



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

Lynda Spraner, Outreach Services Assistant for the St. Charles Public Library (SCPL), is the 2021 recipient of the Illinois Library Association's (ILA) Alexander J. Skrzypek Award. The award is given to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of library services for the blind or physically disabled in Illinois.

This award recognizes the outstanding work Lynda accomplished during COVID-19. During this difficult period Lynda altered the services offered to seniors by the SCPL. She improved SCPL community partnerships by offering virtual programming and contactless delivery of materials. This effort led to the library serving the needs of twelve senior facilities and fifteen homebound patrons.

Before COVID-19 Lynda's creativity was already driving increased use of SCPL by seniors. Her pop-up library and programs including music, images and costumes engage the senior audience. Programs include musical favorites like the rat pack and local topics such as the history of the Marshall Field's department store. Her patrons relate to the programs she develops, finding them stimulating and interactive. Since 2015 she has increased usage of SCPL outreach services by over 200% and expanded service to four new facilities.

When COVID-19 hit in March 2020 Lynda adapted SCPL outreach services to ensure SCPL continued to meet the needs of local seniors. The SCPL team assembled activity kits, with sensory activities designed to support facility activity directors. This was very important for seniors confined in facilities and at home. Also important was contactless delivery of materials following CDC guidelines. SCPL recorded over seventy programs which were distributed to local senior facilities.

Because of her efforts SCPL was the first outreach program in the United States to launch virtual programming. The library received national attention for this noteworthy achievement.

Beyond SCPL Lynda works with other librarians to ensure Illinois residents who cannot visit their local library receive available library resources and services. She works on and is the Chair of the Outreach Users Group for the System Wide Automated Network (SWAN). In this position she shares her knowledge with other outreach librarians. She serves on the Advisory Committee for the Illinois Talking Books and Braille Service. Also, she works on the Advocacy Committee for the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services (ABOS) whose mission is to support and encourage government officials, library administrators, trustees, and staff in the provision of quality bookmobile and outreach services to meet diverse community information and programming needs.

In 2017 Lynda was the recipient of ILA's Robert P. Doyle Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions and dedication to the library field as a support staff member. In 2018 The Association of Specialized Government and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA), awarded Lynda and the entire SCPL outreach team the ASGCLA Exceptional Service's Award. This award recognizes contributions to the advancement of public library services for seniors with physical and cognitive challenges.

The Alexander J. Skrzypek Award will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2021 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 12-14, 2021.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release