



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

The Cook Memorial Public Library District's Book Club Program, led by Andrea Larson, 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 services to adults and teens.

CMPLD's Book Club Program, as managed by Andrea Larson and with contributions by other staff members, was selected as this year's winner, in recognition of their innovative efforts to promote readers' advisory in ways that are longstanding, inclusive and impactful. For more than twenty-five years, the Book Club Program demonstrated their commitment to outstanding readers' advisory services by bringing personalized assistance and dedicated resources to more than 100 community book clubs, including neighborhood groups, faith or service-based organizations, and nine in-house groups.

Currently, Andrea Larson and the Book Club Program's staff manage a customized in-house database, track each club's selections, and process close to 1000 holds each month. Staff helps every group select and schedule books for the entire year, process the titles for each patron individually based on their preferred formats, and personalize their loan periods. Every patron receives this attention to detail, regardless of whether or not they live in-district.

Clubs are encouraged to choose from the in-house book club collection — over 300 titles, including commercial and literary fiction, poetry, memoir, nonfiction, and cookbooks.

The collection provides a carefully chosen, diverse selection of authors, including an array of #OwnVoices titles, which provides an ideal opportunity for readers to see themselves reflected as well as view experiences outside their own. When a club has a special request, the book club associate strives to find copies through their lending consortium and inter-library loan.

Along with the 100+ outside clubs served, the program also provides books for nine in-house book clubs, each led by a staff member and open to drop-in participants as well as registered members. They cover a range of genres, from nonfiction to classics to sci-fi, as well as one specifically for English-language learners. The program also works with the library's Outreach department to serve clubs at five local senior living centers, putting great time and care into selecting books that will interest their older patrons and that are available in large print format.

In addition to providing concierge-level service for their book club patrons, the program provides several other benefits, including a quarterly newsletter just for club members, highlighting new titles and providing suggestions for improving discussions. The most recent one gave tips on how to host a successful Zoom discussion. The book club program also hosts special book-club-only events such an anniversary gala, which featured a historical re-enactor, and Book Buzz nights, where the staff talks about upcoming titles of interest.

At its heart, CMPLD's Book Club Program, as led by Andrea Larson, represents an outstanding and enduring readers' advisory and community outreach service that fosters connections, encourages discussions, and matches thousands of patrons with a diverse array of genres and perspectives.

The Readers' Advisory Service Award will be presented at a ceremony that will be held in conjunction with the 2020 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, which will take place virtually in October.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release