



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

Illinois Library Association
560 W. Washington Blvd., Suite 330
Chicago, IL 60661-2692

Phone: 312.644.1896
Fax: 312.644.1899
Email: ila@ila.org

Press Release

The 2023 Illinois Library Association's (ILA) Intellectual Freedom Award is awarded to the Youth Department of the Glen Carbon Centennial Library. This award, presented by the ILA Intellectual Freedom Committee, recognizes the Department, specifically Aimee Villet, Samantha Lego, and Christine Bristow, for their outstanding contributions to defending intellectual freedom. The award is sponsored by the Intellectual Freedom Fund which was established in 2017 in honor of Robert P. Doyle.

The Illinois Library Association is committed to the advocacy and defense of intellectual freedom, an ideal that has come under increasing attack in recent years. In February 2022, Aimee Villet, Youth Director of the Glen Carbon Centennial Library, planned a Drag Storytime event after it had been requested by several Glen Carbon families.

When the event was publicized, the library began receiving threatening calls and e-mails directed towards library staff, as well as a number of Freedom of Information Act requests pertaining to communication about the event and performer. The situation was the subject of several reports in local media.

Despite the intense pressure surrounding the event, staff bravely adhered to the principles of intellectual freedom and proceeded with the storytime. Villet, Lego, and Bristow prepared a statement for the library board that was also released to the public. It addressed and corrected misinformation surrounding the event and educated on library values of representing all members of the community in book collections and programs. In the end, the storytime was a successful event with attendance numbers far beyond the norm. Staff received compliments on the program and thanks for presenting

something that represented members of the community who are frequently marginalized.

The ILA Intellectual Freedom Award 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