



**ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

Because Libraries Matter

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## Press Release

**Steven Giese, Digital Projects Librarian in the Adult Services Department at Des Plaines Public Library, is the recipient of the 2021 Illinois Library Association (ILA) Reference Services Award. The Reference Services Award is awarded annually for excellence in providing assistance to library users as they seek and use information. The award is sponsored by Ancel Glink.**

Giese was selected as this year's winner in recognition of his innovative efforts for utilizing digital technology to collect and preserve the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in his community and for engaging the public to share their stories.

Giese created the Making History Together campaign in partnership with the Des Plaines History Center, resulting in *Life during COVID-19*, a community sourced digital collection accessible on the Des Plaines Memory website. *Life during COVID-19* reflects the effects of the pandemic on the daily lives of people in the Des Plaines. By capturing history in the making, Giese paved the way for the community to document more than just statistics about life during the pandemic. The community can share their stories of living during a unique time in history, and future generations will be able to access the preserved memories. Stories and memories include written accounts of how residents lived during stay at home orders, essays from high school students, photographs of drive thru graduations and socially distanced celebrations, among others.

While developing the Making History Together campaign, Steven directed the implementation of a new platform for the digital archive, Des Plaines Memory. Giese established the Des Plaines Memory collection in 2011, and the updated platform greatly improved the user discovery experience and made digital participation in the new collection, *Life during COVID-19*, more accessible.

To engage the public, Giese employs various methods for collection, including communication platforms such as social media, a monthly newsletter, the Des Plaines Memory site, and by engaging community partners.

Because of his commitment to providing innovative and accessible services for library users, Giese is very deserving of this year's ILA Reference Services Award.

The Reference Services 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