



**ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

Because Libraries Matter

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## Press Release

**The Illinois Library Association's (ILA) Youth Services Forum presents this year's Youth Services Achievement Award to Mandy O'Brien, Youth Services Advisory Specialist at the Skokie Public Library. This annual award is presented by the ILA Youth Services Forum and Brainfuse to a non-degreed (MLIS) individual working in the Youth Services Department for outstanding local contributions in library services to young people. Individuals nominated for the award must have created and implemented library programs, services, and/or initiatives in the community they serve that promote a love of learning. The award recipient must have positively impacted the lives of children.**

Mandy O'Brien has worked at the Skokie Public Library since 1999. In that time, she has helped countless children grow by teaching them to understand and manage their emotions while having fun in the library. Kids and caregivers love her programs, while everyone at the library, including staff, benefits from the compassion and care she shows in every interaction. O'Brien energetically serves area youth, families, and staff.

Throughout her lengthy career, O'Brien has supported the community by developing a variety of creative events for children from birth through eighth grade, and for high school volunteers. She helps the Youth team create more impactful programs by always keeping the fact that the emotional, social, and intellectual foundation built when children are young shapes their lives as they grow at the center of the planning process. O'Brien teaches children to articulate big emotions in productive ways and she communicates in ways that make children feel more confident in their abilities.

One program that has taught staff a great deal is O'Brien's signature summer program, Booking with a Buddy. This year will be the 24th summer that she has run this program

at Skokie Public Library. Booking with a Buddy differs from other programs that pair younger and older readers together because she works to build community between the whole group and guides volunteers to build strong relationships with each other and with their little buddies.

In every interaction, O'Brien connects with her whole heart, and she is not afraid to be vulnerable. Her impact on Skokie Public Library's services to the community at large and to young people is, in a word, outstanding. Congratulations to Mandy O'Brien, the 2022 recipient of the ILA Youth Services Achievement Award!

The Youth Services Achievement Award will be presented at an Awards Ceremony during the 2022 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 18-20, 2022, in Rosemont, IL.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release