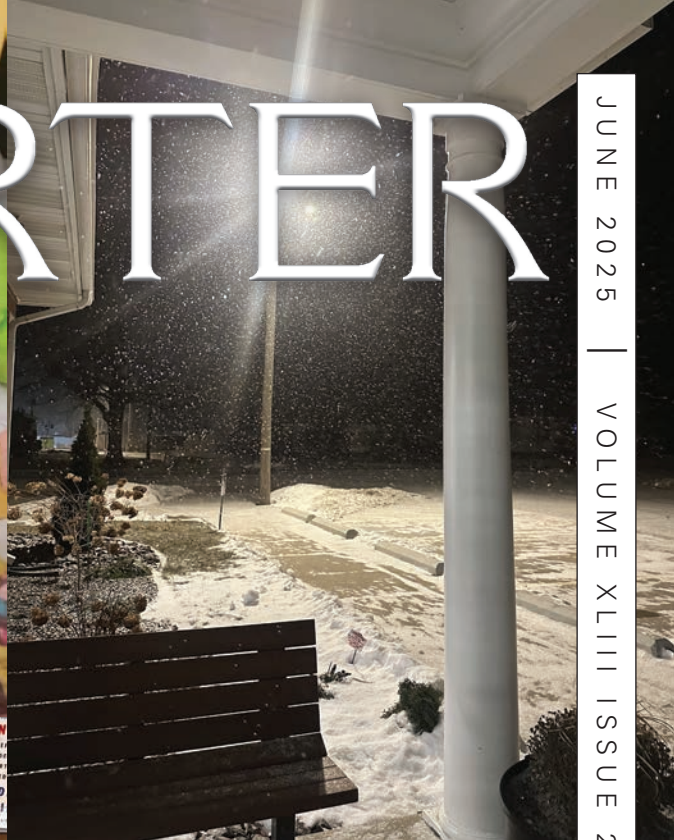


REPORTER

JUNE 2025 | VOLUME XLIII ISSUE 2



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

Photos featured on this month's cover have all been the Member Photo of the Month. These photos offer a snapshot into what's happening in libraries across the state from celebratory moments, surprise guests, fun staff moments, and young patrons enjoying everything their libraries have to offer. If your library is an Institutional Member, send your photos with a short description to Tamara Jenkins at tjenkins@ila.org by the 15th of each month for a chance to be selected and featured on ILA's social media and e-newsletter as the Member Photo of the Month.

CORRECTION NOTE: ILA would like to issue the following corrections to the March 2025 *ILA Reporter*.

The New Library Buildings 2024 feature incorrectly stated the construction cost for Caseyville Library District; the total cost was \$1,671,000. The article "The Community Impact of Makerspaces" incorrectly listed one of the author's organizations; Jimmy Gonzalez-Vicker is employed at the University of Illinois Chicago. We apologize for these oversights and have corrected the online articles.

The Illinois Library Association is collaboratively shaping a strong 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 seven 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 website 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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World on the Move: Exhibit at the Glen Ellyn Public Library

Where did we come from? Where are we going? How does migration change us? These three big-picture questions appear on the larger-than-life displays of *World on the Move: 250,000 Years of Human Migration* from the American Anthropological Association, the Smithsonian Institution, and the American Library Association.

The *World on the Move* exhibit stopped in Illinois at the Glen Ellyn Public Library (GEPL) from July 22, 2024, to August 31, 2024. It consisted of six modules standing about 10 feet high in various shapes displaying high-contrast images from around the globe. Fifteen people, including library staff and community volunteers, set up the exhibit over two mornings. At the end, five staff members broke the exhibit down over two days and repacked it. *World on the Move* focuses on four locations called Crossroads (the Mediterranean Basin, Beringia, Central Africa, and East Los Angeles), which serve as case studies, demonstrating the depth of culture, development, change, and connections with the people groups who pass through or settle in each location. The term *crossroad* implies that no geographic location is isolated from influence from other places; all cultures or groups are connected through time and space. Movement doesn't stop; each person is part of a story of a group that came from another location and will themselves move or have successors who migrate, whether generational movement, short-distance travel, or trans-continental emigration.

Glen Ellyn Public Library was the only Illinois library to host the exhibit. Significant factors in this decision included the area's immigration-focused organizations, the library's proximity to the Metra line, and the space available for the exhibit: we have a large, vaulted atrium that is perfect for exhibits and performances.

The creators of *World on the Move* intended to spark curiosity and conversations about the intersections of ethnicity, place, and reasons for moving. Taking intention as our guide, our library developed a slate of programs for all ages for our summer programs.

We organized over 25 unique programs connected to *World on the Move* concepts. For example, local advocacy group Exodus World Service provided immigration simulations where patrons could move between stations in a way that echoes how new migrants feel coming to the United States. Chef Walks First from Ketapanen Kitchen of Chicago led the Sample the Foods of Turtle Island event to provide samples of Indigenous foods. Reality Illinois, the Teen Advisory Panel to the DuPage County Health Department, and I, the Young Adult Librarian at GEPL, led a program called Empathy is Your Superpower to learn how developing empathy can build self-esteem, foster community, and deepen connections. David Ouellette, Associate Professor of Art History at College of DuPage, presented The Illustrated *Popol Vuh: A Mayan Creation Story*. For the children, local author Shirin Shamsi discussed her book *The Moon from Dehradun*, which is based on her family's migration from India to Pakistan.





The Volunteer Docent program gave everyone from high school students to retired adults a chance to get involved. I was responsible for communicating with and training the volunteers, along with designing software with guides and content for docents to be knowledgeable hosts. Docents had orientation and training sessions describing the activities and principles of the position. They helped watch over the exhibit material, noting damage or locations that seemed popular with people who came to look. Docents collected, recorded, and replaced sticky notes from the interactive portion of the exhibit, which enabled tourists to answer questions posed by the exhibit regarding migration experiences. Each docent was encouraged to complete an “empathy essay” that compared their perspectives on the various subjects of the exhibit before and after they volunteered.

From November 2023 to June 2024, in the lead-up to and organization of the exhibit, I conducted extensive outreach to surrounding organizations for assistance in promotion. Select Adult Department staff also built a slate of participation opportunities. The two most popular programs were VIP Tours and Volunteer Docents. Many of the groups who had hosted my outreach efforts took advantage of the VIP Tours, including staff from other libraries, churches, social justice action groups, the League of Women voters, and county service departments.

For the VIP Tour, groups around Glen Ellyn could schedule a tour with the library Board President and myself to get behind-the-scenes stories and refreshments during a one-hour tour. Tour groups met in a gathering room before the official event to interact with other groups scheduled at the same time, enjoy refreshments, hear the story of how the exhibit came to the library, what it was like to build the exhibit, and how we built programs around it. Even though the tour’s official time frame was one hour, attendees, called tourists during the experience, often stayed to talk, socialize, and re-read the exhibit well past the 60 minutes, sharing migration stories from their own lives or in their family trees.



Docents did not need to be experts in the subjects; they focused on having a friendly face that could explain the exhibit's layout and draw attention to the Understanding Migration website. Docent training enabled them to be self-sufficient, build their schedule, and be independent of the desk staff. The Docent Supervisor communicated with docents, suggested improvements to docent activities, and co-led many VIP tours; this role was vital to ensure docent support. While designed for anyone, volunteer or library staff, our Docent Supervisor ended up being one of our board members. Volunteering as a docent was another way to involve high school and college students when school was not in session, indirectly fulfilling the vision of the World on the Move makers who wanted to connect with teenage students. Adults became docents, too; social justice groups, civic engagement groups, and individuals who wanted to learn and “give back” were part of the docent team.

The program that required the most staff involvement, the longest-running event, and the most diversified experience was making *World on the Move* our Summer Reading theme. We had branded staff t-shirts, activity goals that counted as program achievements, travel-themed prizes for all ages, and partnered with a local organization called Ten Thousand Villages. Ten Thousand Villages focuses on fair trade commerce, simplifying the connection between creators and customers, and the international functionality matching the *World on the Move* character. We marched in the village Independence Day Parade, went on outreach, gave Storytimes in the Park, and handed out chocolate bars for registration throughout the summer months with the exhibit logo and promotional materials. We hosted *Movement of Desis: Desi-Fusion Dance Collective—Chicago* to kick off the program. Later in the summer, we hosted celebration dances from West African and Polish American groups while a Taco Madre food truck and Sunset Slush frozen treats stand were available.

The exhibit resonated with the Glen Ellyn Village administration and residents. In 2020, the Village subcommittee One Community facilitated Community Conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion for residents that continued over the next few years. These conversations aimed to help residents discuss their experiences of living in Glen Ellyn with entities and concepts such as schools, police departments, tax structures, social services, and civic holiday celebrations, and to gather ideas for elevating and enriching those experiences. Various institutions contracted Native American instructors to craft land acknowledgments with Trickster Cultural Center of Schaumburg and Midwest SOARRING Foundation of Lockport. Local groups created a neighborhood watch network to provide free supplies to people moved by buses from Texas who were then dropped at the local Metra railway station. The library connected with local government commissions, educators from the nearby community college, and other educational and service-based groups to build information-sharing networks and programs.



Check out the website UnderstandingMigration.org for more information about the exhibit, including tour stops and content, as well as for an ecosystem of academic articles, sound clips, and supplemental classroom material from a host of expert creators.

I want to highlight a few people. Em Gallagher and Brian Russell, who are on the team overseeing the exhibit at the Public Programs Office of ALA Chicago, prepared us before arrival and evaluated our library's integrated programs and outreach. Maggie Thomann was the department head who found and attained the exhibit and supported my efforts. Dawn Bussey is the Executive Director of our library and supported allocating many library resources to make the exhibit and surrounding projects a success.

This was a massive group project from Glen Ellyn Public Library staff and community volunteers; it would not have been possible without them. To see all associated programs and find the library workers who made it happen, go to gepl.LibraryCalendar.com and use the tag *World on the Move* under Program Type. Collective effort and passion made our endeavors a success.

Humans will always be on the move, and public libraries will always provide resources and welcome to the residents and visitors who come through our doors. **ILA**

Representation in Children's Books: Unlocking the World for Young Readers

Recent research suggests that representation in children's literature is about more than inclusion—it's about fostering literacy and empathy. When young readers see themselves reflected in books, their engagement increases, along with their ability to read, comprehend, and analyze. Yet, in a time of censorship, rising book bans, and heightened political tensions, ensuring access to diverse stories has become an uphill battle.

"When children engage with books reflecting their cultural experiences, they enhance their reading comprehension and critical thinking skills"

WHY SEEING YOURSELF IN STORIES MATTERS

Imagine being a child searching for your reflection in the pages of a book. What does it feel like if, time and time again, you can't find it? Representation in literature isn't just comforting—it's transformative. As Mikkaka Overstreet of Education Northwest explains, books that resonate culturally with readers validate their identities and keep them coming back for similar titles.¹

Studies support this claim. According to Literacy Minnesota, when children engage with books reflecting their cultural experiences, they enhance their reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.² Beyond identifying with a character, these stories equip them with essential tools to navigate the world, serving as both a mirror and a guide to what's possible.

But representation isn't only about the individual child. The Hachette Book Group highlights how diverse stories serve as windows into others' lives, helping to cultivate empathy and cross-cultural understanding.³ Books, then, aren't just for personal growth—they're bridges connecting communities.



WHEN REPRESENTATION IS ERASED

Despite the overwhelming benefits, some stories never reach young readers. Recent surges in book bans have disproportionately targeted works representing marginalized communities. The consequences are far-reaching. For example, in March 2024, Millburn School District 24 in Illinois initially voted to discontinue their participation in the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award program, citing concerns over perceived political bias in the book selections. This decision faced significant pushback from students, parents, and educators, leading the board to reverse their decision and reinstate the program in the following month.⁴ The *EdTrust* blog warns that erasing these books perpetuates a cycle of invisibility, where already underrepresented voices are further silenced.⁵

The harm extends beyond representation—it impacts literacy itself. A 2018 study published in *Literacy Research and Instruction* revealed that African American students who read culturally relevant texts demonstrated a 15% increase in reading comprehension scores and reported greater enjoyment of reading compared to peers who did not engage with such materials.⁶ When these materials are removed, children lose not only a reflection of themselves but also critical opportunities to grow academically.

Stories shape how children see the world, making shared experiences just as essential as the words on the page. As the research points out, diverse stories offer social and emotional lessons that help children understand the complexity of the world around them.⁷ Banning these books strips away opportunities to learn about difference and empathy—skills as vital as literacy itself.

LIBRARIES: WHERE THE FIGHT FOR REPRESENTATION LIVES

Libraries have long been more than just buildings filled with books—they're community anchors. In today's polarized climate, they've also become battlegrounds for intellectual freedom. With censorship on the rise, librarians and collection managers have taken on the crucial task of curating collections that tell stories from all corners of life.

Consider storytime, a staple of public libraries nationwide. As the *School Library Journal* notes, these sessions, which include dancing, singing, and reading, have evolved into powerful tools for promoting literacy and inclusivity. When librarians incorporate diverse stories into their programming, they provide children with access to narratives they might not encounter anywhere else.⁸

The OCLC blog echoes this, calling for “supercharged storytimes” designed to captivate and educate young minds while normalizing diversity.⁹ These aren't just passive readings—they're opportunities to ignite curiosity, foster empathy, and build bridges across differences.

Beyond programming, collection management policies play a pivotal role in shaping the narratives available to readers. To ensure their shelves reflect the diversity of their communities, librarians are increasingly collaborating with authors, educators, and researchers. One such collaboration involves a tool developed by professors at Bates College called the Diverse Book-Finder Collection Analysis Tool.¹⁰ This online resource allows librarians to upload their picture-book ISBN lists and receive a detailed report highlighting racial and cultural gaps in their collections. With this data, library staff can make informed decisions to expand their holdings and intentionally include more Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, and Asian stories—creating a more inclusive and representative literary experience for young readers. The Hachette Book Group emphasizes that amplifying underrepresented voices isn't just a nice idea—it's an essential strategy for creating equitable access to literature and boosting library usage.³

A CROSSROADS MOMENT

As book bans escalate, the stakes have never been higher. Representation in literature isn't just an abstract ideal—it's a necessity for literacy, empathy, and equity. Yet, the fight to protect access to diverse stories often feels like a race against time.

Initiatives like Education Northwest's literacy programs—which include culturally responsive literacy training, educator workshops, and community-based reading interventions—showcase libraries as powerful catalysts for social change. These programs partner with libraries and schools to offer educators tools and strategies for selecting culturally relevant books, incorporating diverse narratives into classroom activities, and engaging children through stories reflective of their identities and communities.¹

For example, here in Illinois, initiatives like the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan highlight how libraries and educational institutions can be powerful forces for social change. Developed by the Illinois State Board of Education, the plan offers professional learning modules that help educators strengthen their skills in evidence-based reading instruction.¹¹ By providing teachers and librarians with practical tools to incorporate culturally responsive materials and inclusive teaching practices, the initiative supports equitable literacy outcomes for students across the state.¹² Efforts like these reframe libraries as dynamic centers of empowerment—advancing literacy, fostering inclusion, and helping communities thrive.

These efforts remind us that libraries aren't just about books—they're about the future. They stand as symbols of what we value as a society: empathy, diversity, creativity, and the right to imagine a better world.

THE PATH FORWARD

The question isn't whether representation in children's literature matters. *It does.* The question is how to ensure every child has access to the stories they need to see themselves, understand others, and grow into the world's next thinkers and dreamers.

Libraries, with their enduring commitment to access and equity, are uniquely positioned to lead this charge. By prioritizing diverse representation in their collections, resisting censorship, and embracing innovative programming, they can reaffirm their role as beacons of possibility. Additionally, advocacy groups like Unite Against Book Bans play a crucial role in raising awareness and mobilizing communities to stand against restrictions on literature.

It's not just about one book or one shelf. This work has the potential of shaping a generation. The future of our libraries is the future of our children. And that's a story worth fighting for.

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Literacy and Gaming in the Library

Libraries are sometimes thought of as only book repositories, but that is no longer true. In addition to traditional books, many libraries now provide a variety of materials to patrons, including video games. Far from just being a way to attract patrons who are not interested in reading, gaming helps build many types of literacy skills, often in ways that traditional reading does not; for example, visual, media, and social literacy skills can be developed by gaming. Additionally, gaming can help build one's capacity for empathy. Providing video games in libraries offers patrons a way to develop these skills and become more empathetic. Readers' advisors also have increased options for promoting books related to gaming when video games are part of the library's collection. This can be done actively by making suggestions to patrons who prefer gaming over reading or vice versa, and passively with booklists and displays, all of which can promote reading and literacy.

THE SHARED BENEFITS OF READING AND GAMING

Some of the benefits of books and video games overlap with one another. Gaming can immerse people in stories, improve communication, and increase their capacity for empathy (National Literacy Trust, n.d.). The same is true for books (Practical Psychology 2018).

When gaming, people play through a virtual experience that they have not actually been through, which is similar to what happens to many people when they read. By gaming or reading from the perspective of another person, people can see the world through a new viewpoint, which in turn helps increase their capacity for empathy (Practical Psychology 2018). Empathy is a key quality for communicating and connecting with others, and both reading and gaming can help build and strengthen it. These benefits are forms of discovery that help gamers and readers alike learn about the world, which, in addition to promoting literacy, are a goal of many libraries (American Library Association, n.d.).



“Gaming can immerse people in stories, improve communication, and increase their capacity for empathy”



GAMING AND LITERACY

Although it may not initially appear that playing video games improves literacy, research indicates that gaming is an excellent way to develop one's literacy skills. Gaming has been shown to increase interest in reading and writing, improve confidence in reading skills, and help reluctant readers to improve their literacy skills (National Literacy Trust, n.d.). Even the physical aspects of gaming, like visual stimulation, can improve literacy skills (Kleiboer 2022) because video games require gamers to pay attention to both what is in their direct line of sight and text that pops up near the edge of the screen. By consistently needing to read and understand text that suddenly appears in their peripheral vision, gamers improve the speed that they read familiar and new words (Kleiboer 2022).

In addition to building literacy skills, video games offer a fun alternative to traditional reading that may attract reluctant or struggling readers. Gaming has been shown to jump-start literacy skills in those who struggle with reading due to learning disabilities like dyslexia (Brooks 2018). On-screen text in video games can help gamers practice reading without being consciously aware of doing so, which reduces the intimidation some may feel about reading books (Brooks 2018). For struggling or reluctant readers, video games and non-traditional reading materials may be a better approach for building reading and literacy skills. Those who become invested in a game may seek out more information related to it, including reviews, blogs, and fan fiction (Saeed 2021). This has the potential to go one step further, with gamers reading books about topics featured in a game's story, rather than accessing non-traditional reading materials about the game itself. Video games not only help gamers indirectly practice reading and build literacy skills, but can spark an interest in both traditional and non-traditional reading materials. Providing both books and video games in the library makes it easier for patrons to expand their interests and read more widely.

Having video games in the library's collection also provides librarians with a non-traditional, but relevant, readers' advisory option. Readers' advisors can suggest books related to the stories in video games to patrons who are reluctant readers or gamers who have developed an interest in topics covered in a game's story. Alternatively, readers' advisors can suggest video games that promote visual, media, and social literacy to readers who are looking to try something new. Displays and booklists about video games in the library's collection are passive ways for readers' advisors to promote many types of literacy skills.

With the rapid technological changes happening in the world, the literacy skills necessary for navigating the world are also changing (Games & Gaming Round Table, n.d.). In addition

to knowing how to read and understand traditional printed materials, visual literacy, media literacy, social literacy, and empathy are important in modern society, and gaming can help build these skills (Games & Gaming Round Table, n.d.).

PROMOTING GAMING IN THE LIBRARY

Given the popularity of games and the benefits they offer, many libraries have added video games and board games to their collections. But what if your library doesn't offer games for checkout? One way to offer gaming without a games collection is through programs. Library gaming programs can be high-tech and use computers or gaming consoles, or low-tech and involve board games, card games, or role-playing games like Dungeons & Dragons or Warhammer.

This summer, the Winfield Public Library is having many gaming-related programs to go along with the iREAD summer reading theme, *Level Up at Your Library*. The Winfield Public Library is a small library with no games collections, computers, or gaming consoles, so they are going low-tech for their summer reading programs. The Adult Programming Librarian, Dawn Leardi, is leaning away from gaming culture and instead embracing activities that can be done as a family or in large groups, including a family game night and a games-themed trivia night. These programs offer something for patrons who want to participate in summer reading programs but are not immersed in gaming culture.

As the former Young Adult Services Librarian at Winfield Library, I planned many programs for teens this summer that directly and indirectly involve gaming. Programs indirectly involving gaming include learning how to make snacks for game nights from a professional chef and a workshop where teens will learn to draw their own characters. For teens who are interested in joining the video game industry someday, I invited a former game designer who now teaches game design and development at the local community college to speak at the library. Teens will also get to play one-shot Dungeons & Dragons campaigns and games that promote information literacy.

Of course, there are many more ways to incorporate gaming into library programs, and they need not be confined to this summer. Gaming is a fun way to bring patrons into the library and help them develop their literacy skills. With the popularity of gaming and the wide variety of games, libraries have ample opportunity to offer them to patrons.



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PROGRAM

Small Changes, Big Impact: Reimagining Existing Spaces for Teens and Tweens

As we wrapped up our yearlong strategic planning process at the Downers Grove Public Library (DGPL) at the end of 2023, one thing became crystal clear from the feedback we received through community surveys and focus groups: the urgent need for a revised approach to teen and tween engagement, services, and spaces. The calls for an enclosed teen area and a dedicated space for tweens (ages 8-12) ranked first and third among 44 suggested improvements throughout the library. These top-ranking suggestions were not just wishes, but a real call to action from the community—and it was our responsibility to bring them to life.

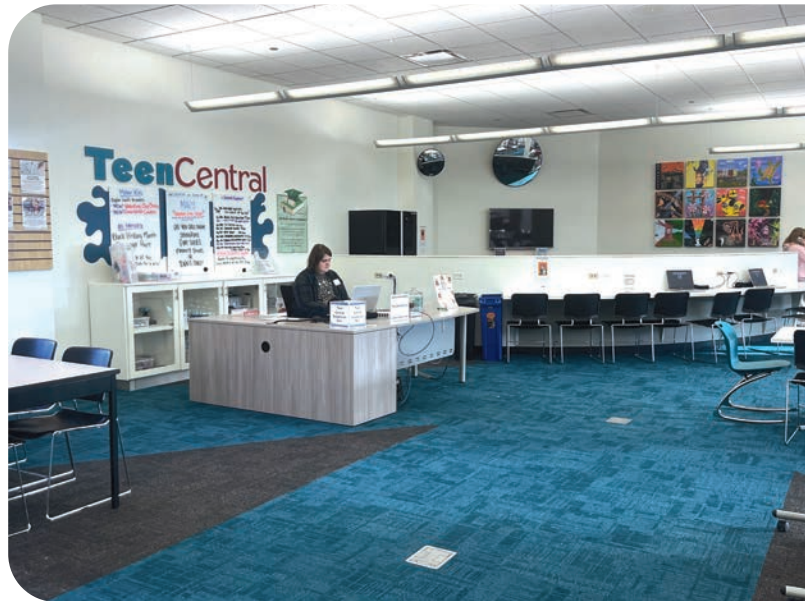
When we created our existing Teen Central area in 2014, which boasted an open floorplan in a far-off corner of our second floor, a large soft-seating area, video gaming, group study tables and rolling chairs (big mistake), an arcade machine, and a robust, popular teen book collection with broad appeal, we naively thought this was exactly what the teens wanted. However, as the years passed, we realized that our “if you build it, they will come” philosophy overlooked several important factors, including logistics, staff supervision, structured activities, and most importantly, teen boredom, angst, and disengagement.

While well intentioned, Teen Central did not receive the type of use we originally thought it would. It became an indoor playground of sorts, providing opportunities for teens to utilize the soft seating as platforms from which to jump, dive, and perform aerial acrobatics, or use the wheeled study chairs to amuse themselves in tournaments of crash bumper cars. Due to its secluded location, tucked away from the line of sight of staff, Teen Central offered just enough privacy for teens to act with a sense of impunity and for the whodunits to claim “I didn’t do it!” Despite having several security cameras in place, building operations monitors patrolling the library regularly, and a poster-sized placard highlighting our Code of Conduct, we just could not get the teens to behave, and quite frankly, we got to the point where there was a sense of relief when they left.

Expected and desired behavior was a challenge to enforce and sustain. Teens who earnestly wanted to use and enjoy Teen Central for its intended purposes could not do so without bother or interruption, and therefore, would vacate the space entirely. Teens who misbehaved were asked to leave, some even banned for a predetermined period of time, e.g., the day, a week, etc. (depending on the severity of their behavior). In either event, Teen Central was often left a ghost town, bereft of the teens we were so eager to engage and serve.



TEEN BEFORE



TEEN AFTER



TWEEN BEFORE



TWEEN AFTER

Staff made genuine attempts to serve the educational and recreational needs of the teens and develop meaningful and lasting relationships with them, but their behavior made it nearly impossible. We struggled tirelessly to get teens to follow our rules for requisite behavior and no matter what or how hard we tried, we failed. We knew we had a problem that needed fixing and the feedback we received through our community surveys and focus groups was the impetus.

We went to work analyzing our existing floor plan to see what types of changes and improvements we could make with in-house talent and resources, without having to invest in a professional space study or architectural renderings (as that was of a future, library-wide concern). As we brainstormed potential configurations for reimagined spaces, we kept several factors in the forefront of our minds: proximity of teen/tween spaces to quiet study areas and capacity for noise control; staff sight lines and security camera visibility; access to electrical outlets and data; necessity and feasibility of moving furniture and shelving; and costs for supplies, furniture, and equipment.

The results included two completely new and separate reimagined spaces: one in the Children's Department for tweens (ages 8-12); and the other in Teen Central for teens (ages 13-18). By reimagining and restructuring these spaces, we could provide two different, yet similar, age groups with welcoming, engaging, and safe spaces, programs, and activities that would allow them to successfully discover, grow, play, and learn.

The new tween area seamlessly incorporates the décor and color scheme consistent with the rest of the Children's Department, ensuring it feels intentional and cohesive rather than an afterthought. The previous space featured little more than four study tables with chairs. The reimagined space includes the same bright and bold colors, a mix of new and repurposed comfortable seating (including booth seating), and modern furnishings and equipment. This transformation supports a wide range of activities, from studying and reading to relaxing, socializing, and engaging in interactive play. The goal was to blend the excitement of entertainment and socializing with friends with the stimulation and appeal of learning and discovery. Beyond the new and repurposed décor and seating, we achieved this by:

- Purchasing a self-service tablet station (Hublets by Envisionware) where tweens can check out tablets to use for homework or access educational and recreational games;
- Adding a digital touchscreen play table, which includes games like "air" hockey, tic-tac-toe, memory games and puzzles, and activities like painting, drawing, and so much more;
- Creating an additional gaming area, which includes Playstation 4, Xbox, and Switch video gaming systems; and
- Converting our STEM room to a more flexible makerspace by replacing the carpet flooring with a vinyl option, adding more counter tops and moveable tables and seating for flexible make-and-create programs, and extra storage units to house maker equipment and supplies for easy and swift access.

The tween area also has a specially-curated book collection that includes textbooks, graphic novels, comics, a diverse range of popular reading materials, and flexible and collaborative spaces where tweens can work on group projects, engage in discussions, hang out with friends, or participate in library programs.

We improved Teen Central by rearranging the shelving to create a more enclosed space in order to mitigate noise; adding a public service desk, which is staffed by teen librarians during off-school hours, and adding storage units to house games and makery and crafting supplies. By implementing these small changes, we have virtually eliminated our behavioral incidents involving teens and more than doubled program attendance and participation. By creating a supervised space and providing easy access to staff, Teen Central is no longer the former ghost town on the second floor. While the teens are still high energy and curious, and possess a desire to test boundaries at times, they are respectfully engaged with one another and staff and their behavior has improved astronomically. The teens are in the building!

These new and improved tween and teen spaces mark a very exciting turning point in our continued commitment to serving the evolving needs of our community and ensuring everyone is welcome to discover, grow, play, and learn. We are excited to welcome all tweens and teens to explore and enjoy these vibrant and innovative new spaces which aim to captivate young minds; promote curiosity, exploration, and fun; and encourage wonder and a sense of adventure at the Downers Grove Public Library.

ILA

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2025 Election Results

VICE PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT-ELECT



Rosie Camargo
South Holland Public Library

Rene Leyva – *Elected*
Fossil Ridge Public Library District

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(three-year term beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028)

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.



Betsy Mahoney
Six Mile Regional Library District

Leander Spearman – *Elected*
Belleville Public Library

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE



Kathryn (Kathy) Lind Caudill – *Elected*
Ela Area Public Library District

Tom Stagg
Alpha Park Public Library District

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE



Caroline Martin
Pecatonica High School

Heather McCarthy – *Elected*
Oak Lawn Hometown Middle School

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE



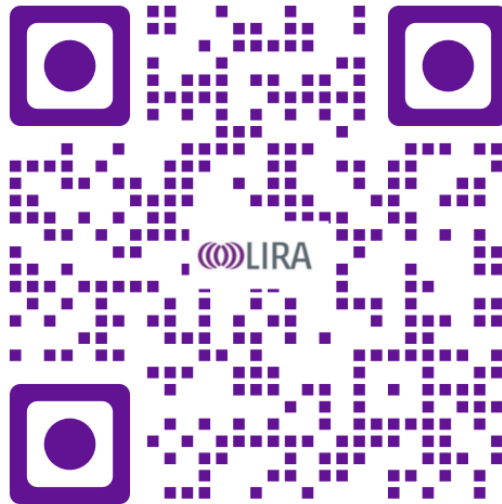
Matthew Ostercamp
Brandel Library, North Park University

Shannon Pohrte – *Elected*
Elgin Community College



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Trevor Smith

Account Executive
630.694.5436
trevor_smith@ajg.com

Ali Sulita

Client Service Manager
630.438.1633
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Marcus Henthorn

Area Executive VP
630.694.5152
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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.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

EBSCO Information Services, Ipswich, MA
FGM Architects Inc., Chicago
Kings Financial Consulting, Inc., Monticello
NobleTec LLC, Lombard

Nicole Orue, Bloomingdale
Phoebe Pappas, Chicago
Bev Sanchez, Naperville
Amy Smith, Virden
Ailyn Trujillo, Elk Grove Village
Rachel Yim, Mundelein

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Elwood Library District, Ridge Farm

TRUSTEE MEMBERS

Kris Adams, Alpha Park Public Library District
Cecilia Buckner, Peoria Public Library
Rachel Forsyth-Tuerck, Barrington Area Library
Kevin Kinne, Peoria Public Library
Suzanne Rupright, O'Fallon Public Library
Michael Shizas, Prairie Trails Public Library District

STUDENT MEMBERS

Emma Bergholz, Oak Park
Mariana Biagi, Elk Grove Village
Isabel Braico, Urbana
Abigail Bowers, Highland
Robin Bryant, Springfield
Ash Cook, Urbana
Ryan Downum, DeKalb
Mary Kroeck, Berwyn
Carol Marquardsen, Moline
Andrew Matsas, Chicago
Danielle Meintanis, New Lenox
Lynette Mendoza, Chicago

PERSONAL MEMBERS

Iris Ashby, Champaign Public Library
Marii Baez, Glen Ellyn Public Library
Betsi Beltran, Addison Public Library
Lyndsey Caliendo, Palos Heights Public Library
Mae Chapman, O'Fallon Public Library
Karen Christiansen, Glen Ellyn Public Library
Courtney Ellis, Glendale Heights
Gwendolyn Gemmell, River Forest
Marsden Giolas, Melrose Park Public Library
Betsy Griebenow, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District
Alexis Henson, Roselle Public Library District
Shelley Hudspath, Marion Carnegie Library
Morgan Joyner, Itasca Community Library
Caroline Martin, Pecatonica School District
Julie McNamara, Toluca Public Library District
Marissa Moravec, Fremont Public Library District
Katrina Perez, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP
Keith Robinson, Eldorado Memorial Public Library District
Terri Slemer, Six Mile Regional Library District
Lisa Stanek, St. Charles Public Library District
Stacey Voelker, Champaign Community Unit School District #4
Marissa Walentschik, Melrose Park Public Library
Lacey Williams, Williamsfield Public Library
Barbara Yong, La Grange
Sara Youngs, Glen Ellyn Public Library

New Illinois Library Luminary



CAROL VAUGHAN KISSANE

It is hard not to think of Carol Vaughan Kissane when one thinks of Brookfield, who has served as a Trustee since 1981. Having decided not to run for re-election, Carol served her 44th and final year as a Trustee of the Linda Sokol Francis Brookfield Library, attending her final meeting this past May. Carol has been a constant advocate for her library as well as for the Illinois Library Association (ILA).

Carol's dedication to her library and fellow library trustees across the state is evident from her years serving on the ILA Library Trustee Forum as President, Secretary, and a Member. In 2012, Carol was named the ILA Trustee of the Year by her fellow trustees. She has both helped plan and attended several in-person Library Trustee Forum Spring Workshops. She has both helped plan and attended several in-person and virtual Library Trustee Forum Workshops. These workshops, now held virtually, are offered each spring and are on topics relevant to library trustees both long-serving or newly-elected. Carol served on the 2015 and 2018 ILA Conference Program Committees, which helps select the programs for the ILA Annual Conference, including Trustee Day—a day full of sessions and networking for library trustees across the state.

Carol has served in various positions of leadership in local, regional, state, and national library associations, and provided support to those who govern and advocate. Carol served on the ILA Advocacy Committee and knows the importance of reaching out and connecting with your representatives. She has represented her library at several ILA Legislative Meetups which offer library trustees and directors a chance to mingle with their elected officials or their staff and talk to them about the important work libraries are doing for their communities.

Carol has served as a role model for library trustees at all levels of governance and has been a valuable member of each board on which she has served. She is a tireless volunteer in the library community, always ready to lend a helping hand, welcoming new trustees, and sharing her knowledge with others.

2025 Consolidated Election Library Referenda Results

This year there were six library-related referenda in Illinois on ballots in the 2025 Consolidated Election with four passing and two failing. We thank the Illinois State Library for assistance in compiling this information, available on the Illinois State Board of Elections.

CHATHAM AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the Chatham Area Public Library District of Sangamon County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.095600% above the limiting rate for the purpose of the establishment, maintenance, and support of the public library for levy year 2023 and be equal to 0.359214% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2025?

Result: Pass

ELLA JOHNSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY DISTRICT

Shall bonds of the Ella Johnson Memorial Public Library District, Kane County, Illinois, in the amount of \$15,000,000 be issued for the purpose of erecting a new library building located in Pingree Grove, Illinois, and furnishing necessary equipment and acquiring electronic data storage and retrieval facilities in connection therewith?

Result: Failed

FLEWELLIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY DISTRICT (SHABONNA)

Shall a public library district, to be known as the Flewellin Memorial Library District, be established in part of Dekalb County and in part of Lee County and under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law, may an aggregate extension, not to exceed \$90,000, be made for the 2025 levy year?

Result: Pass

PITTSFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

Shall the unserved territory in Pike County within Newburg Township, except that part within North Park District Library, within the boundaries of the Pikeland Community Unit School District No. 10 in Pike County be annexed to the Pittsfield Public Library District, Pike County, Illinois?

Result: Pass

SHERRARD PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

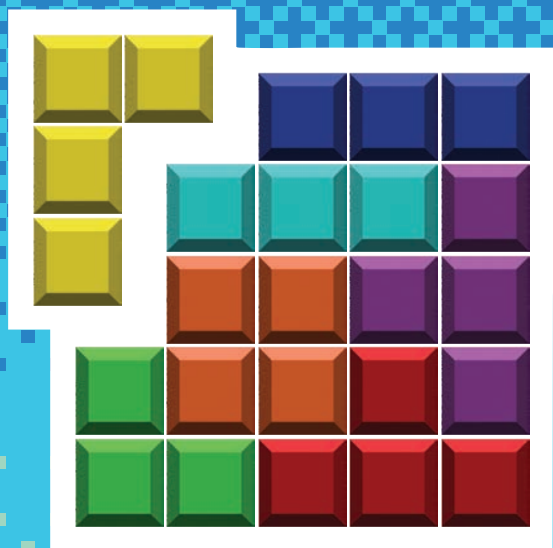
Shall the annual public library tax rate for the Sherrard Public Library District, Mercer and Rock Island Counties, Illinois, be established at 0.19% of full, fair cash value instead of at 0.15%, the maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes to be extended?

Result: Fail

WHITE OAK LIBRARY DISTRICT (ROMEOVILLE, LOCKPORT)

Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the White Oak Library District, Will County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.0286% above the limiting rate for levy year 2023 and be equal to 0.208% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2025? (1) The approximate amount of taxes extendable at the most recently extended limiting rate is \$4,689,455, and the approximate amount of taxes extendable if the proposition is approved is \$5,437,050. (2) For the 2025 levy year the approximate amount of the additional tax extendable against property containing a single family residence and having a fair market value at the time of the referendum of \$100,000 is estimated to be \$9.53. (3) If the proposition is approved, the aggregate extension for the 2025 levy year will be determined by the limiting rate set forth in the proposition, rather than the otherwise applicable limiting rate calculated under the provisions of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (commonly known as the Property Tax Cap Law).

Result: Pass



YOU BELONG HERE

Illinois Library Association
Annual Conference 2025 **Oct 14-16**

Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, Illinois

For full conference information and to register online: ila.org/conference
#ILAAC25

On behalf of the Conference Program Committee and the ILA staff, we're pleased to welcome you to Rosemont in October for the 2025 ILA Annual Conference. From October 14–16, we'll be gathering at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center for three days of education, connection, and celebration of all the wonderful things Illinois libraries have to offer.

This year's theme, **You Belong Here**, celebrates libraries as a place of welcoming and acceptance for all. We're excited to explore how libraries foster belonging within their spaces; how they build strong relationships with diverse communities and address their unique needs; how library workers hold space for each other within the profession; and lastly, discuss just how important belonging is to the implementation of successful diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility efforts within libraries.

A key facet to belonging is creating and developing a feeling of connection, which is why we feel our annual conference is so important. In the face of so much uncertainty, now more than ever, we need to come together as a profession, as colleagues, and as friends to celebrate the work we do and the reasons we do it.

In addition to the programs and poster sessions, our speaker lineup is phenomenal, and continues to touch on the various themes of belonging. Our Opening General Session on October 14 will feature Terrell Strayhorn, Ph.D., whose research and work are directly tied into belonging.

The President's Program on October 15 will feature Sherman "Dilla" Thomas, Chicago historian. Winner of numerous accolades and awards, Dilla started by giving walking tours of Chicago's Black neighborhoods, and has now gained widespread recognition for his videos celebrating Chicago's unique history, and is considered one of the city's premiere historians.

On October 16, DiversiTEA will feature rapper, educator, author, and librarian Roy Kinsey, the founder of Rapbrary, a library dedicated to the preservation of rap and hip-hop as literary art forms.

Academic, school, and special librarians—we look forward to having a wealth of sessions for you, as well as a chance for you to connect with colleagues from across the state. And trustees, as always, you'll have a day dedicated to resources just for you, as thanks for all of the hard work you do for our libraries.

Your full conference registration includes access to the keynotes, all educational programming, and the two day exhibits featuring library vendors, poster sessions, and complimentary lunches and snacks. We also hope that you'll enjoy giving back as we support Anew: Building Beyond Violence and Abuse which offers services for victims of domestic abuse as our community projects recipients. We look forward to seeing you in Rosemont this fall!

And be sure to mark your calendars for the 2026 ILA Annual Conference, October 6-8, 2026 in Peoria, IL.



Carolyn Ciesla



Nanette Donohue



Jennifer Paliatka

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Joe Marcantonio
Winfield Public Library

Georgia Pichinos-Anderson
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Camille Rose
Kankakee Public Library

Alanna Sablotny
Chatham Area Public Library District

Devin Scott
Salem Township Public Library District

Rhiannon Shoults
Normal Public Library

Laura Van Cleve
Richton Park Public Library District

Featured Speakers



Dr. Terrell Strayhorn TBS Opening General Session Tuesday, October 14

During the Opening General Session on October 14, respected thought-leader Dr. Terrell Strayhorn will take the stage. He is one of the most prolific and influential scholars in the fields of education, psychology, and the academic study of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB).

He is President and CEO of Do Good Work Consulting Group, a minority-owned business that partners with hundreds of colleges, universities, corporations, and agencies each year to enhance culture, build inclusive environments, and boost belonging in ways that raise morale, increase retention, improve people's journey, and help organizations hit their bottom line. He's co-host of the podcast *Do Good Work* on Spotify and a contributing writer for *Entrepreneur*, *Thrive Global*, *AllBusiness*, and *Psychology Today*.

Strayhorn is Professor of Education and Psychology, Director of Research in the Center for the Study of HBCUs, and Principal Investigator of The Belonging Lab at Virginia Union University, where he also serves as Associate Provost for Faculty Development.

The Opening General Session is made possible by the generous support of Today's Business Solutions (TBS).



Dilla President's Program Wednesday, October 15

ILA President, Carolyn Ciesla, is excited to welcome Chicago historian Sherman Thomas—affectionately known as Dilla—to be the President's Program speaker. A fascinating blend of modern historian, cultural worker, and content creator, Dilla is passionate about and well-versed in Chicago's history, architecture, and overall culture. He brings the city to life through captivating storytelling and insider knowledge. Featured in Chicago Emmy award-winning programming, this self-taught historian was awarded the City of Chicago's Tourism Ambassador of the Year by Choose Chicago. The Chicago Public Library has awarded Dilla the prestigious 21st Century Award for his recent achievements in promoting Chicago to the world.

Through his social media account, Dilla has made over 400 videos highlighting the stories of Chicago, with more than 20 million views. He has amassed a following of over 300,000 followers across all platforms and has been featured in all manner of Chicago media.

He has also appeared nationally on *The Today Show* and *The Kelly Clarkson Show*, and has been written about in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and several international publications. Dilla has presented Chicago history lessons and lectures to institutions such as the University of Chicago, LaSalle University (PA), Northwestern University, Roosevelt University, and several Chicago Community Colleges network partners. Dilla is a proud lifelong resident of Chicago's South Side. He lives by the saying that "everything dope about America comes from Chicago."

The President's Program is made possible by the generous support of Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS).





Wendy Xu

Youth Services Forum Breakfast
Wednesday, October 15

Wendy Xu is a bestselling, award-nominated Brooklyn-based illustrator and comics artist. She is the creator of *Infinity Particle*, *Tidesong*, and co-creator of *Mooncakes*, a young adult fantasy graphic novel. Her work has been featured in various places on the internet including Catapult, Barnes & Noble Sci-fi/Fantasy, and Tor.com. She loves obsessing over the perfect line, making matcha lattes, and art history.

Wendy Xu's appearance is presented by the Youth Services Forum and made possible by the generous support of iREAD.



April Anderson-Zorn

IACRL Luncheon
Wednesday, October 15

April K. Anderson-Zorn is an associate professor and University Archivist at Illinois State University. Anderson-Zorn holds an MA in History from the University of Central Florida, an MLIS from Florida State University, maintains a Digital Archives Specialist certificate through the Society of American Archivists, and is a certified archivist through the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Anderson-Zorn is active in SAA and the Midwest Archives Conference, advocating mental health awareness and representation for archives professionals. Additionally, her research focuses on women's history in the library and archives professions and explores unique outreach initiatives for hard-to-access repositories.

Hosted by the Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL).



Roy Kinsey

DiversiTEA Closing Session
Thursday, October 16

Roy Kinsey is a Chicago-based rapper, librarian, and the founder of Rapbrary, an innovative platform dedicated to preserving hip-hop as a literary art form while advocating for literacy, banned books, and marginalized voices in literature. As both an artist and an educator, Roy seamlessly weaves storytelling, identity, and cultural preservation into his work, making him a powerful voice at the intersection of hip-hop and literature.

A 2025 recipient of the Arts & Public Life Residency at the University of Chicago, Roy has been featured in *Billboard*, *The New York Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, WBEZ, and NPR, among others. His album *Blackie: A Story by Roy Kinsey* was named one of the best albums of 2018 by the *Chicago Tribune* and continues to resonate as a defining piece of his catalog.

Hosted by the ILA Diversity Committee.

Program Schedule at a Glance

Monday, October 13

7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	RAILS Data Conference
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Tuesday, October 14

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Help Desk Open
9:00 – 10:30 A.M.	TBS Opening General Session featuring Dr. Terrell Strayhorn
10:45 – 11:45 A.M.	Program Session 1
NOON – 1:15 P.M.	Awards Luncheon
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 15

8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.	Help Desk Open
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Youth Services Forum Breakfast featuring Wendy Xu
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 Dilla
NOON – 5:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
NOON – 1:30 P.M.	Exhibits Opening Lunch
12:15 – 1:30 P.M.	IACRL Luncheon featuring April Anderson-Zorn
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 16

8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.	Help Desk Open
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.	Unconferences
8:30 – 9:00 A.M.	Trustee Breakfast
9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.	Exhibits Open
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 featuring Roy Kinsey
3:00 – 4:00 P.M.	Program Session 10

Conference Highlights

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

Awards Ceremony & Luncheon

Tuesday, October 14, 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 responsible for your own lunch on Tuesday.**



The Awards Ceremony & Luncheon is made possible by the generous support of LIRA.



DiversiTEA Closing Session

Thursday, October 16, 1:45 – 2:45 P.M.

The DiversiTEA Closing Session, hosted by the ILA Diversity Committee, will be on the big stage and open to all conference attendees. This Annual Conference event showcases experts within and outside the library sector who share their insights, expertise, and exemplary approaches to foster a more diverse and inclusive world.

This year ILA welcomes Roy Kinsey, a Chicago-based rapper, librarian, and the founder of Rapbrary and his keynote: “From Banned to Boundless: Literacy, Hip-Hop, and the Power of Knowing Thyself.”

IACRL Luncheon

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

Join your academic library colleagues for a luncheon with April Anderson-Zorn. April K. Anderson-Zorn is an associate professor and University Archivist at Illinois State University. She holds advanced degrees in history and library science, along with certifications in digital and professional archiving. Active in professional organizations like SAA and MAC, her work advocates for mental health awareness in the field and focuses on women’s history and innovative outreach for hard-to-access archives. See “Featured Speakers” for more information about April.

Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event.

ILA Membership Meeting & President’s Program

Wednesday, October 15, 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.

Immediately following the ILA Membership Meeting, Carolyn Ciesla will welcome Dilla, Chicago’s historian as the 2025 President’s Program. Winner of numerous accolades and awards, Dilla started by giving walking tours of Chicago’s Black neighborhoods, and has now gained widespread recognition for his videos celebrating Chicago’s unique history, and is considered one of the city’s premiere historians. See “Featured Speakers” for more information about Dilla.

Libraries Count: RAILS Data Conference

Monday, October 13, 7:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Join us for the first ever Libraries Count: RAILS Data Conference. We’re planning a full day of hands-on data workshops that cover analysis, visualization, storytelling, and more—all tailored specifically for libraries. There will also be time to network and connect! Library workers of all positions, types, and levels are invited to register.

Registration is required.

Trustee Day

Thursday, October 16, 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.

Youth Services Forum Breakfast

Wednesday, October 15, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Brooklyn-based illustrator and comics artist, Wendy Xu, will be the keynote speaker at the ILA Youth Services Forum Breakfast on October 15. She is the creator of *Infinity Particle*, *Tidesong*, and co-creator of *Mooncakes*, a young adult fantasy graphic novel. Her work has been featured on *The Today Show*, and Book Riot. Xu is a 2026 iREAD featured artist for the theme “Plant A Seed, Read.” See “Featured Speakers” for more information about Wendy. **Pre-registration is required for this ticketed event.**

Conference Information

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 10. 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. Please review the menu before registering. We do our best to choose a menu that provides options for attendees with common dietary restrictions but if you have specific dietary restrictions that cannot be accommodated by the menu, you're welcome to bring your own meal.

Visit the Exhibit Hall

Exhibits Hours:

Wednesday, October 15	NOON – 5:00 P.M.
Thursday, October 16	9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

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

Wednesday, October 15

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

Thursday, October 16

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

Exhibits are not open on Tuesday, October 14.

Exhibits-Only Pass

One-day, Exhibits-Only passes are available for \$100 Early Bird or \$125 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.**

Hotels

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

Room blocks have been reserved for Monday, October 13 to Thursday, October 16, 2025. Reservations must be made by September 22, 2025. Once all rooms in the blocks have been reserved, ILA is not able to add more so we recommend you reserve your rooms as early as possible.

Doubletree O'Hare - Rosemont

800-756-5505
5460 North River Road
Rosemont, IL 60018
Parking: \$31 Daily with in/out privileges
Rates: \$185–205

Embassy Suites by Hilton O'Hare -Rosemont

800-315-1061
5500 North River Road
Rosemont, IL 60018
Parking: \$36 Daily with in/out privileges
Rates: \$195–215 (Breakfast is included in the rate, along with the evening reception: two free drinks and light snacks)

Mobile App

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. The PheedLoop mobile app is made possible by the generous support of Today's Business Solutions (TBS).



Professional Headshot Studio

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

Statement of Appropriate Conduct

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) holds many events throughout the year to enable its members to receive continuing education, build professional networks, advocate for legislation, and discover new products and services for professional use. 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

The Convention Center offers complimentary WiFi through their Boingo WiFi network. Attendees can sign in for free, 45-minute sessions throughout the day. We thank our generous sponsor, Outsource IT Solutions Group, for their support in keeping the conference connected!



Get Involved

Support ILA – Donate to our Silent Auction!

The ILA Fundraising Committee is gearing up for an upcoming Silent Auction Fundraiser at the ILA Annual Conference 2025 in Rosemont, IL, and we need your help to make it a success!

Do you create handmade crafts, jewelry, or art? Do you want to show off your local community, or have a unique item to share? We're seeking donated items, services, or gift cards to include in our silent auction with a special interest in items that align with the conference theme: **You Belong Here**, or are bookish, literary, or library-themed. All proceeds go to ILA continuing education, events, awards, and grants that benefit the Illinois library community.

Some ideas for donation:

- Handmade art or crafts, jewelry, candles, bath works or skin care
- Gift baskets or themed bundles
- Local delicacies and beverages
- National gift cards
- Books, collectibles, or specialty items

To donate, visit: www.ila.org/conference — Support ILA at Annual Conference

Submit a Poster Session

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) Conference Program Committee invites applications for poster sessions at the 2025 ILA Annual Conference at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Illinois. Poster sessions will be held in the exhibit hall on Wednesday, October 15, and Thursday, October 16.

Submissions are solicited 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 25, 2025.

Conference Committee 2026

Interested in being a part of the team that brings all the magic of the annual conference together? Submit an Interest Form for the ILA Conference Program Committee, 2026.

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, or visit ila.org/conference.

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.



**Donate to the
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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 (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
ILA Member*	\$350	\$400
Non-Member	\$450	\$500
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed ILA Member**	\$215	\$265
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed Non-Member**	\$290	\$340

SINGLE DAY	Early Bird (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
ILA Member*	\$275	\$325
Non-Member	\$350	\$400
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed ILA Member**	\$190	\$240
Full-Time Student/Retired/ Unemployed Non-Member**	\$240	\$290

TRUSTEE	Early Bird (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
Trustee Day ILA Member*	\$300	\$350
Trustee Day Non-Member	\$375	\$425
Trustee Day + Full Conference ILA Member*	\$375	\$425
Trustee Day + Full Conference Non-Member	\$475	\$525

OTHER	Early Bird (7/21–9/15)	Standard (9/16–10/1)
Single Day Exhibit Only (Exhibits Lunch is included. 1200–1:30 P.M.)	\$100	\$125
Award Luncheon	\$75	\$85
Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast	\$50	\$60
IACRL Luncheon	\$60	\$70
RAILS Data Conference	\$100	\$110

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

July 21 – September 15: Early Bird registration

September 16 – October 1: Standard registration

All registrations close October 1, 2025.

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 October 1, 2025. This includes refunds for conference registration, meals, and special events. No telephone cancellations/refund requests can be accepted. No refunds after October 1, 2025. All cancellations are subject to a \$30 processing fee.



Illinois Library Association

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TO LEARN MORE: SCAN CODE OR EMAIL ILA AT ILA@ILA.ORG

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Want to see your name in print? Earn a publication credit?
Explore current issues in librarianship? Consider writing for the *ILA Reporter*!

Here's what we're looking for:

- Articles that explore an issue, rather than promoting a particular initiative or program, with examples from more than one library or type of library
- Writing that considers a "how to think about..." approach rather than "how to do..."
- Submissions from all geographic areas of the state
- Submissions that relate to ILA's strategic goal area of a culture of diversity and inclusion, both in the profession and the association



Illinois Library Association

View submission guidelines at www.ila.org/publications/ila-reporter
and consider sharing your ideas! Send submissions to ila@ila.org.

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