



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

Johnna Schultz, Assistant Director at Effingham Public Library, receives the 2020 Illinois Library Association (ILA) Reference Services Award. This award is given annually for excellence in providing assistance to library users as they seek and use information. The award is sponsored by Ancel Glink.

Schultz's dedication to assisting users is displayed in her work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Within weeks of her library closing, and community members no longer having access to its services, Schultz formed a partnership with a City Council member, and FISH, a local non-profit, to support those in her community when they needed it most. The group she spearheaded was able to provide off-site access to computers, food vouchers, and applications for federal phones.

During a time of much uncertainty and unease, she has gone above and beyond her role as a librarian, as she sought out new ways to assist in her community.

In less than 48 hours, she helped set up an unemployment site to assist those individuals and families who needed access to unemployment and PUA platforms, but who did not have computers, printers, Wi-Fi, and/or fax machines. She did all this while also making sure the facility met the best practice health screening standards from the local health department.

Furthermore, as the stay-at-home orders remained in place, Johnna Schultz continues to expand these services. Through her efforts, over one hundred community members have gained access to much needed unemployment benefits, PUA, DHS resources, food vouchers, food pantry dates and times, phones, phone data and minutes, and many phone numbers for other state and local resources.

Additionally, there are now three hubs, one assisting the Spanish speaking population, and Ms. Schultz can be found helping out on almost a daily basis.

Because of her commitment to providing outstanding services for community members, Johnna Schultz is an inspiration to the profession and extremely deserving of this year's ILA Reference Services Award.

The Reference Services Award will be presented at a ceremony to 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