Press Release

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) announces Victoria Blackmer, Assistant Director of the Robert R. Jones Public Library District in Coal Valley, IL, as the 2021 Crosman Memorial Award Winner.

The Crosman Award is named in memory of Alex Crosman, director of the Peoria Public Library at the time of his death in 1986. The award recognizes the achievements of library workers who are new or relatively new to the field and encourages continued involvement in the profession. Other awards honor those who have accomplished a great deal over a long period of time; this award honors someone who has accomplished a great deal in a short time.

Victoria has made a big difference for her community in her position as the Assistant Director of the Robert R. Jones Public Library District. In 2018, she revamped their summer reading program to include gamified summer reading badges and in the process improved circulation by 61% and participation by 373%. This summer, Victoria is partnering with the Village of Coal Valley to provide summer park activities through the library for local youth.

Victoria is also deeply involved in the Illinois library community. She presents her projects at conferences, publishes them to spread them widely, and regularly serves on committees with ILA, ALA, PrairieCat, and RAILS. Victoria has also been named an ALA Emerging Leader and an ASRL Outstanding in their Field Outfielder. She is closely involved in her community's civic life and volunteers with Big Brothers Big Sisters, New Kingdom Trailriders, and the Quad Cities Canine Assistance Network.

The Crosman Memorial 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.