



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

Illinois Libraries Present is the recipient of the Illinois Library Association’s (ILA) 2023 Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award for Interlibrary Cooperation, which is awarded annually for sustained activity and contributions having a lasting impact on librarianship in regards to resource sharing and/or library cooperation. The award is supported by the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Fund and by the Valerie J. Wilford Memorial Fund established in recognition of contributions to multi-type cooperation and resource sharing.

Illinois Libraries Present (ILP) is a collaboration amongst Illinois public libraries that provides high interest, virtual adult and children’s programming to patrons statewide. This initiative was started in 2021 and utilizes virtual programming lessons learned during the pandemic, while exemplifying library ideals of resource sharing. By bringing together public library resources, ILP offers programs and access to presenters that would otherwise be difficult for just one library. ILP levels the playing field by bringing all public libraries the opportunity and affordability to join their initiative and open conversations and experiences statewide. To date, it has brought together more than 200 public libraries across the state.

ILP also supports library ideals of resource sharing through its committee and fee structures. Staff from over 30 public libraries work collaboratively on five committees to execute events. Membership is offered to all 608 public libraries in the state each season, utilizing a sliding scale fee structure based on operating budget. Steering Committee Member Alexandra Skinner notes “ILP strives to affirm the role of libraries post-pandemic as vibrant centers of humanities learning, conversation and connection. ILP does not just elevate one library but a community of Illinois libraries.”

Members of the ILP Steering Committee have presented on this program at ILP and ALA, and have worked with Canadian libraries to help them start a similar program there. Ultimately, ILP is not only a wonderful addition to the Illinois public library landscape, but a model to the world on how libraries can band together to offer more than they ever could on their own.

The ILA Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award for Interlibrary Cooperation will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2023 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 24-26 in Springfield, Illinois.

For more information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release