

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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MORE

THAN A BUILDING

The Illinois Library Association Reporter

is a forum for those who are improving and reinventing Illinois libraries, with articles that seek to: explore new ideas and practices from all types of libraries and library systems; examine the challenges facing the profession; and inform the library community and its supporters with news and comment about important issues. The *ILA Reporter* is produced and circulated with the purpose of enhancing and supporting the value of libraries, which provide free and equal access to information. This access is essential for an open democratic society, an informed electorate, and the advancement of knowledge for all people.



ON THE COVER

Political polarization. A global pandemic. Social uprisings. Censorship campaigns. Viral disinformation. And now attacks on and threats to public servants, including library workers and volunteers. The Illinois Library Association is committed to working across our association and in partnership with librarians, libraries, and organizations across the state to support workers, engage with our communities, and advance the public good. The More Than a Building campaign celebrates libraries as the hearts of their communities and honors those who keep that heart beating strong. ILA has gathered information and resources to support and unite the library community, and to activate stakeholders to take action in support of their libraries. Learn more online at www.ila.org/advocacy/more-than-a-building.

CORRECTION NOTE: ILA would like to issue a correction to the March 2024 *ILA Reporter*. The New Library Buildings 2023 feature incorrectly stated the construction firm for Byron Public Library District. The construction firm used was Gehrke. We apologize for this oversight and have corrected the online article and PDF.

The Illinois Library Association is collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois, providing leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries. It is the eighth oldest library association in the world and the third largest state association in the United States, with members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. Its 3,000 members are primarily librarians and library staff, but also trustees, publishers, and other supporters.

The Illinois Library Association has six full-time staff members. It is governed by a sixteen-member executive board, made up of elected officers. The association employs the services of Blaida and Associates for legislative advocacy. ILA is a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization.

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See ILA calendar for submission deadlines for the *ILA Reporter*. Copy should be submitted by email to ila@ila.org. You are encouraged to include press-ready digital photos (300 p.p.i.) and graphics with your articles, which will be included on a space-available basis.

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Editorial: More Than a Building

When we heard about the initial bomb threat targeting a library, we were speechless, pondering the state of the world. With subsequent threats emerging, the pressing question arose: what action could we take in response?


We quickly engaged with those directly impacted—the library directors and staff members—and collaborated with our partners at the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS), and the State Library. Together, we recognized the need for resources to aid both those currently affected and those potentially at risk.

After several months of dedicated effort, we proudly unveiled the “More Than a Building” campaign, a sister initiative to our previous endeavor, “Bigger Than a Building.”

More Than a Building is more than just a campaign, it’s a resource that provides comprehensive information and tools for library leadership, staff members, volunteers, and community advocates. Information and resources are separated into four categories: Actionable Steps, Communication, Talking Points, and Resources. There are also two toolkits offering a plethora of information and actionable steps library allies and advocates can take within their communities.

We understand that this collection of resources isn’t exhaustive, but it serves as an excellent launching pad. We’re eager to hear your thoughts on the campaign and whether you have found any of the resources useful. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us at tjenkins@ila.org. Share your feedback on what aspects of the campaign you appreciated, what didn’t resonate with you, what worked well, what didn’t, and, crucially, how we can enhance our efforts to better support you in this realm.

We know these last few years have been tremendously challenging, and we are proud to serve you and are here to support you.

To view the More Than a Building campaign visit www.ila.org/advocacy/more-than-a-building. 

“It’s a resource that provides comprehensive information and tools for library leadership, staff members, volunteers, and community advocates.”



Invisible Threads: Tracking Illinois LGBT History

The diverse information landscape of publication on American LGBT history often centers attention on the communities of major cities and their political and social lives. Less attention has been given to the histories of local and rural communities, although since the 1990s this situation has begun to change. Illinois has long been the focus of LGBT activism, from the days of the homophile movement in the 1950s to contemporary times and witnessed one of the pioneering (if short-lived) efforts at establishing an organization during the 1920s. This article will present a review of sources on the state's LGBT past in both print and nonprint formats.

The earliest records of Illinois gay history are associated with the work of Henry Gerber, a German immigrant who founded the nonprofit Chicago Society for Human Rights (modeled on similar organizations in his homeland) in 1924. On December 24th, the State of Illinois issued a charter to the new group, which “decided to concentrate...efforts on the State of Illinois and to focus on reform of those laws criminalizing homosexual acts” (Katz 1976, 390). In his groundbreaking compilation *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the United States* editor Jonathan Katz profiles both the Society (suppressed by the Chicago police in 1925) and Gerber's subsequent involvement with the struggle for homosexual rights. A notable feature of the entry is the reproduction of the original charter for the Society (together with a statement signed by the founders) and a photograph showing a copy of the group's publication *Friendship and Freedom*. No copies of this periodical are known to have survived. In 2023, *Angel in Sodom: Henry Gerber and the Birth of the Gay Rights Movement* by Jim Elledge appeared from Chicago Review Press and provides a detailed biography of Gerber's life and significance to LGBT history.

In 1955, the American Law Institute, a group composed of law school faculty and practicing lawyers, issued a body of recommendations for the reform of criminal law, which would be further developed and formally adopted in 1962 as a model penal code for the nation. The draft form of this code influenced a major revision of the Illinois state criminal code signed into law by Governor Otto Kerner on July 28, 1961. Among the measures enacted by this revision was the repeal of extant sodomy laws that criminalized consensual homosexual acts, making Illinois the first state to enact such a reform.

The homophile philosophy espoused by Gerber came into fuller existence in the United States a quarter century after the suppression of the Chicago Society for Human Rights with the foundation of the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles in 1950. By the 1960s, chapters of the Society were being formed across the country, one of which, Mattachine Midwest, appeared in Chicago in 1965. Its publication, the *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter*, initiated a series of publications serving the gay and lesbian community of Chicago whose overlapping coverage created an unbroken journalistic record which is now approaching its sixtieth anniversary. Titles such as *Chicago Gay Crusader* (June 1973–1976), *GayLife* (June 20, 1975–Jan. 30, 1986), *Windy City Times* (September 26, 1985 to date) and *Chicago OUTlines/OUTlines* (June 1987–2000) offer a frank look at the city's LGBT communities as they evolved and changed.



In recent years, more comprehensive books on Chicago's gay and lesbian past have appeared. The first, assembled by Tracy Baim, co-founder of *Windy City Times*, appeared in 2008 from Surrey Books as *Out and Proud in Chicago: An Overview of the City's Gay Community*. It was followed four years later from the University of Wisconsin Press by *Chicago Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago before Stonewall* by journalist and historian St. Sukie de la Croix. Jim Elledge explores the city's past in *The Boys of Fairy Town: Sodomites, Female Impersonators, Third-sexers, Pansies, Queers, and Sex Morons in Chicago's First Century* from the Chicago Review Press and published in 2018.

But the lands lying outside the Chicago metropolitan region were also home to LGBT communities with a very different geography and history from their urban cousins. An important thread of Illinois LGBT history can be found on the campuses of the state's universities, with the chartering of organizations serving those members of the academic community (faculty, staff, and students) who identified as other than heterosexual. In 1969, a local chapter of the Gay Liberation Front formed at Illinois State University, later renaming itself as the Gay People's Alliance. Taking their cue from the University of Michigan, where a local chapter of the Gay Liberation Front had been established in March 1970, students at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb formed a chapter of the Front in April 1970. The name of the group was later changed to the Gay and Lesbian Union. Across the state, similar efforts took shape, with the formation of the Gay Liberation Organization at Southern Illinois University's Carbondale campus in April 1971 and another chapter of the Gay Liberation Front on the campus of the University of Illinois in August 1972 (the forerunner of the Gay Illini [1975] and Illini Pride [1977]). For researchers, the campus newspapers of these institutions and the towns they were embedded in provide valuable context for how LGBT communities evolved on a local scale. In some cases, the organizations themselves created publications which can be traced in university archives.

While many of Illinois' LGBT citizens subscribed to such nationally circulated periodicals as *The Advocate* or picked up copies of the Chicago papers as available, there was also a stream of local journalism that chronicled the events of smaller communities and tracked their issues. One example is the *Rock River News*, founded by Steve Wheeler in Rockford in 1990 and published monthly from May 1990 to July 1996 to serve the stateline area. A more ambitious publication picked up the thread the following month, when the first issue of the monthly newspaper *Prairie Flame* appeared in Springfield. For the first six months, its stated area of coverage was Decatur, Springfield, and Jacksonville, with Bloomington, Carlinville, Champaign,

Normal, and Urbana added in March 1997. During its nearly twelve years of existence, it declared itself to be "A newspaper of interest to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered people of downstate Illinois and those who support them in their quest for equality."

With the rise of the Internet, access to information of local importance for Illinois' LGBT communities outside the Chicago region became both significantly easier to obtain and more in demand. In 2010 journalist Tom Wray created the *Windy City Banner* as an LGBT news outlet for the city and subsequently left the Chicago area and created an online successor to the *Prairie Flame* with the transformation of the *Banner* into the *Illinois Eagle*. The statement of purpose for the new organization noted that "our mission is to serve as a forum and voice for the LGBTQ communities of Illinois at the local level and to inform the community of events and issues across the state."

In 2019, the Queer Oriented Rural Resources Network (QORRN) was founded in response to the findings of a report issued jointly by the Movement Advancement Project, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the National Black Justice Coalition, and the Equality Federation. Entitled *Where We Call Home: LGBT People in Rural America*, it noted that between 2.9 and 3.8 million people living in rural America are LGBT and that they face higher rates of discrimination due to "the social and political landscape of rural areas...the greater social and geographic isolation of rural areas means there are fewer support structures available to LGBT people in rural areas. When LGBT people in rural areas face discrimination, or even simply are struggling with acceptance or coming out, there are fewer places to turn for social support, legal support, or even just basic information."

Among the projects of QORRN is a survey of local and state resources available to rural LGBT communities; as of 2023, Illinois was one of two states for which such information had been assembled, the other being North Carolina.

The diversity of past and evolving primary sources of information created by and for the LGBT communities of Illinois poses ongoing challenges for the state's libraries, particularly in the areas of collection development, local history, reference services, and archival preservation. In both rural and urban settings, the chief question is not whether new historical information will be found and made available, but how soon and at what level of detail, and the social and political changes it will mirror. **ILA**

“The chief question is not whether new historical information will be found and made available, but how soon and at what level of detail, and the social and political changes it will mirror.”

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From Awareness to Action: Trauma-Informed Approaches in Libraries

Library employees witness or experience traumatic events that can lead to secondary traumatic stress (STS), and libraries are often unprepared to deal with the adverse effects of this on their staff. According to the Urban Library Trauma Study (2022), libraries are “radically open to the public” and often serve populations affected by traumatic events. This is a departure from libraries of the past that focused primarily on books, information, and education. In addition to providing books, today’s libraries provide access to social services, bridge the digital divide, function as a community gathering space, and host programs and events (Mattern, 2014). Across the U.S., libraries have begun looking for answers to help with the increased demand for social services. Some libraries have hired or partnered with social workers and agencies to better deal with traumatic crises.

Library workers experience STS due to working with people experiencing trauma. STS, “...also known as secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, or vicarious traumatization, is beginning to be recognized in some disciplines and professions as a significant occupational hazard” (Sloan et al., 2019, p. 1). Examples of trauma experienced by the public include the COVID-19 pandemic, violence, domestic violence, racism, homophobia, economic problems, homelessness, substance abuse, mental health issues, and more (SAMHSA, 2014). In addition, some library employees have experienced adverse childhood events (ACES) that continue to cause issues in their work lives long after the traumatic experience has passed.

A trauma-responsive culture within an organization aligns with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) (2014) principles of trauma-informed organizations: safety, trustworthiness, support, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural intelligence. These principles serve as tools to enhance employee resilience and engagement. SAMHSA (2014) outlines the 4 Rs for trauma-responsive organizations: realizing the impact of trauma, recognizing its effects, responding with trauma-informed policies and management, and resisting re-traumatization of the public and employees.

While research exists on trauma-informed approaches in medicine, social work, and mental healthcare, trauma in library settings has not been widely studied. Libraries are not considered spaces that need help dealing with STS because libraries are not centered around helping people experiencing traumatic events. To examine trauma-informed practices in Illinois libraries, I sent a survey to library staff through Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) and Reaching Across Library System (RAILS) listservs. Fifty-one people responded to the survey, helping to provide information about what is currently happening in Illinois libraries. Survey respondents have witnessed violence (27.5%), mental health crises (76.5%), substance use (58.9%), homelessness (78.5%), harassment (58.82%), discrimination (43%), child abuse or neglect (43%), and other traumatic occurrences (21.5%). In contrast, only approximately 49% of respondents felt moderately or very familiar with the relationship between traumatic stress and related issues such as substance abuse and mental health.

“...also known as secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, or vicarious traumatization, is beginning to be recognized in some disciplines and professions as a significant occupational hazard.”



“Trauma-informed libraries work to find practical, evidence-based strategies for building resilience and fostering engagement.”

Central to establishing a trauma-responsive organizational culture is the concept of psychological safety – a workplace environment where employees feel secure in expressing themselves without fear of judgment or reprisal. Trauma-informed leaders play a vital role in fostering this environment, embodying stability and consistency that encourage open communication and creativity. By prioritizing employee well-being and creating spaces for conversation and support, leaders lay the groundwork for resilience and growth within their organizations. Despite this, only a minority (27.4%) of survey respondents always feel safe at work, highlighting the need for improvement while 66.7% of respondents noted that they usually feel safe at work. Additionally, while most respondents (66.7%) feel comfortable providing input to library leadership, there is room for improvement in building trust in leadership’s decision-making regarding boundaries and policies. A fraction (10%) of respondents sometimes trust leadership in this area.

Psychological safety is just the beginning, as much of an organization’s success involves employee engagement. Engagement happens when employees are fully invested in their work. Leaders can create engagement through a culture of support, collaboration, and empowerment, turning challenges into opportunities for growth and learning. Team meetings provide a place for library staff to talk safely about trauma-related incidents in the library. Leaders can use these opportunities to build trust, educate, and learn more about what is needed in the organization. Not all libraries surveyed have team meetings, including 13.7% of survey respondents, but those that do were split over whether leaders address trauma-related topics. 41% of survey respondents sometimes talk about trauma-related topics at team meetings, while only 2% always talk about them, and almost 20% never talk about these issues.

While some libraries have embraced trauma-informed practices, others continue to shy away, highlighting the need for more comprehensive support systems and resources. Attending trauma-informed library services training is an excellent way to start the conversation. Over half (58.8%) of library workers surveyed have yet to attend this type of training. De-escalation is also a helpful training to attend or foster for library staff. Only 37% of survey respondents were very or moderately familiar with de-escalation tactics that could be used in crises.

Trauma-informed libraries work to find practical, evidence-based strategies for building resilience and fostering engagement. SAMHSA’s framework for trauma-informed organizations provides a roadmap for leaders to implement these principles effectively, emphasizing the importance of safety, trustworthiness, support, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural intelligence. From recognizing the impact of trauma to creating inclusive workplaces, each step is designed to create a supportive environment where employees can thrive. By embracing trauma-informed practices, libraries can pave the way for a more resilient future for themselves and the communities they serve.

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Unlock the Next Level of Youth Readers' Advisory: Creating Interactive Readers' Advisory Quizzes

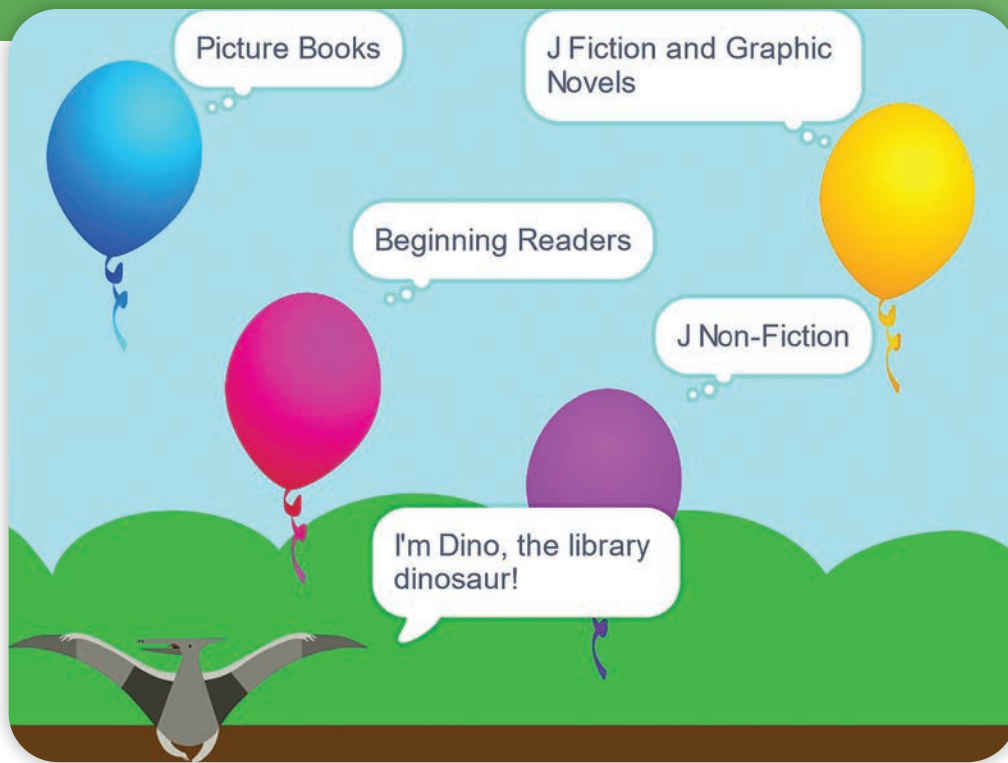
Virtual readers' advisory is a key part of library service, especially after the pandemic. According to *Library Journal's* 2021 survey "RA By the Numbers," the most commonly offered virtual readers' advisory offerings include "book clubs, virtual author events, unboxing videos, book talks, shelf tours, and virtual desk hours." Form-based readers' advisory has also grown in popularity, where patrons fill out a form that is sent to a librarian, and a librarian then creates a list of recommended titles for patrons.¹ Virtual readers' advisory is a great way to connect to patrons who are unable to physically come to the library or want assistance when the library is closed.

These common virtual readers' advisory methods are wonderful and extremely successful, but can also come with drawbacks. Book clubs, virtual author events, and virtual desk hours require patrons to be available at specific times, which can be tricky for busy patrons. Unboxing videos, shelf tours, and virtual book talks recommend the same books to all patrons. Form-based readers' advisory contains a delay between when patrons submit a form and when librarians respond. Virtual readers' advisory would benefit from a way patrons could get individualized book recommendations immediately.

At the Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library, we met this need by creating a virtual readers' advisory interactive quiz called the What Should I Read? quiz. The quiz is a combination between form-based readers' advisory and a shelf tour. It also uses graphics and sound effects to increase patron engagement. Since our department serves patrons from birth-eighth grade and their parents, our website is geared at that age range and enables patrons to quickly find a book that meets their preferences, and then directs them to place a hold on the title. It is embedded into our kids' virtual readers' advisory website.

The quiz opens with a character, Dino the Library Dinosaur. Dino asks patrons what kind of book they want to read: Picture Books, Beginning Readers, J Fiction or Graphic Novel, or J Non-Fiction. Once a patron makes their choice, they are then prompted to choose a topic or genre to read about, such as "Sports" or "A Mystery." These topics are different for each kind of book to give patrons as many options as possible. After choosing a topic, patrons then choose a more specific topic, like "Soccer" or "A mystery I can solve". Then, the quiz makes a drum roll sound effect, and Dino reveals a book recommendation tailored to the patron's choices. The patron also sees the book's cover and a QR code that directs the patron to the book in the library's catalog so they can place a hold on the title. The book a patron sees is based directly on their choices; the quiz can recommend more than fifty different titles. This gives patrons the best of both worlds – they get a book recommendation tailored to their personal interests without having to wait for a librarian to respond to an online form.





While our patrons preferred the graphics-based look of the Scratch-built quiz, the text-based look of a Google Forms quiz may appeal to older readers. Other libraries may prefer to create quizzes with Python or Java. Readers' advisory quizzes can also be tailored to focus on a specific genre, like "Romance Novels" or "Science Non-Fiction." The possibilities are endless! Best of all, these quizzes can be created for free with platforms like Google Forms and Scratch, and easily added to your library's website with a URL link or with HTML Embed Code. Our library was able to create the quiz, make it accessible to patrons, and maintain it for free.

Virtual readers' advisory quizzes can be built with a variety of platforms and methods. Our library first built a readers' advisory quiz using Google Forms. The quiz asked similar questions to the current readers' advisory quiz, and worked just like an online survey. The benefit of using this method was ease of creation. Google Forms allows users to easily set each answer of a form to lead to a different section. That functionality enabled the quiz to recommend different books to patrons based on their choices.

After our initial rollout, we decided to update the quiz and create a new quiz with more graphics. Our quiz was specifically geared at patrons aged birth-eighth grade, so we wanted to create it in a way that our patrons were already familiar with. To that end, we decided to build it using Scratch block coding, which is taught in our local school districts. By creating the quiz with code, we were able to give the quiz images that changed depending on a patron's choices, like changing the background to look like an 8-bit video game when recommending books for older readers. We were also able to add sound effects that matched the different images. These small changes had a big impact on the overall look and feel of the quiz.

What makes virtual readers' advisory quizzes so impactful is that they are endlessly customizable. They can be designed and created with any patron group and book type in mind. While our quiz is designed for children, these quizzes can also be made for teens, adults, or for multiple age ranges. They also can take different forms based on each library's patron needs and staffing.

When creating a virtual readers' advisory quiz, start by considering who your target patron is, and how they are most likely to use it. Are you targeting busy moms who want to quickly find fast-paced novels they can read while waiting to pick up their kids? First-year college students who want to take a break between classes with fun young adult novels? Create your quiz with that target patron group in mind. Then comes the fun part – adding books to the quiz! When choosing titles, make sure to consider diversity, equity, and inclusion. Just like you would make sure that your physical display contains books with diverse characters, you want to make sure your quiz does, too. Like any library program or display, we want all patrons to feel seen and included in the books featured.

Virtual readers' advisory quizzes can help staff at any library. While readers' advisory might be traditionally associated with public libraries, it is a service offered to patrons across all kinds of libraries. Researchers from the University of Minnesota Library System found that offering form-based readers' advisory for leisure reading "can foster goodwill between an academic library and its users."² School librarians regularly offer book talks both virtually and to students in the classroom.³ Quizzes can build off on these successful readers' advisory techniques by offering patrons a new level of engagement. When busy students are unable to come to the physical library and ask for reader's advisory services, they can still access a virtual quiz and get immediate recommendations.

Virtual readers' advisory quizzes are also helpful when training frontline staff. As Karen Muller of the American Library Association observed, "We all do readers' advisory, even if it's not part of our usual job."⁴ Frontline staff can access virtual readers' advisory quizzes from service desks. Then, when patrons come to service desks looking for readers' advisory, staff can use the quiz as a tool to help best serve the patron, along with the library catalog, staff knowledge of the collection, and other readers' advisory guides. It can help guide staff in readers' advisory conversations, especially in areas where the patron's reading interests fall outside of the staff member's expertise.

Virtual readers' advisory quizzes can also be a lot of fun for patrons. Just like taking a fun personality quiz on social media, these quizzes encourage patrons to think about their reading tastes – and themselves – in a new way. And in the end, that is what makes readers' advisory a worthwhile interaction for librarians and patrons alike. When we help patrons discover new books, we help them unlock new sides of themselves and learn more about both themselves and the world around them.



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Inclusive Spaces: Sensory Storytime at the Naperville Public Library

As Sensory-Friendly Storytime at the 95th Street branch of the Naperville Public Library begins, the story room fills with gentle excitement as children settle down onto the colorful storytime rug. Among them, some children cling to their parents or stuffed animals tightly. Ms. Julie Diekmann, the children’s librarian, welcomes everyone with a bright smile, radiating warmth. She understands the importance of creating a safe and inviting space.

Julie begins “I’m so glad you’re here today. We are going to have such a wonderful time together. But first, how does everyone feel?” She offers visual aids for children to show how they feel, offering gentle prompts along the way. Julie enthusiastically presents a picture book filled with exciting images that come to life through her narration. Using sensory elements throughout, she adjusts the pacing of the storytime, allowing the children to process the words and the sounds around them. Julie observes the children closely, remaining aware of subtle cues, ready to provide support when needed.

As Sensory-Friendly Storytime comes to a close, Julie incorporates a movement activity, offering reassuring smiles and prompts. “You all did such an amazing job today. I’m so glad you all were able to be here with us. We can’t wait to see you again.” Children and their caregivers, welcomed with genuine warmth and acceptance, exit the room with positive memories of an immersive storytime experience and a newfound sense of belonging.

For public librarians like Julie, serving youth and creating inclusive programming and services that meet the unique needs of their communities can be both challenging and rewarding, particularly in addressing the needs of children with sensory concerns.

Sensory processing disorder is a term used to describe the difficulties children face in interpreting sensory messages in their environment. This often occurs, though not exclusively, in children with autism spectrum disorder, the fastest-growing developmental disorder in the United States.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 44 children across all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds are affected.²

Providing sensory storytime is an alternative approach to traditional storytime that helps children with sensory concerns participate inclusively in a regular, ongoing program within the library while giving children more ways to process information. It allows for movement and sensory play while considering the sensory integration needs of its participants. These needs vary in severity and can include sensitivity or even hypersensitivity to certain sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and movements, which can be overwhelming. Having sensitivities such as these can make attending a traditional storytime difficult. Understanding and accommodating these concerns may involve modifying the environment, using various aids, or changing a routine.³



Beginning in 2023, Ms. Jenny Berry, Children’s Services Supervisor at the 95th Street branch, noticed a need for sensory storytime by observing the interactions of children and parents during storytime. While some appeared fully engaged and able to sit and participate, others seemed restless or overwhelmed, even with caregiver support. She knew that the existing storytime was not meeting the needs of these children.

Parents and children with sensory concerns often find engaging in an average storytime challenging. With their child’s inability to sit quietly as expected during storytime, they can feel unwelcome. However, being accessible for children with special needs goes beyond providing a welcoming environment. Public librarians serving youth must better understand the needs of special needs youth and their families and be proactive about accessibility. This means investigating the problems experienced by special needs library users and delving deeper into how to serve their unique needs to provide a safe space for families in the library and offer a sense of belonging.

Jenny, determined to find the best approach to serving the needs of children with sensory concerns, gained insight through feedback and casual conversations with parents and caregivers while also researching best practices for serving those with sensory differences.

With the support of the Naperville community and library administrators, Jenny and Julie began offering Sensory-Friendly Storytime, a monthly 30-minute storytelling experience. The storytime has drawn praise from parents and community members alike. While maintaining its core format, it continues to adapt to accommodate the needs of its participants.

Sensory-Friendly Storytime is designed to focus on the social and emotional needs of children while retaining the traditional elements of a typical storytime: reading, songs, and early literacy skills are modified to fit a slower pace. The carefully crafted program, provided during the school year, even encourages the expression of feelings and provides alternative methods of handling strong emotions.

Engagement with children during Sensory-Friendly Storytime has proved successful among families. As Julie says, “[Parents] seem to appreciate sharing different emotions and tips on communicating to their child regarding emotions.” This simple aspect of the Sensory-Friendly Storytime is one reason it’s garnered tremendous community support. The storytime also provides calming spaces where children can relax separate from the group without fear of being asked to step out of the program.

With sensory storytime, libraries can make the storytelling experience accessible regardless of sensory needs or developmental challenges. By adapting the environment, libraries can offer special needs users a controlled visual and auditory environment where children can thrive and feel like they belong. When children come to the library, they can be who they are.

In anticipation of challenges that may arise during a session, Julie has found it helpful to have a calm area available for children to relax, which can include dim lighting and soft seating, among other adaptations, to create the most inclusive experience. These moments provide a welcome release and allow children to channel their energy more constructively, and can limit distractions from too many stimuli, like bright lights and loud noises. Additionally, incorporating simple books and props, such as a puppet to help tell the story, followed by a short craft or activity with many different types of supplies on hand, makes participating fun.

For Jenny and Julie, providing sensory storytime demonstrates a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of the children and families served and creates an inclusive experience where every child is valued and respected.

With effort, Illinois librarians can reach families with special needs and help them overcome barriers to participation in library programming with sensory storytime. To ensure equal opportunity access to library services, underserved populations need special consideration, and children with special needs should be provided accessible programming and support that helps to overcome barriers.

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ILA Welcomes New Members

On behalf of the ILA community, Executive Board, and staff we would like to welcome our recent new members. We hope as a member of ILA you contribute, grow, and thrive within the library profession and the ILA community; and support ILA's continuing efforts to create and promote the highest quality library services for all people in Illinois.

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Best Quality Cleaning, Franklin Park
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Michael Treece, Community Unit School District No 196
Michelle Wilkes, Bartlett Public Library District
Lisa Winchell, Hinsdale Public Library

2024 Election Results



VICE PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT-ELECT

Carolyn Ciesla – *Elected*
Elmhurst University

Lora Del Rio
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(three-year term beginning July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027)

A candidate from each pairing will be elected in accordance with the ILA bylaws as amended at the 1998 ILA Annual Conference; a total of four directors will be elected to serve three-year terms on the ILA Executive Board.



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

Rachel Fuller – *Elected*
The Urbana Free Library

Aimee Villet
Glen Carbon Centennial Library



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

Jennie Mills – *Elected*
Shorewood-Troy Public Library District

Monica Dombrowski
Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

Erin Steinsultz
Crab Orchard Public Library District

Chris Houchens – *Elected*
Charleston Carnegie Public Library



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

Michelle Glatt – *Elected*
Chiddix and Evans Junior High Schools

Gail Meyer
Thornton Fractional South High School



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Daniel Matthews – *Elected*
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2024 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference

October 8–10 | Peoria Civic Center, Peoria, IL

For full conference information and to register online: ila.org/conference

#ILAAC24

On behalf of the Conference Planning Committee and ILA staff, we are excited to welcome you to Peoria this fall for our 2024 ILA Annual Conference. The fun runs from October 8-10 at the beautiful Peoria Civic Center in downtown Peoria. This year's theme, **Libraries are Lit: Sparking Innovation and Imagination**, represents and celebrates the passion and creativity of library workers in Illinois.

As good librarians, we researched the word "Lit" before deciding to use it. Merriam-Webster defines it as "exciting" or "excellent." Libraries exemplify what it means to be both. Throughout the state, Illinois libraries continue to meet the needs of their communities in new and creative ways.

Libraries aren't Lit on their own. They can only succeed through the hard work and dedication of library workers, administrators, and trustees. That is what this conference is all about. Join us as we celebrate the vital role we play in initiating creativity, inspiring new ideas, and fostering innovation within our communities. We will learn from our outstanding program and poster session speakers, make lasting connections, and most importantly, celebrate why libraries are "Lit."

On October 8, we will welcome renowned actor and Emmy Award winner Nick Offerman for our Opening General Session. Hailing from Illinois, Offerman gained fame for his portrayal of the beloved Ron Swanson in the acclaimed TV series, *Parks and Recreation*. Beyond the screen, Offerman showcases his versatility as an author with several notable works, including *Good Clean Fun: Misadventures in Sawdust at Offerman Woodshop*, *The Greatest Love Story Ever Told*, and *Where the Deer and the Antelope Play*.

Join us on October 9 and be filled with library joy when Mychal Threets takes the stage for the President's Program. With a wealth of experience in various roles within librarianship, Threets serves as a guiding light and inspiration in the library community. His infectious positivity and optimistic worldview bring joy to all who engage with him, whether online or in person.

Also on October 9, Oge Mora, a collage artist and captivating storyteller, will be the keynote speaker at the ILA Youth Services Forum's annual Author Breakfast. Mora's exceptional talent has garnered critical acclaim, earning her accolades including a Caldecott Honor, the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award, and the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award for her enchanting picture book *Thank You, Omu!* Her second book, *Saturday*, was awarded the 2020 Boston Globe—Horn Book Picture Book Award. Mora is a 2025 iREAD featured artist for the theme "Level Up at Your Library."

In all, the Annual Conference is packed with compelling programming and many ways to connect and collaborate with colleagues. It will inspire you to go back to your libraries with a refreshed vision for the future. Your full-conference registration includes access to the Opening General Session, President's Program, all educational programming, and the two-day exposition featuring library vendors, poster sessions, and complimentary lunches and snacks in the exhibit hall. While you're taking in all that Peoria has to offer, we hope that you'll enjoy giving back as we support the Peoria Humane Society and Peoria Proud as our community projects recipients. We look forward to seeing you in Peoria this fall!

And be sure to mark your calendars for the 2025 ILA Annual Conference, October 14–16, 2025, at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont.



Amy Byers
ILA President



Laura Barnes
Conference Co-Chair



Veronica De Fazio
Conference Co-Chair

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2024 ILA Annual Conference Program Committee

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Featured Speakers



Nick Offerman

TBS Opening
General Session
Tuesday, October 8

During the Opening General Session on October 8, renowned actor and Emmy award winner Nick Offerman will take the stage. Hailing from Illinois, Offerman gained fame for his portrayal of the beloved Ron Swanson in the acclaimed TV series, *Parks and Recreation*.

Recently honored with his first Emmy at the 75th annual Creative Arts Emmy Awards, he was awarded Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series for his performance in HBO's *The Last of Us*. Beyond the screen, Offerman showcases his versatility as an author with several notable works, including *Good Clean Fun: Misadventures in Sawdust at Offerman Woodshop*, *The Greatest Love Story Ever Told*, and *Where the Deer and the Antelope Play*.



Mychal Threats

Presidents Program
Wednesday, October 9

Mychal Threats, a seasoned librarian and online sensation, will be featured at the President's Program on October 9. With a wealth of experience in various roles within librarianship, Threats serves as a guiding light and inspiration in the library community. His infectious positivity and optimistic worldview bring joy to all who engage with him, whether online or in person.



Elaina Norlin

Workshop "From Quiet
Observation to Strategic
Action: Introverted
Leadership for
Dynamic Libraries"
Tuesday, October 8

Elaina Norlin is the Professional Development DEI Coordinator for the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries. She is an accomplished teacher, technology and leadership development trainer, and writer with extensive leadership experience and a flair for public relations, organizational development, marketing and persuasion, and communications. Author of two books, she has delivered over 70 workshops, training sessions, presentations, and institutes both nationally and internationally on marketing, web usability design, facilitation, strategic influence, and conflict management. Self-motivated and results oriented, she is well known for her ability to juggle many projects at once.



Oge Mora

Youth Services
Author Breakfast
Wednesday, October 9

Collage artist and captivating storyteller, Oge Mora, will be the keynote speaker at the ILA Youth Services Forum's annual Author Breakfast on October 9. Mora's exceptional talent has garnered critical acclaim, earning her accolades including a Caldecott Honor, the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award, and the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award for her enchanting picture book *Thank You, Omu!* Her second book, *Saturday*, was awarded the 2020 Boston Globe—Horn Book Picture Book Award. Mora is a 2025 iREAD featured artist for the theme "Level Up at Your Library."

Program Schedule at a Glance

Monday, October 7

7:00 - 9:00 P.M.	President's Reception
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Tuesday, October 8

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Help Desk Open
9:00 – 10:30 A.M.	TBS Opening General Session, featuring Nick Offerman
10:45 – 11:45 A.M.	Program Session 1
Noon – 1:15 P.M.	Awards Luncheon
1:30 – 5:30 P.M.	Workshop "From Quiet Observation to Strategic Action: Introverted Leadership for Dynamic Libraries"
1:30 – 2:30 P.M.	Program Session 2
2:45 – 3:45 P.M.	Program Session 3
4:00 – 5:00 P.M.	Program Session 4

Wednesday, October 9

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Help Desk Open
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast featuring Oge Mora
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Unconferences
9:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Program Session 5
10:30 A.M. – Noon	ILA Membership Meeting & President's Program featuring Mychal Threets
Noon – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
Noon – 1:30 P.M.	Exhibits Opening Lunch
12:15 – 1:30 P.M.	IACRL Luncheon
1:45 – 2:45 P.M.	Program Session 6
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.	Program Session 7
4:00 – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Snack Break

Thursday, October 10

8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Help Desk Open
9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Unconferences
8:30 – 9:00 A.M.	Trustee Breakfast
9:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Program Session 8
10:00 – 11:00 A.M.	Exhibits Coffee Break
11:00 A.M. – Noon	Program Session 9
Noon – 1:30 P.M.	Exhibits Closing Lunch
12:15 – 1:30 P.M.	Trustee Luncheon
1:45 – 2:45 P.M.	DiversiTEA Closing Session
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.	Program Session 10

Get Involved!

Submit a Poster Session

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) Conference Program Committee invites applications for poster sessions at the 2024 ILA Annual Conference at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria, IL. Poster sessions will be held in the exhibit hall on Wednesday, October 9, and Thursday, October 10.

Submissions are invited from all types of libraries and on any topic relevant to librarianship and may include a description of an innovative library program; an analysis of a solution to a problem; a report of a research study; or any other presentation that would benefit the larger library community. Applications are due by Friday, July 26, 2024.

Conference Committee 2025

Interested in being a part of the team that brings all the magic of the Annual Conference together? Submit an Interest Form at www.ila.org/about/committees for the ILA Conference Program Committee, 2025.

Sponsor/Exhibitor

Becoming an Illinois Library Association Annual Conference sponsor or exhibitor represents an extraordinary opportunity to complement your marketing plan while supporting Illinois libraries. Sponsorship and exhibits enable ILA to deliver high-quality professional development and networking to Illinois library workers and trustees. Contact Kristin Pekoll, kpekoll@ila.org with questions.

Sponsorship benefits will include two complimentary registrations at the Gold level and one complimentary registration at the Silver level. Leadership partners and Platinum sponsors that also exhibit will receive the six complimentary registrations included in the exhibits contract.

Conference Highlights

For a complete list and full descriptions of conference programs and events, visit ila.org/conference.

Awards Luncheon

Tuesday, October 8, Noon – 1:15 P.M.

Join us to celebrate our colleagues and friends within the Illinois library community. As we do each year, we will honor and recognize the best in libraries throughout the state. Tickets for the Awards Luncheon can be purchased when you register. *Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event. If you do not register for this event, you are on your own for lunch on Tuesday.*

DiversiTEA Closing Session

Thursday, October 10, 1:45 – 2:45 P.M.

New this year — the DiversiTEA Closing Session will be on the big stage and open to all conference attendees. Hosted by the ILA Diversity Committee.

IACRL Luncheon

Wednesday, October 9, 12:15 – 1:30 P.M.

Join your academic library colleagues for a luncheon. *Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event.*

ILA Membership Meeting & President's Program

Wednesday, October 9, 10:30 A.M. – Noon

Learn more about what happened in your association in the past year and what we're looking forward to in the coming year. Non-members are invited to attend the Membership Meeting. Mychal Threets, a seasoned librarian and online sensation, will be featured at the President's Program on October 9. With a wealth of experience in various roles within librarianship, Threets serves as a guiding light and inspiration in the library community. His infectious positivity and optimistic worldview bring joy to all who engage with him, whether online or in person.

President's Reception

Monday, October 7, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.

Join ILA President, Amy Byers, to kick off the start of the 2024 Annual Conference. The President's Reception is open to all conference attendees and light refreshments and a cash bar will be provided.

Trustee Day

Thursday, October 10, 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

A full day of conference programming is planned for Illinois library trustees. Enjoy breakfast and lunch with fellow trustees from around the state. Hosted by the ILA Library Trustees Forum. *Trustee Day registration is required in order to attend meal events.*

Unconferences

In these participant-driven sessions, attendees will share ideas, network, and discuss relevant issues or topics they are confronting in their daily work with their peers. Facilitators will recommend topics but participants are encouraged to contribute suggestions. Unconferences are hosted by ILA forums.

Academic Libraries Unconference

Wednesday, October 9, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Human Resources and Administration Unconference

Thursday, October 10, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Resources and Technical Services Unconference and Networking

Wednesday, October 9, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Youth and Young Adult Services Unconference

Thursday, October 10, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Workshop "From Quiet Observation to Strategic Action: Introverted Leadership for Dynamic Libraries"

Tuesday, October 8, 1:30 – 5:30 P.M.

This hands-on, immersive workshop delves into the dynamic of introversion and power structures within libraries, empowering participants to harness the power of quiet strength. Author Elaina Norlin will unpack the four introverted types, delve into their leadership superpowers, and navigate the unique challenges they face under pressure and stress. *Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event. This is a limited space event. Pre-registration will begin on July 22 with the opening of Early Bird registration.*

Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast

Wednesday, October 9, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Collage artist and captivating storyteller, Oge Mora, will be the keynote speaker at the ILA Youth Services Forum's annual Author Breakfast on October 9. Mora's exceptional talent has garnered critical acclaim, earning her accolades including a Caldecott Honor, the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award, and the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award for her enchanting picture book *Thank You, Omu!* Her second book, *Saturday*, was awarded the 2020 Boston Globe—Horn Book Picture Book Award. Mora is a 2025 iREAD featured artist for the theme "Level Up at Your Library." *Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event.*

Conference Information

Visit the Exhibit Hall

Exhibits Hours:

Wednesday, October 9	Noon – 5:00 P.M.
Thursday, October 10	9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

The following free events will be held in the exhibit hall:

Wednesday, October 9

Exhibits Opening Lunch	Noon – 1:30 P.M.
Exhibits Afternoon Snack Break	4:00 – 5:00 P.M.

Thursday, October 10

Exhibits Morning Coffee Break	10:00 – 11:00 A.M.
Exhibits Closing Lunch	Noon – 1:30 P.M.

Exhibits are not open on Tuesday, October 8.

Exhibits-Only Pass

One-day, Exhibits-Only passes are available for \$50 Early Bird or \$60 Standard. Exhibits-Only passes do not include attendance to conference programming. *Passes must be purchased online in advance and will not be available for purchase on site.*

Accessibility

ILA wants to make your conference experience pleasant and accessible.

- All conference hotels offer accessible sleeping rooms on request.
- ADA service animals are welcome throughout the conference.
- Complimentary ASL interpreters are available by request.*
- Complimentary mobility scooters are available by request.*
- A Mothers' Room will be available in the convention center.
- A quiet room will be available for attendees who need a break from conference activity.

*Requests for scooters and ASL interpreters must be received by September 16. Contact Kristin Pekoll at kpekoll@ila.org to submit your request.

Dietary Accommodations

When registering for a meal event, you must indicate if you require dietary accommodations, e.g. gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, allergy. We cannot accommodate dietary restrictions given on-site.

Hotels

Visit ila.org/conference for reservation information on conference hotels.

Room blocks have been reserved for Monday, October 7 to Thursday, October 10, 2024. Reservations must be made by September 7, 2024.

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Attendees are able to access full event schedules, rate sessions, view exhibitor profiles, customize their own agendas, and much more in the ILA conference mobile app.

Professional Headshot Studio

Complimentary head shots are available at the conference. An online sign-up will be available in late September and photos will be shared with attendees within two weeks after the conference.

Statement of Appropriate Conduct

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) holds an annual conference to enable its members to receive continuing education, build professional networks, and discover new products and services for professional use; and hosts a number of additional continuing education opportunities and events. To provide all participants—members and other attendees, speakers, exhibitors, staff, and volunteers—the opportunity to benefit from these events, ILA is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, religion, or other individual or group identity.

For more information and to review the Statement of Appropriate Conduct visit ila.org/conference.

WiFi Access

Complimentary WiFi will be available throughout the convention center.

Registration Rates & Deadlines

Your full conference registration includes access to all sessions, the exhibit hall, and networking. Register online at www.ila.org/conference. Questions? Email ila@ila.org

Full Conference	Early Bird (7/22–9/16)	Standard (9/17–9/26)
ILA Member*	\$325	\$375
Non-Member	\$400	\$450
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed ILA Member**	\$200	\$250
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed Non-Member**	\$275	\$325

SINGLE DAY	Early Bird (7/22–9/16)	Standard (9/17–9/26)
ILA Member*	\$250	\$300
Non-Member	\$300	\$350
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed ILA Member**	\$175	\$225
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed Non-Member**	\$225	\$275

TRUSTEE	Early Bird (7/22–9/16)	Standard (9/17–9/26)
Trustee Day ILA Member*	\$275	\$325
Trustee Day Non-Member	\$325	\$375
Trustee Day + Full Conference ILA Member*	\$350	\$400
Trustee Day + Full Conference Non-Member	\$425	\$475

OTHER	Early Bird (7/22–9/16)	Standard (9/17–9/26)
Exhibits Only	\$50	\$60
Award Luncheon	\$60	\$70
Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast	\$40	\$50
IACRL Luncheon	\$50	\$60
Out-of-State (Only Available 9/2–9/26)		\$450

July 1 – July 15: Speaker registration (with 20% discount)

July 22 – September 16: Early Bird registration

September 16 – September 26: Standard registration

All registrations close September 26, 2024.

No registrations will be available on-site.

* Attendees can register at the ILA Member rate if they have either a Personal Membership or work or serve as a Trustee at a library that has an Institutional Membership. If you are not sure of your membership or member status, please email ila@ila.org.

** These registrant types apply to full-time students, retired librarians, or currently unemployed librarians. If you do not fall into these categories and you register at this rate, you will be billed for the appropriate level of registration and will not be allowed to fully register for the conference until the correct registration rate is paid in full.

CANCELLATION POLICY: All cancellations/refund requests must be received in writing by September 26, 2024. This includes refunds for conference registration, meals, and special events. No telephone cancellations/refund requests can be accepted. No refunds after September 26, 2024. All cancellations are subject to a \$30 processing fee.



Illinois Library Association

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CALL FOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROPOSALS



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Annual Conference 2024 | October 8–10 | Peoria, IL

The ILA 2024 Annual Conference Program Committee is seeking program proposals for this year's conference. **The deadline for submissions is April 5, 2024.**

Join us on a journey that will spark imagination and innovation as we celebrate the dynamic role we play in initiating creativity, inspiring new ideas and fostering innovation within our communities.

Our conference this year will be in Peoria, located in the heart of Illinois, where we'll explore how we can enrich relationships that spark:

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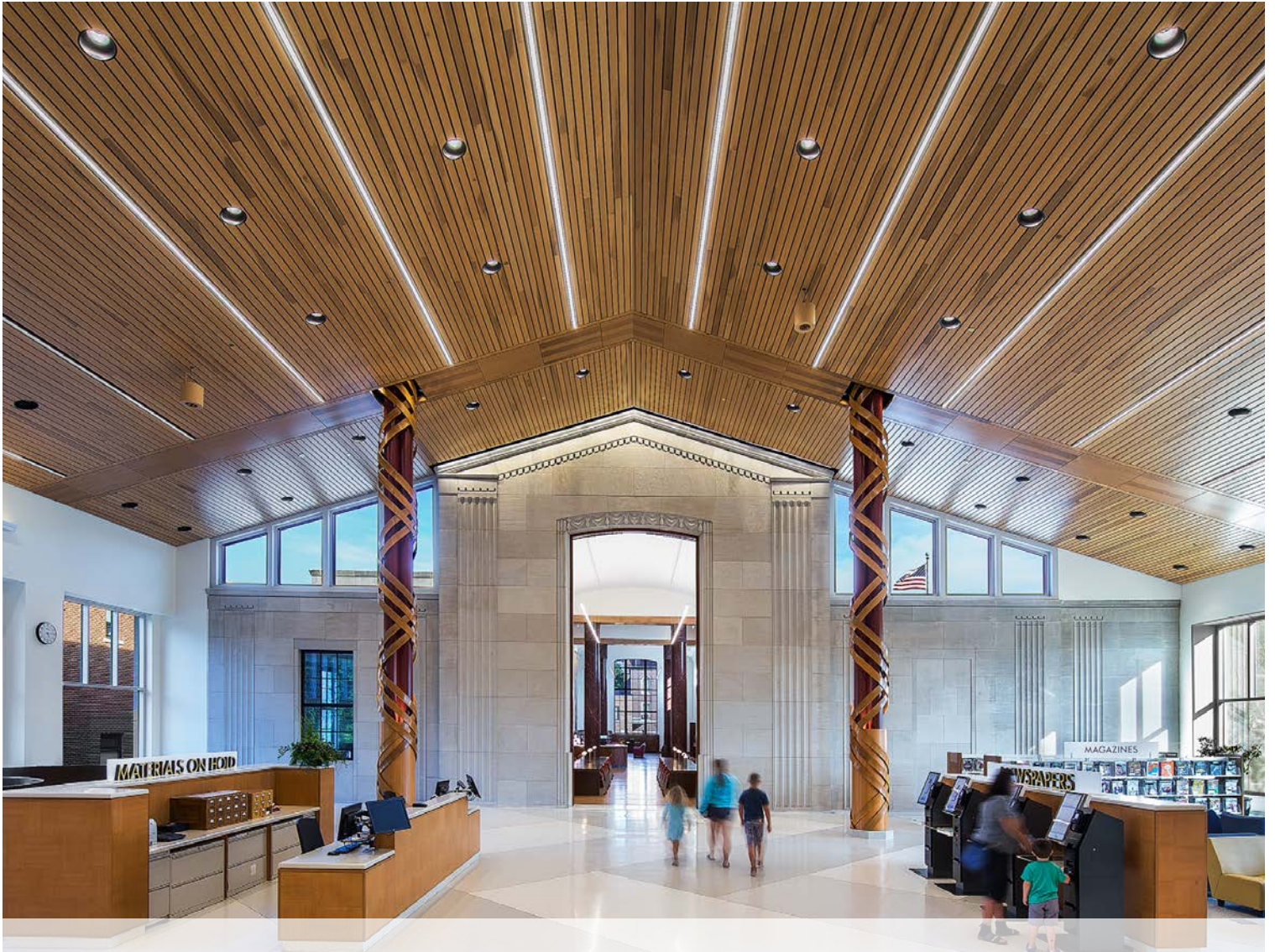
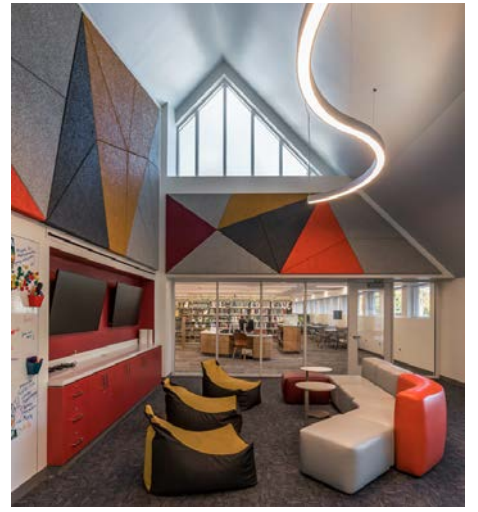


NEW: Speakers are eligible for a conference registration discount of **20% off** their appropriate fee.

<https://bit.ly/ILAAC24proposals>



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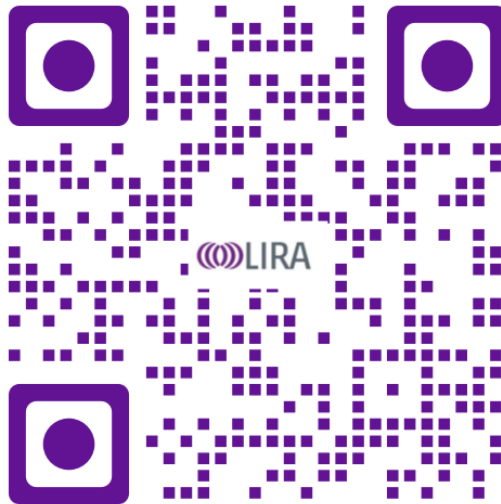

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