



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

Kate Hall, Executive Director of the Northbrook Public Library, is the 2021 recipient of the Illinois Library Association (ILA) Librarian of the Year Award. This award recognizes a librarian's distinguished service and leadership in Illinois Libraries. The award is presented and sponsored by Today's Business Solutions, Inc. (TBS).

Kate Hall has been working in Illinois public libraries her entire career. She began as a readers' advisory assistant, then became a youth services assistant, an unofficial teen librarian and a youth services manager before making the leap to director, where she has found her niche. Colleagues Kathy Parker and Betsy Adamowski write, "Kate is a well-respected leader in the library landscape. She is an engaging person who has a true passion for her work and the people that libraries serve. She is committed to being a mentor, coach, and trainer; and has created many training initiatives to set library staff, boards, and new library directors up for success in their work and careers. She makes every effort to make each library, committee, and project she is a part of be the best possible."

Kate is an active member of ILA, attending all conferences and most often presenting multiple programs per conference. She has been and continues to be active in leadership roles in ILA. She has served as a past board member, a conference committee member, and a committee member and co-chair of the Legislative Breakfast for the North Suburban meetups. She is also very involved in the leadership of the Directors University, a program designed to mentor and train new library directors.

Speaking of library directors, Kate literally helped write the book about being a successful director. She used her passion for mentorship and training to seek advice from her fellow library leaders on what tools and knowledge public library directors need. From that research, Kate and her co-author Kathy Parker published The Public Library Director's Toolkit in 2019.

Kate has also been a role model during this time of COVID. She has and continues to do extensive research on the virus and its transmission. She found a way to supply the best possible library services to her community while maintaining a high standard of safety protocols to keep library staff safe. Kate willingly shared her plans and procedures with anyone who requested them.

Kate is also committed to equity and inclusion in libraries and communities, a concern stretching back far longer than the civil unrest of 2020. For example, when hate graffiti was found in a library restroom in 2016, Kate worked with her staff to “develop a new code of behavior, one that would create an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and patrons, and patrons with each other, and sparking efforts to better support community discussions.” Her passion for equity is an integral part of the second book she and Parker are writing on human resources for public libraries.

Kate Hall's life's work and passion is the public library. She has been working in Illinois public libraries for 21 years, and that is just the beginning. In the words of Parker and Adamowski, “She has been a shining example of what it means to be librarian and leader in Illinois. Kate selflessly serves public librarians and shares all that she can with librarians from all walks to ensure that library services are the best possible.”

The Librarian of the Year 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