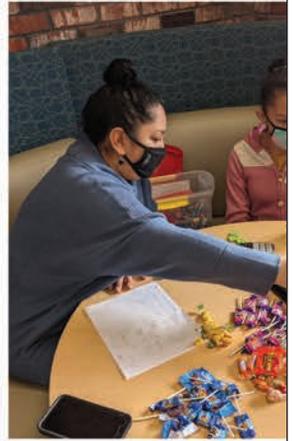


REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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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

Highwood Public Library is one of six recipients (three libraries and three museums) of the 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries. "It is an honor to be recognized as an IMLS winner," says Carmen Patlan, executive director of the Highwood Public Library. "We believe that education and community engagement is a first step towards equality, progress, and opportunity. Our programs and resources not only respond to the basic needs and interests of our families, but also empower them to pursue their dreams. Over the past year, as the pandemic hit all of us, we quickly pivoted to offer essential services and be a lifeline for the community. And, as families went into crisis mode, we continued to find ways to be with them as a trusted friend every step of the way." For more information, visit the IMLS website at www.imls.gov. Congratulations to the Highwood Public Library for serving its community so well, and for this prestigious recognition!

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 five 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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Understanding Your Patrons with Dementia

Before the pandemic, people living with dementia were frequently walking into Illinois libraries (and hopefully will again soon). In 2020, over 230,000 Illinoisans had Alzheimer's, or another dementia, and that number is projected to grow by 13% by 2050 (Alzheimer's Association, 2021). Most of them still live at home; less than 20% live in residential communities (Lepore, 2017). They come from all walks of life and are unique individuals with their own histories, life experiences, and interests. Despite their diagnosis, they want to retain their identity, dignity, and independence and continue to be treated with respect as valued members of their community. Social isolation and loneliness are nothing new for those living with dementia. There has been, and still is, a strong stigma surrounding this disease caused by fear and lack of information that keeps people living with dementia isolated.

This article is based on the responses of 12 Illinois libraries to a recent survey regarding services and programs for what is an often-underserved patron group. Their thoughtful responses explore topics such as why they are providing services/programs, what value libraries can add to the quality of life for these patrons, the benefits of staff dementia awareness training, and utilizing new methods to meet the needs of these patrons. Links to resources mentioned can be found in the sidebar.

WHAT IS THE LIBRARY'S ROLE?

In recent years, our society has begun to take steps to become more "dementia friendly." For example, Dementia Friendly America is a nationwide network of communities that are committed to "foster the ability of people living with dementia to remain in community and engage and thrive in day-to-day living" (Dementia Friendly America, 2021). Seventeen Illinois communities have achieved this designation to date. The Evanston Public Library, the Gail Borden Public Library District, and the Orland Park Public Library are heavily involved in their communities' Dementia Friendly initiatives. Several others, such as the Deerfield Public Library, are participating in their communities' planning efforts to achieve a dementia friendly designation.

Most libraries have inclusive language in their mission statements indicating a desire to serve everyone living in their communities. As Gayle Florian, Antioch Public Library, says, "We can create a warm, welcoming community where [people with dementia] feel respected and comfortable." Glenna Godinsky, Gail Borden Public Library District, says that, with library programming, "the stigma of dementia is reduced; a safe, understanding space is created; and social isolation is reduced." Christy Wagner reports that the Ela Area Public Library has had a long-standing commitment to serving these patrons and, as a result, their "quality of life is increased through engagement and social stimulation." Brooke Hansen, Effingham Public Library, states, "We believe that everyone benefits from literature. . . . Providing services/programs for those living with dementia is clearly a responsibility of a library."

“Dementia Friendly America is a nationwide network of communities that are committed to ‘foster the ability of people living with dementia to remain in community and engage and thrive in day-to-day living’.”



The author's late husband, Steve, four years after diagnosis with a young-onset dementia along with materials demonstrating his personal interests
Photo credit: Mary Beth Riedner



Kit for Wheaton Public Library's Memory Cafe: Art Museum
Photo credit: Bari Ericson

In addition to providing a welcoming space, libraries are a treasure trove of books, magazines, CDs, and DVDs that can be effectively used to engage people living with dementia to stimulate memories and conversation. Nina Kenney and Joy Johnson, Lake Villa District Library, point out that, “By providing library materials and programs to those living with dementia (especially those who still live independently), we’re providing opportunities to exercise their minds and expand their world.” Brooke Hansen, Effingham Public Library, states it succinctly by saying “Literacy—whether it is being read to or simply enjoying the task of turning pages to look at pictures—is beneficial to those living with dementia. Even in the late stages of dementia, books, pictures and stories can still be enjoyed and the personal interaction that sharing those resource makes an impact on people’s lives.”

Libraries are increasingly making a formal commitment to serve those living with dementia. Sarah Kleiva reports that the Orland Park Public Library incorporated specific objectives and action steps to serve their patrons with dementia and their caregivers into their current strategic plan. Bari Ericson, Wheaton Public Library, says that “Reaching out to this community in a larger way was a goal in 2019-2020. We were just starting to make connections and get programs running when the pandemic hit.” Recognizing the need to take further steps, Jonathan Gaskill, Waukegan Public Library (WPL), frankly admits, “Our strategic plan has been a guiding document for WPL, though conspicuously absent from said plan is working with older patrons and those experiencing dementia.”

Perhaps a request from Patricia Naisbitt, Woodridge Public Library, for “shared library programming...for an improved use of time and resources” might serve as a call to further action. Collaboration among librarians benefits everyone. The American Library Association (ALA) has a community of interest called Library Services for Dementia/Alzheimer’s (LSDA; formerly IGARD) to facilitate national discussion and networking for librarians serving this population. The Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) has also established a “Serving Patrons with Dementia Group” for networking among Illinois librarians.

STAFF TRAINING

An effective way for a library to become “dementia friendly” is to have all staff members participate in dementia awareness training. While professional development for management and department heads is important, training for front-line staff, who interact most frequently with those living with dementia, is also essential.

In 2019, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) funded a grant called “Dementia Awareness for Public Libraries.” Four of the responding libraries participated in the grant through in-person all-staff training conducted by gerontologist Christine Damon. The NNLM training provided detailed information about dementia and those living with it, as well as communication techniques for successful interactions. Jonathan Gaskill, Waukegan Public Library, indicates that “Training was effective, and helped spark interest in helping the whole patron, empathy for our patrons, and made for plenty of conversations around ‘how does this apply to us?’” According to Nina Kenney and Joy Johnson, Lake Villa District Library, the training was “eye-opening for staff and alerted them as to how those living with dementia experience the world.” Two webinars were also created as a part of the grant and are available for free online.

There are many reliable sources for information about dementia on the Web such as the Alzheimer’s Association and medical research centers like Northwestern Medicine’s Mesulam Center for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources and the National Institutes of Health recently unveiled a comprehensive new government website called Alzheimers.gov. An important resource for librarians is the still pertinent “Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dementia” published by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in 2007.

Other organizations offer dementia awareness training. Judy Hoffman, Deerfield Public Library, reports individuals attending live online training provided by the Dementia Friendly Deerfield initiative. Training may also be provided by the federally funded Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), such as AgeGuide for Northeastern Illinois. There are 13 AAAs located across Illinois. The Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness organization provided training for the Effingham Public Library. Dementia Friends, a subset of Dementia Friendly Illinois, also offers online dementia awareness training to groups via Zoom.

INNOVATIVE MATERIALS & SERVICES

In addition to traditional home delivery, which has been very effective during pandemic times, libraries have begun developing kits designed for those living with dementia. As Glenna Godinsky, Gail Borden Public Library District, points out, “Most people with dementia are able to read through the later stages.” Paula Shapiro and Bridget Petrites, Evanston Public Library, describe their kits as containing “books, DVDs and CDs that are appropriate for those on the memory loss spectrum. They include puzzles, games and other mind and memory activities.” Nina Kenney and Joy Johnson, Lake Villa District Library, say that they are “developing ‘memory kits’ that will include activities...to reinforce skills, stimulate memory and serve as conversation starters.” The Forget Me Not Resource Center at the Effingham Public Library provides reminiscence toolkits created by Effingham Area Alzheimer’s Awareness.

Over the years, libraries report bringing wonderful outreach services to those living in local residential memory care facilities and nursing homes. Recently, however, some have begun to offer in-library programming for the 81% of dementia patrons still living at home. One such program is the drop-in Adult Coloring Night hosted by the Woodridge Public Library.

Four responding libraries have also begun hosting, or participating in, Memory Cafes for people living with dementia and their care partners, often offered in conjunction with their local dementia friendly community. The Wheaton Public Library was only able to offer one in-person memory café before the pandemic hit, but Ericson reports that in March 2021 twelve seniors attended the library’s first virtual memory café with an art museum theme. The Gail Borden Public Library District participates in two monthly memory cafes, one in English and one in Spanish. The Ela Area Public Library launched their first monthly memory café in May 2019 in conjunction with their local Council on Aging. Christy Wagner, Ela Area Public Library, says, “The café uses books, poetry, music and visual images...to stimulate memory and conversation.” Responding to the pandemic, Paula Shapiro and Bridget Petrites indicate that the Evanston Public Library hosts a weekly virtual Memory Café via Zoom using activities such as “a sing along, gentle movement with music, art and show & tell.”

Some libraries utilize the Tales & Travel program that uses oral reading and browsing through non-fiction books to stimulate memories and conversation. The program has pivoted to an online version called Tales & Travel Adventures with twelve YouTube “trips” freely available for use by anyone via a Creative Commons license.

LESSONS LEARNED

Libraries of all sizes and locations are taking on the challenge of serving this population head-on. Patricia Smith, Rowe Public Library, shares that their small rural library is sensitive to the needs of their community members and are preparing their staff for expanded services through watching dementia awareness training webinars. Glenna Godinsky, Gail Borden Public Library District, says, “Those living with dementia can enjoy being in the moment as well as anyone, and they enjoy a good laugh, a smile and a heartwarming thought.” Brooke Hansen, Effingham Public Library, reports, “Those with dementia are still able to enjoy things we may assume they can’t. This is why it is so important to have patience, pay attention and listen to what they are telling you.” Bari Ericson, Wheaton Public Library, says that she learned “patience, empathy and compassion.” She goes on to say, “These programs have been very fun to plan.” Speaking of those living with dementia, Jonathan Gaskill, Waukegan Public Library, says, “They are patrons too, and worthy of our service as any other member of our community.... It is an eye-opener which broadens our horizons to the possibilities.”

The possibilities for serving those living with dementia are indeed many. More libraries in Illinois beyond the twelve that responded to the survey already offer dementia programs and services and hopefully more will do so in the future. Many people living with dementia have been using libraries all their lives and are thrilled when the library continues to welcome them. Libraries can make a positive difference in their lives by ensuring that this deserving population is not forgotten. **ILA**

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Lepore, M., Ferrell, A., Wiener, J. M. (2017). Living arrangements of people with Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementias: Implications for services and supports. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257966/LivingArran.pdf>

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Resources

- Alzheimer's Association, "What is Dementia?"
<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia>
- Alzheimer's.gov
<https://www.alzheimers.gov/>
- Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) for Illinois
<https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/forprofessionals/Pages/AreaAgenciesOnAging.aspx>
– Age Guide Northeastern Illinois: <https://ageguide.org/>
- Dementia Friendly America
<https://www.dfamerica.org/>
- Dementia Friendly Illinois
<https://ilbrainhealth.org/get-involved/dementia-friendly-illinois/>
– Dementia Friends: <https://ilbrainhealth.org/get-involved/dementia-friends-illinois/become-a-dementia-friend/>
(contact Susan Frick at susan_frick@rush.edu to schedule a Zoom training session)
- Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness
<https://www.effinghamalz.org/>
– Forget Me Not Resource Center -
<https://www.effinghamlibrary.org/forgetmenot/>
- International Federation of Library Associations, Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dementia
<https://archive.ifa.org/VII/s9/nd1/Profrep104.pdf>
- Library Services for Dementia/Alzheimer's Interest Group (formerly IGARD), ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services
<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/diversity/interest-groups>
- National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) "Dementia Awareness for Public Libraries" grant
<https://nmlm.gov/class/dementia-awareness-public-libraries/24204>
Free training webinars:
 - "Kernel of Knowledge" from the NNLM:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVNjCnNJ_xc
 - "All of Us Dementia Awareness for Public Libraries," to introduce NNLM resources: <https://www.railslibraries.info/events/181734>
- Northwestern Medicine's Mesulam Center for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease
<https://www.brain.northwestern.edu/>
- RAILS Serving Patrons with Dementia Group
<https://www.railslibraries.info/community/groups/-serving-patrons-dementia-group>
- Tales & Travel Adventures
<http://talesandtravelmemories.com/memory-cafes/>



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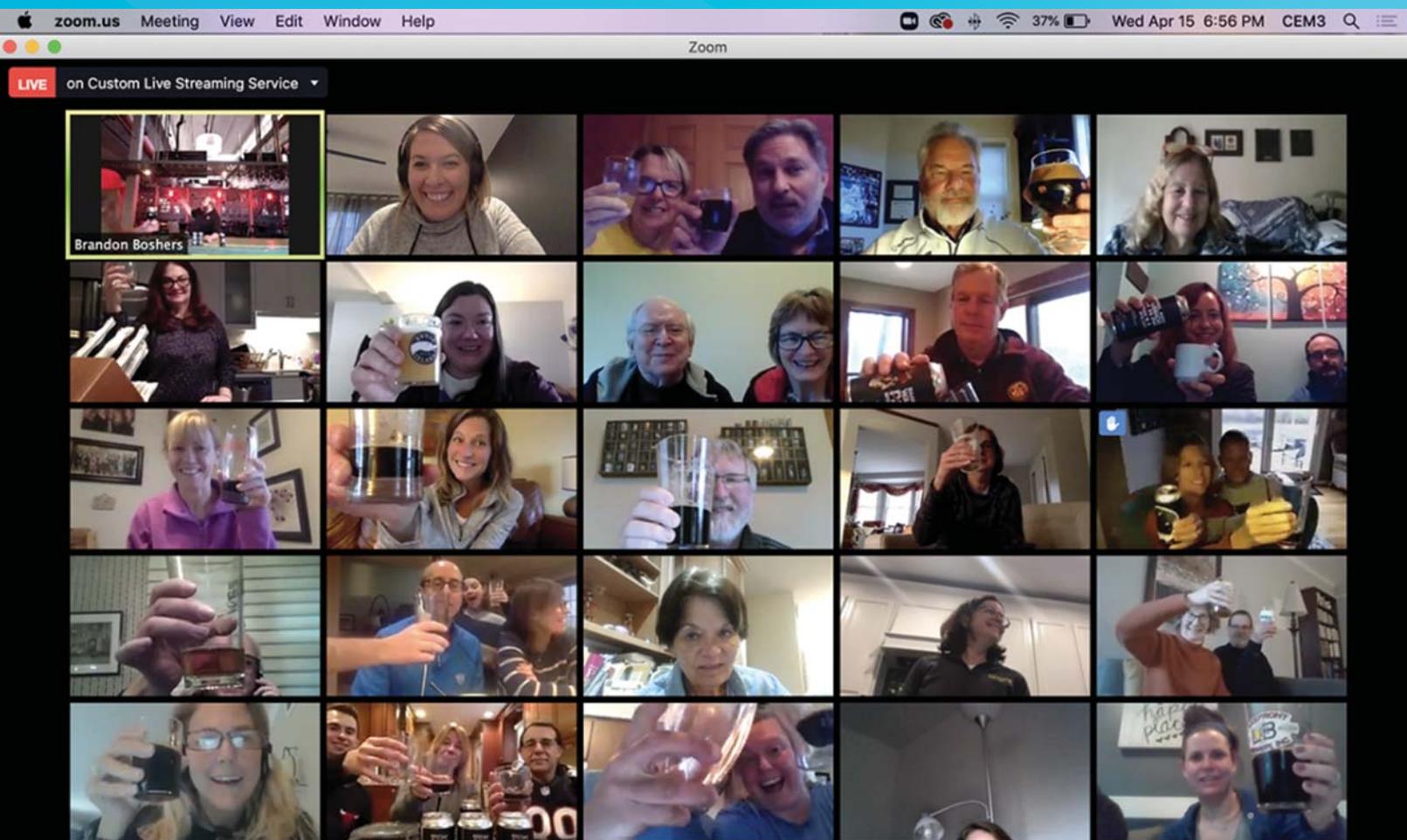
Adaptation, Innovation, Outreach: A Year of Libraries Coping With COVID-19

In March of last year, Governor Pritzker issued a disaster proclamation and the first shelter in place order for the state of Illinois. Schools closed, large gatherings were prohibited, and the boundaries of what constituted “essential” needed to be navigated. Libraries across the state were faced with hard decisions about serving their communities, following the law, and safeguarding the welfare of their staff. Over the next few months, additional orders were issued, extended, and modified. In May, the “Restore Illinois” re-opening plan was unveiled. This tied certain metrics to the types of services and gatherings that were permitted within Illinois. However, many libraries re-opened their doors only to have to shut again, while running curbside pickup and virtual programming. The uncertainty, constant updates to shifting requirements, and lack of needed support in many areas all contributed to create an incredibly messy situation for librarians and library networks to navigate. But Illinois libraries and librarians met this challenge with determination to support their patrons and their fellow libraries, quick pivots to online versions of usual programming, and clever innovations to take best advantage of a socially distanced and mostly virtual environment.

In addition to the great work by individual libraries, library associations and other organizations also moved to keep members informed and safe. University of Illinois Springfield’s Interim Chancellor instituted weekly briefings (called United in Safety, so that the acronym is also UIS) with speakers on current topics. The Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)’s COVID-19 information page includes news from other organizations, national and international updates, various

resources, and the results of several member surveys they distributed. The results of these surveys show what essential actions libraries provide, what virtual programming is being offered, and whether responding libraries are closed, available for curbside pickup, or open for certain hours. Along with similar updates from the state government and stories from individual libraries, the ILA also created the Bigger than a Building campaign to aid libraries in sharing information with their communities. The Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), in addition to a resource page with numerous examples of reopening plans and COVID-19 response pages, kept its members aware of their colleagues’ hours and availability through a survey tool initially administered in May and finally updated in December.

The survey data collected highlight how much services and availability could differ from one area to another. In IHLS’ December 2020 survey, just over half of respondents said they had returned to regular hours. However, nearly 20% were still completely closed and more than half of the remainder were limiting their number of patrons to 25% of capacity, 10 people at a time, or fewer. And whether due to technology concerns, staff capacity, hours of access, or a combination of factors a third of respondents said their library had no programming scheduled. For RAILS’ reopening survey, nearly 10% of those who have updated their responses for 2021 are still entirely closed to patrons entering their building while 84% of this year’s updates are offering virtual programming. All these numbers point to a situation where needed to find new ways to provide information and other, often vital, services.



Vernon Area Public Library's Socially Distanced Beer Tasting

As a way to advertise offerings, allow librarians to network for ideas, and showcase the creativity on display, some organizations collected more specific examples of how libraries continued engaging with their patrons and offering accessible programs. RAILS dedicates a page to the virtual offerings of its members, with many providing social media posts or video of the events in questions (<https://www.railibraries.info/responses/virtual-program>). Whether it is the LEGO movie scene challenges the Grayslake High School library posed for their staff and students or the multiple locations that hosted virtual trivia nights, author events, and storytimes the list showcases happenings of interest to all audiences.

A notable example of a library adapting their existing events to a virtual space is the College of DuPage's African-American Read-In. Unable to host it in the library as usual, the event was changed to a YouTube event. Prior to streaming, students, faculty, and staff were encouraged to film themselves reading a relevant selection. Christine Kickels, a librarian at College of DuPage, said the response was strong. Then, a time was chosen to release the video, creating the sense of an event, even with no physical space to gather in. And as is frequently the case with material made online, the playlist of poems recorded is still available and has hundreds of views.

At the Barrington Area Library, Community Engagement Librarian Sam Adams-Lanham mentioned that Zoom programming allowed “snowbird” patrons to continue attending events from as far away as Arizona and Florida. And events could come together quickly when participants did not need to be in the same space. The day after a Black Lives Matter rally arranged by local students, the library hosted a conversation titled *After the Rally* that shared resources and experiences for the community. Additionally, they discovered, as did many other libraries, that activities often aimed at children and young adults could appeal to an adult audience as well. Once limited service was available, take and make kits were offered by the adult services department as well as youth services. They also created Book Bundles as a way of performing distanced readers advisory. Interested patrons could fill out a form and a librarian would put together a selection of titles to pick up.

In addition to transitioning traditional library services and programs to a virtual environment, many libraries also took this opportunity to try out new partnerships or reach their communities in different ways. Diana Brawley Sussman, director of Carbondale Public Library, mentioned that they were able to partner with the League of Women Voters and the NAACP to provide virtual candidate forums for local elections as well as online Lawyer in the Library consultations. With recordings available on their YouTube channel, many more people could find this useful information than may have otherwise.

And at the Vernon Area Public Library in Lincolnshire, one of outreach librarian Ashley Johnson’s favorite events was their Socially Distanced Beer Tasting. A local brewery created themed four-packs for pickup and a local brewmaster led a Zoom call where folks met up and enjoyed their beverages. Ashley shared details of how to set up this kind of virtual event involving a physical component over at the Programming Librarian blog. On a more serious note, the Vernon Area Public Library also hosted a multi-day mini-conference with local businesses and domestic violence awareness programming with a local legal aid organization. The latter included sessions disguised as cooking demonstrations where at-risk individuals could raise questions in the chat.

Besides the distanced programming and transitioned services, libraries kept their communities connected with all the tools at their disposal. At the University of Illinois Springfield’s Brookens Library, head of user services Sarah Sagmoen created a map to help students find nice locations to study in good weather. Kim Tipton, reference librarian at McHenry County College, created a rotating guide to instruct students by focusing on different programs each month as well as helping create a relaxation guide to encourage students to remember self-care. For much needed technical assistance, the College of DuPage library was able to use CARES Act funding to acquire and distribute laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to students. At Vernon Area, traditionally mailed postcards allowed the library to spotlight one major happening at a time and grab interest from patrons.

Of course, there are difficulties with any large change. But some policies developed out of need can prove to be beneficial going forward. Hard conversations about keeping the library relevant were common in areas with low technology use or specialized populations, such as students. Instituting tutorials to help patrons navigate Zoom became necessary. Beefing up the library’s social media presence was even more integral to reaching patrons than ever before. Sam Adams-Lanham mentioned how much she missed being able to just quickly run an idea by a nearby co-worker. UIS librarian and associate professor Pamela Salela noted the Zoom fatigue everyone felt a few months in. However, there are still those bright spots. Adams-Lanham also shared that focusing on completing projects was easier at home. Ashley Johnson said Vernon Area went fine free, a policy that would have come in time but was hastened by the pandemic’s onset. And for many, shorter shifts, work from home options, and virtual programming are here to stay.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt for more than a year. The changes that have come in its wake will likely affect us all for years to come even with vaccines released. But Illinois’ libraries and librarians have shown in myriad ways that the library is more than a building, that the community can count on their libraries to do absolutely everything in their power to meet their needs, and that necessity truly is the mother of invention. Hopefully, the future will be able to incorporate the best ideas that came out of this difficult time into a safer landscape. 

“Illinois’ libraries and librarians have shown in myriad ways that the library is more than a building”



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My Turn: How Do You Think About Library Advocacy?

I've been asking myself this question a lot lately, and I challenge you to do the same. How do you think about library advocacy? Perhaps we can agree that traditionally this is defined by actively seeking to increase public funds to ensure that libraries have the resources needed to be successful and up to date. We may also refer to library advocacy as the effort to speak or communicate in favor of libraries to garner public support. As library professionals we consider ourselves library advocates because we understand the value and importance of library service and we communicate that value and importance in conversations to the community whenever we can. But as I consider the question How do I think about library advocacy? I think about the expansive variety of incredible ways this has actively demonstrated itself to me during my service to school and public libraries for almost 20 years.

I think about parent volunteers in small parochial schools, devoting an hour or two of their time every week to assist children in grades PreK-8 to select books and check out materials during their class visit to the school library. I think about all of the daily library functions performed exclusively by parent volunteers, including cataloging, displays, book fairs, and fundraising for author visits, as was the case when I served as a volunteer library assistant at St. Hubert School in Hoffman Estates. This was grassroots library advocacy at its best.

I think about new library assistants, just starting their coursework in library school and simultaneously working part time at a public library to gain hands-on experience. I regard their participation in story time and outreach activities, side-by-side with their degreed colleagues, to observe, learn and be mentored by their experience, as was the case when I served as a library assistant for young people's services at the Barrington Area Library. The heart of library advocacy is pedagogy.

I think about school services librarians in public libraries connecting with schools, students and teachers in their district to form lasting community partnerships. I am wonderstruck by the hours of preparation devoted to selecting, reading, creating, and presenting exhilarating book talk presentations and summer reading promotions to assemblies of kids in all grade levels to engage kids and invite them back to the public library, as was the case when I served as a school services liaison at the Vernon Area Public Library and Glenview Public Library. Fostering youth excitement for reading is synonymous with library advocacy.

“As library professionals we consider ourselves library advocates because we understand the value and importance of library service and we communicate that value and importance in conversations to the community whenever we can.”



I think about libraries that have built strong collaborative relationships with Friends of the Library, community organizations, neighboring villages, rotary, women's clubs and local businesses that have elevated them to the next level of service excellence as I learned was the case when I worked for the Wauconda Area Library. For example, the library's "Smartest Card" promotional campaign in conjunction with library card sign-up month collaboration with local businesses served as a model for other libraries and communities. It was gratifying to serve for a library that had been named Library of the Year by the North Suburban Library System (previously a consortium of 650 academic, public, school, and special libraries in north suburban Cook, Kane, Lake, and McHenry Counties at the time) and had earned the moniker "the little library that DOES!" Their action of collaborating to produce or create something better—what better way to draw public support for libraries?

I think about the determination and resourcefulness demonstrated by libraries that strive to open new branch libraries in unique and creative ways in order to expand library services to their community. I am particularly in awe when this occurs without increasing taxes, as was the case when I was honored to serve as branch manager of the Randall Oaks Library and participated in the opening of the West Side Branch for the Fox River Valley Public Library District. The library leased 5,000 square feet of space from a recreation center belonging to the Dundee Township Park District and purchased 20,000 new items, including books, DVDs, and video games for the expansion. Additionally, the branch offered four computers with Internet access, three computers for children and three self-checkout machines. The community of 70,000 residents had been waiting a long time to have expanded services and more than 1,700 visitors attended the grand opening to eagerly check out the new branch. The practice of branching out and providing equal access to opportunities and resources who might otherwise be excluded, this is library advocacy.

I think about library programmers that creatively aim to reach library users outside the parameters of print and electronic materials. Whose purpose it is to promote literature, entertain, educate, socialize, and engage the participants in loving the library beyond the books. They masterfully find ways to tap into the interests of the community and find out what hobbies, authors, music, or trends might be surfacing to offer programming that will show they care what's important to their patrons, as was the case when I had the privilege to serve as a programming librarian at the Bloomingdale Public Library for a community of residents of which 75% have library cards. What better way to show library advocacy than to plan, market and present creative programs that build interest and enthusiasm for wanting to know or learn about something more interactively, while also drawing a regular flow of library users through your doors?

I think about library trustees, administration, managers, and staff members who work tirelessly to honor tax-paying residents who supported a referendum to create a new and beautiful state of the art library. Whose meticulous preparation for a transition to the new building was unexpectedly disrupted by a worldwide epidemic just two weeks ahead of moving day, as was the case for me and my colleagues at the Geneva Public Library. We were undeterred in our determination to quickly and seamlessly pivot to expand access to digital resources, launch virtual programs, and open drive-up delivery of library materials. We continue to evolve and reimagine library services throughout the ongoing changes to the Governor's COVID Restore Illinois Mitigation plan. Despite on and off closure requirements, and health uncertainties, we continue to serve the community in innovative ways. Rapidly adapting services to adjust to new conditions underscores library advocacy in a profound way.

How do you think about library advocacy? I challenge all of us to look around and notice all the ways that library advocacy presents itself. But more importantly, we should ask ourselves how can we make a difference in library advocacy? Are we asking questions? Are we walking the walk? Are you being assertive and staying focused on advocacy purpose? For example, are we joining library associations and participating in library committees (ILA, ALA, PLA) to get involved in library initiatives? Are we expanding professional development opportunities for the library community? Are we supporting careers in librarianship? We say we support libraries, but in many cases, we are employing less and less full-time librarians, devaluing the MLIS graduate degree by not requiring this level of education in a majority of the open library positions, and reducing healthcare benefits to full timers who are seeking to sustain a livelihood in the profession. If we want to advocate for libraries, we need to build an employment framework that grows and supports library professionals as well. How do you think about library advocacy? 

"I challenge all of us to look around and notice all the ways that library advocacy presents itself."

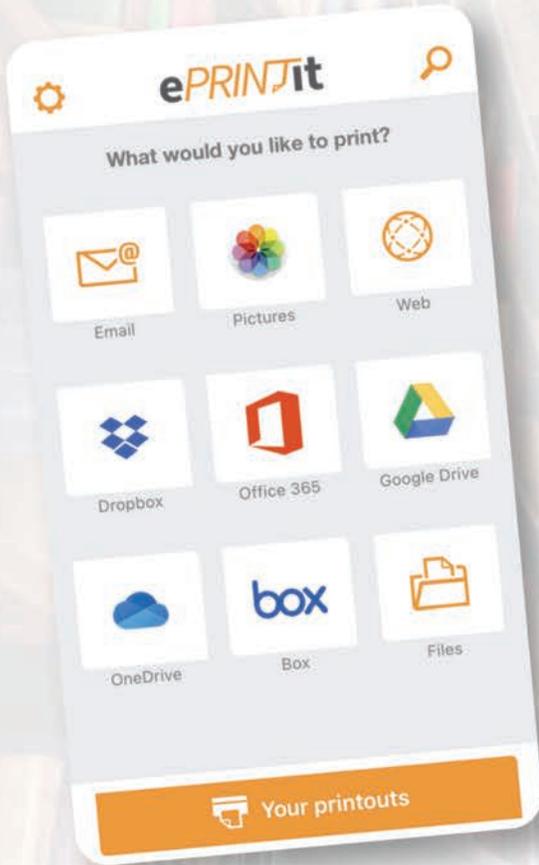


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2021 ILA Executive Board Election Results



PRESIDENT-ELECT:

Heather Jagman – Elected

DePaul University

Michelle Nielsen Ott

Methodist College

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(three-year term beginning July 1, 2021–June 30, 2023)

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



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

Kara Thorstenson – Elected

Chicago Public Schools

Mary Jo Matousek
Aptakisic-Tripp School District,
retired



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

Julie Milavec – Elected

Downers Grove Public Library

Andrea Telli
Chicago Public Library, retired



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

Michelle Oh – Elected

Northeastern Illinois University

Qiana Johnson
Northwestern University



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE:

Jordan Neal – Elected

Champaign Public Library

Randi Sutter
Normal Public Library



ALA COUNCILOR:

Paul Mills – Elected

Fountaindale Public Library

Aaron Skog
SWAN Libraries

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.

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Greenville Public Library, Greenville
Mt. Hope-Funks Grove Public Library, McLean
Tilden Public Library, Tilden

TRUSTEE MEMBERS

Debby Berry, Lewistown Carnegie Public Library District
Jane Chornig, Elmhurst Public Library
Taylor Holop, Elmhurst Public Library
Sandhya Patel, Prospect Heights Public Library District
Andrew Porth, Morris Area Public Library District
Mark Torczek, Prairie Trails Public Library District
Alex Vancina, New Lenox Public Library District
Noreen Winningham, Skokie Public Library

STUDENT MEMBERS

Kou Chery, Champaign
Emma Conway, DeKalb
Amber Filbeck, Jonesboro
Nichole Folkman, Hartsburg
Brittany Janes, Bloomington
Felicia Kohlberg, Moro
Emily Lemanski, Aviston
Gabriel Mansfield, Champaign
Rebekah McFarland, Chicago
Cynthia Meadows, Posen
Lauren Pirritano, Naperville
Dana Queen, Champaign
Hayley Rightnowar, Chicago
Maureen Robst, Westchester
Lisa Rossi, Algonquin
Sherry Waldrep, Mahomet
Jennifer Wegmann-Gabb, Woodstock
Lisa Wiczorek, Chicago
Jeanne Zhang, Chicago

PERSONAL MEMBERS

Katie Allan, Orland Park Public Library
Jacob Baker, Six Mile Regional Library District
Lisa Bendoff, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District
Jill Brasseur, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District
Jaimie Buckman, Morton Public Library District
Elena Carrillo, University of Illinois Chicago
Michelle Frigo, Lake Forest Library
Amanda Garrity, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District
Sarah Holmes, Northern Illinois University
Rudy Host, SWAN
Han Huie, Eisenhower Public Library District
Jeff Lassahn, Glenview Public Library
Beth McGowan, Northern Illinois University
Freedom Nguyen, Prospect Heights Public Library District
William Pixley, C.E. Brehm Memorial Public Library District
Lauren Rosenthal, Elmhurst Area Public Library District
Megan Sanks, Deerfield Public Library
Liz Scheiner, Arlington Heights Memorial Library
Lynne Schick, Geneva Public Library
Kara Thorstenson, Chicago Public Schools
Carol Williams, Oak Lawn Public Library
Victoria Zahrobsky, Evanston

CORRECTION: In the March 2021 issue of the *ILA Reporter*, two new trustee members' names were transposed. We apologize for the error and they are corrected here:

Michelle Mallari, Skokie Public Library
Christopher Pudelek, Addison Public Library

2021 Library Legislative Meet-ups

Like everything else this past year, our annual series of Library Legislative Meet-up events looked a little different with all events taking place online, and without the opportunity for conversation that convening over a meal has allowed in the past. What didn't change was the enthusiasm and support for libraries expressed by the elected officials and their staff members in attendance and ILA's articulation of our state and federal legislative priorities for the year, which focused on per capita grant funding for school and public libraries on the state level, and COVID-19 relief funding and the Build America's Libraries Act on the federal level.

South Suburban Library Legislative Meet-up, January 29, 2021

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2020 Attendees: 57 | Legislators: 6 out of 39 or 15% |
| 2019 Attendees: 60 | Legislators: 9 out of 38 or 24% |
| 2018 Attendees: 75 | Legislators: 10 out of 38 or 26% |
| 2017 Attendees: 82 | Legislators: 10 out of 38 or 26% |
| 2016 Attendees: 66 | Legislators: 11 out of 40 or 28% |
| 2015 Attendees: 48 | Legislators: 7 out of 40 or 18% |
| 2014 Attendees: 37 | Legislators: 4 out of 42 or 9% |

Southern Illinois Library Legislative Meet-up, February 5, 2021

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2021 Attendees: 59 | Legislators: 6 out of 10 or 60% |
| 2020 Attendees: 30 | Legislators: 7 out of 10 or 70% |
| 2019 Attendees: 29 | Legislators: 6 out of 10 or 60% |
| 2018 Attendees: 35 | Legislators: 5 out of 10 or 50% |
| 2017 Attendees: 34 | Legislators: 4 out of 8 or 50% |

North Suburban Library Legislative Meet-up, February 15, 2021

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2021 Attendees: 116 | Legislators: 19 out of 35 or 54% |
| 2020 Attendees: 137 | Legislators: 16 out of 41 or 39% |
| 2019 Attendees: 146 | Legislators: 19 out of 41 or 46% |
| 2018 Attendees: 131 | Legislators: 12 out of 41 or 29% |
| 2017 Attendees: 141 | Legislators: 14 out of 41 or 34% |
| 2016 Attendees: 138 | Legislators: 10 out of 41 or 24% |
| 2015 Attendees: 124 | Legislators: 17 out of 41 or 41% |
| 2014 Attendees: 156 | Legislators: 13 out of 47 or 27% |
| 2013 Attendees: 150 | Legislators: 17 out of 50 or 34% |
| 2012 Attendees: 145 | Legislators: 20 out of 50 or 40% |

This was the 31st North Suburban Library Legislative Meet-up.

West Suburban Library Legislative Meet-up, February 19, 2021

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2021 Attendees: 111 | Legislators: 12 out of 25 or 48% |
| 2020 Attendees: 113 | Legislators: 14 out of 26 or 54% |
| 2019 Attendees: 113 | Legislators: 12 out of 27 or 45% |
| 2018 Attendees: 66 | Legislators: 13 out of 25 or 52% |
| 2017 Attendees: 85 | Legislators: 10 out of 28 or 36% |
| 2016 Attendees: 105 | Legislators: 13 out of 29 or 45% |
| 2015 Attendees: 76 | Legislators: 17 out of 20 or 59% |
| 2014 Attendees: 85 | Legislators: 13 out of 29 or 45% |

Metro East Library Legislative Meet-up, February 22, 2021

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2021 Attendees: 51 | Legislators: 8 out of 15 or 53% |
| 2020 Attendees: 47 | Legislators: 8 out of 15 or 53% |
| 2019 Attendees: 59 | Legislators: 8 out of 15 or 53% |
| 2018 Attendees: 59 | Legislators: 6 out of 15 or 40% |
| 2017 Attendees: 63 | Legislators: 3 out of 17 or 18% |
| 2016 Attendees: 58 | Legislators: 5 out of 16 or 31% |
| 2015 Attendees: 59 | Legislators: 6 out of 16 or 38% |
| 2014 Attendees: 54 | Legislators: 5 out of 17 or 29% |

Central Illinois Library Legislative Meet-up, February 26, 2021

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2021 Attendees: 76 | Legislators: 9 out of 23 or 39% |
| 2020 Attendees: 39 | Legislators: 3 out of 20 or 15% |
| 2019 Attendees: 52 | Legislators: 11 out of 19 or 58% |
| 2018 Attendees: 45 | Legislators: 7 out of 19 or 37% |
| 2017 Attendees: 50 | Legislators: 3 out of 18 or 17% |
| 2016 Attendees: 51 | Legislators: 4 out of 22 or 18% |

Northwestern Illinois Library Legislative Meet-up, March 5, 2021

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2021 Attendees: 26 | Legislators: 6 out of 23 or 26% |
| 2020 Attendees: 31 | Legislators: 3 out of 19 or 16% |
| 2019 Attendees: 21 | Legislators: 7 out of 19 or 27% |
| 2018 Attendees: 27 | Legislators: 5 out of 19 or 25% |

2018–2020 represented Western Illinois.

Chicago Library Legislative Meet-up

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| 2020 Attendees: 51 | Legislators: 4 out of 29 or 14% |
| 2019 Attendees: 48 | Legislators: 3 out of 28 or 11% |
| 2018 Attendees: 38 | Legislators: 7 out of 27 or 26% |
| 2017 Attendees: 75 | Legislators: 4 (2 elected, 2 staff) out of 28 or 14% |

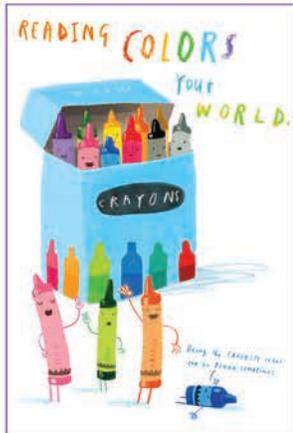
Chicago did not host an event in 2021.

iREAD® SUMMER READING 2021

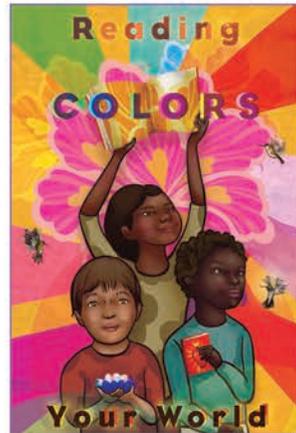
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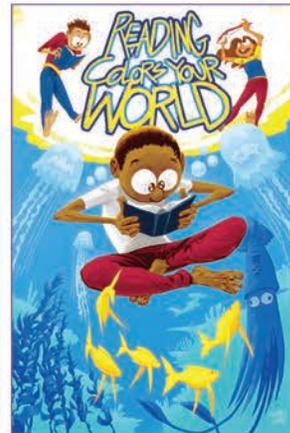
OLIVER JEFFERS



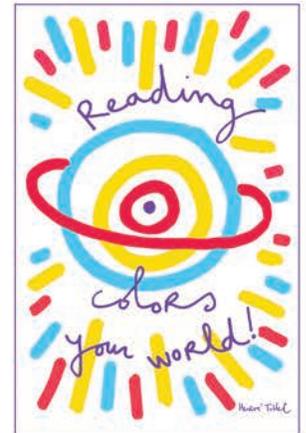
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HERVÉ TULLET



The 2021 theme is *Reading Colors Your World*, which lends itself to a wide range of interpretations and vibrant graphic presentation. The broad motif of “colors” provides a context for exploring humanity, nature, culture, and science, as well as developing programming that demonstrates how libraries and

reading can expand your world through kindness, growth, and community. Library patrons, young and old, will be encouraged to develop creativity, try new things, explore art, and find beauty in diversity. Illustrations and posters will tell the story: “Read a book and color your world!”

Visit the iREAD website to shop in the online store, view the 2021 summer reading PSA, and learn how to get involved:

ireadprogram.org

Two New Illinois Library Luminaries

The ILA Executive Board approved the induction of two new Illinois Library Luminaries on May 20, 2021: Patricia Jarog, nominated by Scott Pointon and James R. Johnston, nominated by Megan Millen.



PATRICIA JAROG

Long before Patricia Jarog pursued a career in public libraries, she found herself volunteering on a library referendum committee and directing several “Murder at the Library” fundraisers. Those early experiences at the Villa Park Public Library played a huge role in her next act: earning a MLIS from Dominican University and landing at the White Oak Library District (the Des Plaines Valley Public Library District in 2006). Her career coincided with that library’s massive expansion in services as well as the total revamp of its three facilities. Serving as adult services librarian, children’s services librarian, children’s services manager, and Lockport Branch manager, her inspirational leadership and innate ability to bring people together in compromise became the hallmarks of her career.

Patricia’s ability to connect with community organizations resulted in a plethora of partnerships including the library’s largest event, Comicopolis, a comic and fandom “con” that topped 2,000 attendees in 2019. It also drew the attention of the City of Lockport, resulting in significant funding from the city’s Summer Art Series and cementing a strong partnership between the library and the city. Her unique capacity for collaboration also made a long-lasting impact on how public-school students would receive library cards. She spearheaded the Student Success Card Initiative that removed barriers from the application process, resulting in the issuance of almost 20,000 cards in a two-year period.

About Illinois Luminaries

Illinois Library Luminaries honor those who have made a significant contribution to Illinois libraries and whose supporters make a contribution of at least \$2,000 to the Illinois Library Association Endowment on their behalf. The first Luminary was Peggy Sullivan, saluted by members of the association who benefited from her leadership and contributed \$11,975 to the ILA Endowment in 2008 through individual donations of \$50 in honor of her more than 50 years of service to the profession. For more information and to view bios of the nearly 70 Luminaries honored to date, please visit www.ila.org/support-ila/illinois-library-luminaries.



JAMES R. JOHNSTON

James R. (Jim) Johnston served as the Director of the Joliet Public Library for more than 33 years from 1976–2009.

Jim was a visionary leader who touched many lives and made a deep and lasting impact on the Joliet community. During his tenure, Joliet's historic downtown library was renovated and expanded, an innovative branch in a local mall opened, and the Black Road Branch built. Ahead of his time, Jim testified in front of the Illinois General Assembly arguing for financial assistance in bridging the digital divide in 1979.

Jim showed courageous leadership when the library was firebombed in 1989. He used the terrible tragedy as an opportunity to build back stronger and to revitalize services at the library, and shared his insights into handling a crisis with the ILA community at the ILA Annual Conference the following year. He spoke on disaster response and recovery to library and municipal organizations around the United States over the three years following the firebombing. Jim was a champion for library service in his community and throughout the state. A fierce advocate, he could be counted on to play the devil's advocate and stand firm for his convictions. He fought hard for the library and was never afraid to vigorously defend his position. What may be most remembered, however was what an excellent mentor he was to many in the profession. Known for creating an atmosphere where staff were allowed to explore and be creative, it was said of him that he gave you the room to fail and the support to try again. Through that support, countless individuals were able to succeed.

Jim was actively involved in many Joliet community organizations such as the Joliet Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Kiwanis Club of Joliet, Joliet/Will County Project Pride (now Project Acclaim), and United Way of Will County. His career included awards and honors, including Joliet/Will County Project Pride Community Service Award and induction into the Hall of Pride. He was a member of ILA's Public Library Forum and served on the public library standards committee to update *Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries*, an ILA publication.

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"Because of my association with LIRA, I am a more sophisticated professional and steward for the library and community. I've learned more than I had in almost 30 years working in libraries about safeguarding community assets as a direct result of my involvement with LIRA. Hopefully, additional Illinois libraries will come to understand LIRA is more than insurance; it's a community pulling for each other, contributing to a greater good, and ensuring all are stronger, safer, smarter, and better as a result."

– Tina Hubert, Six Mile Public Library

For additional information visit www.lirapool.com



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- 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

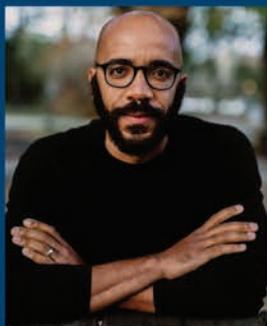
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and consider sharing your ideas! Send submissions to ila@ila.org.



Illinois Library Association **2021 Annual Conference** October 12–14, 2021

Mark your calendar and join us for the 2021 ILA Annual Conference — **Breaking Down Barriers: Building Up Communities**. The virtual conference will be held in the PheedLoop platform and all sessions will be recorded and available for viewing until January 2022.

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Tracie D. Hall
President's Program
Speaker



Twanna K. Hodge
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