



**ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

Because Libraries Matter

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## **Press Release**

**The Popular Materials Department at the Ela Area Public Library is the recipient of the Illinois Library Association Readers' Advisory Service Award. The award, presented by the Adult Reading Round Table, recognizes excellence in the planning, development and delivery of readers' advisory service to adults and teens. The award is sponsored by the Adult Reading Round Table.**

Ela's Popular Materials Department was selected as this year's winner in recognition of their innovative efforts to promote Readers' Advisory in ways that are inclusive and impactful. With initiatives such as the Three Books Podcast, Ask Me What I'm Reading, Ela Book Buzz, Teen Margin Project, and Great Read Out, the Popular Materials Department has made readers' advisory a central focus and more than doubled their reach over the past two years.

These efforts are even more remarkable when you consider the challenge the Popular Materials department faced in the recent past. Due to a large volume of passports being processed at the Popular Materials Desk, staff were spending up to 50% of their time on passports. This was preventing other users from accessing the desk, and it was difficult for staff to focus on or promote readers' advisory. As the library worked on making passport processing more manageable, staff began brainstorm ideas to ensure that patrons' readers' advisory needs were met.

Highlights of the resulting readers' advisory initiatives include:

### **Three Books Podcast**

This monthly podcast is hosted by staff members Christen Wiser and Becca Boland and features staff recommendations as well as guests including genre experts, authors, and local readers. One review of the podcast on iTunes states, "Three Books has become one of my most-anticipated podcasts. I love hearing the conversations about books almost as much as I love reading!"

### **Ela Book Buzz**

This event featured book promotions and giveaways led by staff from across the library. Alexis Neumann, an attendee of event, states, "Book Buzz was an incredible one night program in which various staff members of the library spoke on their favorite books they read within the past year. Hearing each person's review and what they loved about the books made me incredibly eager to read each and every one."

### **"Ask Me What I'm Reading"**

Initiatives such as Book Clip Signage, Reading Stands, and Pins/Buttons highlight that staff are available and eager to provide reading suggestions, with a goal of encouraging more casual readers' advisory interactions.

### **Teen Margin Project**

This program encouraged teens to write their thoughts, feelings, and reflections in the margins of the book before returning it to the library. Other readers could then reflect and add their thoughts, which created a discussion between readers.

### **Great Read Out**

Library patrons were welcomed to the library after hours on the first day of summer to enjoy some ice cream and read together as a community.

Executive Director Matt Womack applauds the work of the Popular Materials staff as both inspiring to staff and a big hit with patrons. Assistant Director Erica Christianson adds, "From engaging patrons through direct and indirect methods, to empowering and involving staff in RA activities, the Popular Materials Department has used innovative methods to make our Library a more welcoming place for all readers."

The Readers' Advisory Service 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