



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) is proud to announce Karen Toonen, Collection Services Manager at Naperville Public Library, as the recipient of the 2023 TBS, Inc. Technical Services Award. This annual award, presented by ILA's Resources and Technical Services Forum and sponsored by Today's Business Solutions, Inc., is awarded to an individual who has made a substantial contribution in the area of library technical services, principally with commitment to leadership, programming, and professional development in the technical services field.

Toonen has held the position of Collection Services (formerly Technical Services) Manager at Naperville Public Library since April of 2020. She started as an Adult Services Librarian and later worked as a Collection Development Librarian before her current position. In the three years since she became Collection Services Manager, she rejuvenated the department to focus on enhancing collection diversity, improving ease of access and developing new collections.

During her first year as Collection Services Manager, Toonen increased digital collection funding with savings from physical materials to support the needs of a homebound community impacted by the ongoing pandemic. In the following years, she has initiated, led, and coordinated multiple projects with staff across a three-library system including: World Language collection expansion, Binge Boxes, Board Games, Read and Play Kits, reclassifying/relabeling the Adult Biography collection, and a collection diversity audit.

Toonen explored different acquisition options and utilized library staff talent to expand the library's World Language print and digital collections to 10 languages in both Adult and Children's collections. She subscribed to LOTE for Kids, a read-along e-book collection with 35+ languages. This in turn helped the library develop the overwhelmingly well-received multi-language story time programs. She also coordinated the development of the wildly popular "Read and Play Kits" collection with some kits having over 50 holds. In addition, Toonen led the project of digitizing historical newspaper microfilms including *Naperville Clarion*, *DuPage County Recorder*, and a few other local publications from the 1850s to 1925. She worked with the Illinois Digital Newspaper Collection at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to host this wonderful resource so that researchers of genealogy and local history everywhere can now have easy and free access.

Her leadership in collection development and technical services extends across Chicagoland libraries. As a long-time member of the Adult Reading Round Table and its Steering Committee, Toonen has been a strong advocate for readers and writers and continues to promote reading to all. She presented at LACONI, ILA and Reaching Forward conferences, and has served as a panelist on multiple professional programming on a wide range of topics such as weeding, collection diversity auditing, DEI practices in cataloging and collection development, and readers' advisory.

Her weeding presentation was included in ALA's Collection Development Crash Course on 2/07/2023. When book challenges started to rise, she co-presented on the topic of book banning to the library's board of trustees to provide context and local relevancy so the board is better prepared.

The ILA TBS, Inc. Technical Services 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