Atkinson award is being given to Roz Topolski on behalf of the Vernon Area Public Library District, the Indian Trails Library District, and the Cook Memorial Public Library District. Topolski served as the central coordinator of the One Book, One Community (OBOC) program. The program's goal is to connect community through a shared experience of literature and library programming.

The program was a truly joint effort for all three of the organizations involved and included contributions from many people in addition to Roz Topolski.

Vernon Area Public Library District: Sadie Frey, Anne Baker Jones, Janice Kellman, Catherine Savage

Indian Trails Library District: Susan Dennison, Stavroula Harissis, Christina Stoll, Aleksandra Terlik, David Wright

Cook Memorial Public Library District: Dari Carré, Valentina Cotini, Jo Hansen, Andrea Larson

The partnership leverages the benefits of resource sharing in the truest sense. The three libraries contribute financial and staff resources to develop a website (1book.org), a comprehensive programming booklet, and author related expenses that each library could not afford independently. This endeavor requires extensive collaboration with librarians, programmers, marketers, graphic designers, and technical services staff at each library.

The OBOC program also serves to expand patron horizons both figuratively and literally. By defining community as more than a single municipality or library district, participants are reminded that they are part of a much larger community. By inviting participants to attend programming hosted at any of the participating library locations, it broadens their library universe, opening up new resources to them.

The initiative launches annually in December when each library hosts a kickoff event and distributes a number of free paperback copies of the feature book to their community. Additionally, each library makes it a priority to have the title available for checkout in every available format. In January and February, each library presents several public programs that complement the themes, characters, or settings featured in the book. These program offerings typically include book discussions, film screenings, or art exhibits that align with the book, along with lectures and performances. All programs are available to all area residents, regardless of home library affiliation.

The OBOC program exemplifies a unified front for libraries working together particularly in a mobile suburban area that shares geographic borders and can maximize taxpayer resources. Through the book selection OBOC hopes to open dialogue among neighbors and reach a broader audience through a greater appreciation for a culture or identity different from their own.

The Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award will be presented at the Awards Luncheon to be held on Tuesday October 22, during the 2019 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference in Tinley Park.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release