

REFLECTER

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.



Photo credit: Dennis Pryber

ON THE COVER

Gene Luen Yang spoke to a packed, enthusiastic crowd as the 2018 ILA Annual Conference Keynote speaker on Tuesday, October 9. In his talk, titled “Reading Without Walls,” Yang discussed superheroes, his own development as a nerdy computer geek and cartoon fan into professional graphic novelist, and Superman’s experience as one of an immigrant. Yang was the 2016-17 National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature and a 2016 MacArthur Fellow. He began drawing comic books in the fifth grade, and in 1997 he received a Xeric Grant for his first comic, *Gordon Yamamoto and the King of the Geeks*. He has since written and drawn a number of titles, including *Duncan’s Kingdom*, *The Rosary Comic Book*, and *Prime Baby*. *American Born Chinese*, his first graphic novel from First Second, was a National Book Award finalist, as well as the winner of the Printz Award and an Eisner Award. He also won an Eisner for *The Eternal Smile*, a collaboration with Derek Kirk Kim. He is the author of the *Secret Coders* series (with artist Mike Holmes) and has written for the hit comics *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *Superman*. In addition to cartooning, he teaches creative writing through Hamline University’s MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults.

The Illinois Library Association is the voice for Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. It provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services in Illinois and for the library community in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. 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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See ILA calendar for submission deadlines for the *ILA Reporter*. Copy should be submitted by email to ila@ila.org. You are encouraged to include press-ready digital photos (300 p.p.i.) and graphics with your articles, which will be included on a space-available basis.

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“Non-Traditional” Library Services: Expanding the Library’s Offerings While Increasing Community Engagement

What do notarization, passports, and credit unions have in common? What about stamps, voter registration, and fishing and hunting licenses? They are all services that libraries offer. As surprising as this may sound to people who still view libraries as repositories of books and journals—and, starting more recently, as community spaces where groups can meet and patrons can explore new technologies—offering “non-traditional” services is a growing trend among libraries of all types, including in Illinois. Whether filling a gap in services that other community organizations normally provide, increasing the library’s visibility in the community and drawing people who might not otherwise use its services, or simply making the library a more “fun” place to visit, offering non-traditional services is the latest way in which many libraries are adapting to the demands of twenty-first-century librarianship.

WHY OFFER “NON-TRADITIONAL” SERVICES?

Why would libraries consider offering these services in the first place, however? Filling a gap in services that other community organizations provide is one reason. Since libraries are open beyond traditional business hours (especially in the evenings and on the weekends), they can provide government services, such as passport issuing, that are normally only available during the regular workday. Having services available locally is especially convenient for people in smaller communities who cannot easily travel to access a service elsewhere. In other instances, the library is stepping in to fill a need that other institutions used to fill, but no longer do. One example is notarization, as some banks and currency exchanges no longer provide the service.

Certain government services can also be a source of revenue. This is one reason the Helen Plum Library decided to offer passport services. Other services, such as selling stamps (which the Indian Prairie Public Library provides), are closer to breakeven, but they still have value because the services are highly popular with patrons. More important, if the library is the only location in the community that offers a service, this makes the library “unique” in people’s minds. The Gail Borden Public Library District was the first public library anywhere (to the best of anyone’s knowledge) to house a branch of a credit union, through KCT Credit Union.

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“The library is stepping in to fill a need that other institutions used to fill, but no longer do.”



COLLABORATING WITH OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

For some services, in-house organizing and planning are sufficient. For others, however, bringing in outside assistance is necessary. The Loyola University Chicago Libraries, for instance, partnered with the League of Women Voters to undertake voter-registration efforts during this year's primaries, and the Libraries are working with the University's Office of Civic Engagement as part of a campus-wide drive for the general election. In the case of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the library is working with the Champaign County Clerk's Office to promote voter registration. Similarly, the Fountaindale Public Library District has partnered with the Will County Clerk's Office to offer early-voting services. Another example of a library that has worked with outside groups to offer a service is the Niles-Maine District Library, which has collaborated with organizations such as CJE SeniorLife Resource Counseling and SCORE Chicago, a nonprofit that offers free or low-cost business education workshops, to offer senior resource counseling and small business services, respectively.

In offering a government service, in particular, additional outside training might prove necessary. For example, to provide hunting and fishing licenses, staff at the Coal City Public Library District and the Six Mile Regional Library District received training from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The US Department of State provides training for passport issuing. For many public libraries that are part of municipal government, contacts in other city departments can help. Even if a service initially has just internal training, it might prove beneficial to include outside experts for a refresher course, or to train additional staff. Similarly, a library can seek training and advice from a professional regional or statewide organization; this is what a staff member at the Marseilles Public Library did for notarization, taking a class offered through the Reaching Across Illinois Library System.

PROMOTING THE SERVICES

A library has determined what "non-traditional" services it wants to offer and how to deliver them, but what about promoting the services? Word-of-mouth can prove effective, particularly in a small community. Posting flyers around the library and community, and signs within the building, is another "low-tech" approach. For academic libraries in particular, social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) can be the best way to reach people, particularly students. If a service is especially relevant to a certain group, it might work best to advertise the service in a class. For instance, the Berwyn Public Library advertises its voter-registration services to a citizenship class.

If the library has a website that it updates regularly, putting information about the service in a noticeable place (such as near the top of the homepage) can ensure that as many people as possible are aware of that service. Including an article or announcement in a library or community newsletter, or the local newspaper, can be another option, especially for alerting the broader community. If a library offers a government service, such as passports, a government website may list the library as a Passport Acceptance Facility. In the case of a unique service, such as a credit union, national publications advertise the partnership.

In promoting "non-traditional" services, libraries should clearly convey how offering the service meets the needs of the community and fits the mission of the library. Having services such as voter registration or passport issuing, for instance, promotes the goal of encouraging civic engagement. A credit union improves financial literacy, which can be part of a library's overall mission of promoting literacy in general. If the library is part of a larger organization, connecting the services to the educational mission of a college or university, such as promoting literacy or lifelong learning, can be particularly effective. Or, if a library requires a more generic approach, simply emphasizing that adding the services is part of the library's ongoing efforts to improve the user experience will work.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

The most obvious benefit to offering "non-traditional" services, beyond improving the patron experience, can be increased foot traffic. For those users who are new to the library or may have visited in the past but are not familiar with some of the library's services, drawing them via the "non-traditional" services can lead to increased use in more "traditional" services, such as signing up for library cards. Similarly, people who may have viewed the library as primarily a place to check out books and study now understand that it offers additional services. Some libraries have learned that offering the services can draw "hard-to-reach" populations, including recent immigrants; this is what the Ela Area Public Library District discovered when it started offering passport processing. In some instances, even a service that is not usually held in the library itself can lead to increased library use. This is what Blackburn College has found with its peer tutoring services, which sometimes refer students to the Lumpkin Learning Commons and its resources, especially for class research.

Even with extensive planning, however, libraries will inevitably encounter obstacles. Staff support is crucial; the people providing the service need to be enthusiastic and willing, and they should view it as an extension of their duties, and not a "burden." As important as the service might be for making a library stand out, offering it should not interfere with the library's day-to-day operations. If a library has the option, it can train additional

staff to assist, or rotate staff to ensure adequate coverage across all departments. If libraries cannot make the service available at certain times or on particular days, they should clearly convey this to patrons.

An alternative that avoids some of these problems is to host a service, rather than actually having library staff members provide it themselves. This is what the Bloomington Public Library has done for tax preparation, recruiting the volunteers from AARP Tax-Aide. If appropriate, a library may have to reduce a service if certain aspects of it fall outside the scope of what the library can realistically provide. The Antioch Public Library District found this approach helpful with its notarization services due to concerns over liability, and it does not notarize certain types of documents, such as wills or other real-estate papers.

ADVICE FOR LIBRARIES CONSIDERING LAUNCHING “NON-TRADITIONAL” SERVICES

Starting a “non-traditional” service, as adventurous as it might sound, does require some advance planning, particularly if outside training or other assistance is necessary. If a library is considering offering voter registration, for example, it should account for the logistical challenges, including recruiting volunteers. A library should make certain to follow any rules or regulations, especially for using library spaces for events that one could construe as politically related. Having the support of all involved parties, including a library’s board or administration, is important for ensuring the continuity of the service, particularly if funding is required.

In terms of which services to offer, a library should consider what its community already has. Even if the service might seem worthwhile to library staff, it might not meet the needs of the community, so it is vital to obtain feedback from library users. Focusing on one or two services that staff can provide particularly well is often more productive than trying to offer a wide range of services. Studying community demographics can be especially helpful for launching social services, such as immigration-related ones. This is what the Addison Public Library discovered when, based on U.S. census estimates, it determined that more than a third of community members were foreign-born.

Most importantly, librarians should be willing to adapt to unforeseen circumstances, and should try to make this a “fun” experience for everyone involved—staff, regular library users, and new users attracted by the services. Despite the challenges involved, patrons are likely to be grateful for the opportunity to use the service. This helps increase the value of the library in the eyes of the community.

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Libraries and the 2020 Census

A major “non-traditional” service project is approaching: the upcoming decennial census! ALA recently released its new policy brief, “Libraries and the 2020 Census.” The brief emphasizes that libraries are essential, trusted partners in achieving a complete count in the 2020 census. Specifically, they deliver information, provide internet access, serve as trusted messengers, and train data users. The brief, available on the ALA website at <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/govinfo/census>, also explains how decision-makers, including state and local policymakers, can partner with libraries as they work to ensure their communities are fully represented in the 2020 census.

ILA is working with the nonprofit group Forefront on strategies to ensure a complete count in Illinois for 2020. Please visit and bookmark the Illinois Complete Count Commission's website to remain up-to-date on census activities at illinoiscensus2020.com.

Teen Parents: Strategies for Library Interventions

Birth rates among teens have been falling for decades and there were fewer births to teens in 2016 than ever previously recorded, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Still, research shows that adverse outcomes for adolescent parents and their children can be felt across multiple generations in health, socioeconomic status, and social-emotional development. Although the number of pregnant and parenting teens is small, interventions can have large impacts on both parent and child, potentially breaking a cycle of harm. By partnering with schools and community organizations, four Illinois libraries are embracing this opportunity and building central roles for libraries in teen pregnancy prevention and support for young parents.

“When people found out I was pregnant, they was like, ‘Oh my God, this is gonna be so hard, you’re gonna be struggling, you’re gonna be poor.’ . . . Then when I had my baby, it was like, ‘Oh, I’m still in school, graduated. I’m looking for a college now.’ . . . I feel like it’s because of the support system I have.” —Nia, New Moms participant

FINDING PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

Most likely, groups serving teen parents already exist in your community. Arlington Heights Memorial Library (AHML) and Mount Prospect Public Library (MPPL) connected with teens through the nonprofit St. Mary’s and the Hopeful Beginnings program that serves pregnant and parenting high schoolers. Students at Vanguard Alternative High School meet for a class five days a week, while students district-wide meet one evening a month. Oak Park Public Library (OPPL) connected with teen parents through New Moms, an organization that supports young moms and their children in order to break the cycle of poverty. The New Moms group meets weekly and librarians visit monthly or quarterly. They also arrange occasional field trips to the library. For Addison Public Library (APL), it was Teen Parent Connection, a nonprofit serving DuPage County. The library provides two program rooms, planned activities, and dinner for two weekly meetings a month. In all three cases, agencies were eager to work with libraries because they provided a break from planning, skilled staff, space, and necessities like materials and food. Even if a group doesn’t exist already, partnering with other agencies is recommended. Social services, the county health department, and school districts provide essential services to pregnant and parenting teens and may welcome an opportunity to collaborate.

There has been significant research showing that both teen parents and their children are especially vulnerable to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). They are more likely than their peers to experience trauma, neglect, poverty, and abuse. The impact of ACEs can be life-long and has been linked to numerous problems in adulthood including drug use, higher dropout rates, poverty, depression, and disease. Librarians serving teen parents will likely encounter issues like these that go beyond their expertise and require intervention by outside organizations.

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Libraries have also found success with services aimed at pregnancy prevention. Created in partnership with teens, The Ask answers their anonymous questions about sex, drugs, and mental health. Answers come from a panel of health professionals chosen for their ability to mix humor, advice, and accurate health information. The Ask not only provides information, but also puts a face to local organizations and resources. Knowing a person that works at the health department, the YWCA, social services, or the local Title X clinic removes a significant barrier that keeps many teens from reaching out at all. Addison's local Title X clinic reported that teen use of their health services doubled since the program began. Some of the organizations also provide free condoms, making protection more accessible. Both APL and OPPL now host monthly events.

LEADING CHANGE

Commitment to transformation is already a core library value and it is also fundamental to serving teen parents. Too often, young parents echo Nia, quoted at the top of the article. They feel judged and dismissed by society. They think no one believes they can succeed. Although the many barriers and challenges laid out in the research can seem overwhelming and cannot be ignored, librarians will have their greatest impact by focusing on aspirations. Research also shows positive outcomes stem from strong relationships, from celebrating and empowering teen parents. Because libraries are already committed to lifelong learning and are experts in early literacy, they are uniquely positioned to lead their communities in services to young parents and their children.

RESOURCES AND ARTICLES

People Safe Places

illinoisap.org/projects/childdevelopment/team/

Bright Futures

brightfutures.aap.org

New Moms

newmoms.org

Teen Parent Connection

teenparentconnection.org

Title X Family Planning Clinics

hhs.gov/opa/title-x-family-planning/index.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Adverse Childhood Experiences

cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html

Health and Human Services: Office of Adolescent Health

hhs.gov/ash/oah/

Teenage Births: Outcomes for Young Parents and Their Children

scaany.org/documents/teen_pregnancy_dec08.pdf

ILA

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Reaching Forward: Thirty Years Strong... and Counting!

AN INNOVATIVE BEGINNING

Once upon a time (1988), in a library system not so far away, an idea was born: that library staff—at all levels—should have opportunities for professional development relevant to their positions and careers. Miriam Pollock, of the North Suburban Library System, had seen a conference for library assistants and non-MLS staff offered in New Jersey and decided to replicate it for library workers in Illinois. She gathered a committee of ten library staff committed to excellence in their fields, and the Reaching Forward Library Conference was created.

Originally sponsored by the Metropolitan and North Suburban Library systems, the conference was held at the College of DuPage in 1990 and 1991, with a maximum attendance of 200 library support staff. After a few years, sponsorship was taken up solely by the North Suburban Library System under the leadership of Sarah Long, whose dedication to continuing education kept the conference afloat. Due to the quality of the programs presented, an extensive waiting list prompted continued growth until the conference found its home at the Illinois Library Association and taking place in Rosemont, where it is now held every year on the first Friday in May, with attendance hovering around 1000 participants.

2019 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of Reaching Forward, which has nurtured future library leaders, influenced the creation of Reaching Forward South (an independent conference with similar goals, more convenient to libraries in southern portions of Illinois), and sponsored events at the Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, while bringing in a small profit as well.

DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR, A SOUND INVESTMENT

As library budgets have changed and/or decreased, many have chosen to send their staff to Reaching Forward, regardless of position. Many of the presentations are ones that have been offered at professional conferences such as the Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, the American Library Association Annual Conference, and others. Jane Jenkins, director of the Green Hills Public Library District, brings her entire staff, as their library in-service training day.

“When I asked for Board agreement to close the library for a staff development day on the first Friday in May I added that I would like all staff to attend this conference,” notes Jenkins. “Their response was a unanimous ‘What a wonderful idea!’ Most part-time staff don’t get the opportunity to attend conferences so they appreciate this opportunity.” It’s a great bargain for the library because for little more than the price of one or two presenters for the whole day, the staff is able to attend varied sessions that are most relevant to their positions, enjoy a plated meal and dessert, and get out of the library and meet people from other libraries as well as socializing with coworkers in a different environment. More and more libraries are making use of staff that are part-time, or who shoulder various responsibilities that may or may not have originally been in their job description. With an increased focus on collaboration and cross-training, Reaching Forward remains an economical way for staff to fill in gaps or get additional support for roles they find themselves in on a day-to-day or occasional basis.

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“Our mission is to provide professional opportunities for library staff to grow, learn, and connect with new ideas.” —Reaching Forward Library Conference Mission Statement



A BROAD-BASED LEADERSHIP TEAM

In the beginning, “the committee was made up totally of library assistants. We didn’t have anyone with a [master’s in library science] degree,” says Tobi Oberman, founding committee member and longtime co-chair. “One year, we invited 25 library directors to tell us what we could do to convince them to send more of their staff. Then we added a few to the committee, so we could have the ear of the directors and they could do PR for us. It worked for everybody.” Though originally intended for—and limited to—library support staff, “things began to change as degreed librarians were attracted to the quality of our programs and many of our assistants went on to get their degrees and wanted to still attend,” according to Oberman.

Not only does the conference serve to educate and inspire library staff at all levels, but it provides a springboard for leadership and involvement in the profession at large. Betsy Adamowski, executive director of Wheaton Public Library and past ILA president remarks, “My time serving in that role was one of the best leadership roles that I have had and I wear the Reaching Forward Committee member badge with great pride and honor. Truth be told, being on the committee was hard work, but it was fun hard work and meeting the many library leaders who served on the committee was a priceless gift.” Committee members come from all sizes and types of libraries, with a wide range of professional and life experiences. For many, this is their first experience working on a professional committee, while others are experts in their fields. From academic and public libraries, departments from adult and youth services, to administration, to technical and circulation services, this diversity informs the decisions that are made and ensures representation across the programs and topics offered at the conference.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The Reaching Forward Conference has traditionally embraced a “whole person” approach—recognizing that library staff members aren’t simply their roles, but people—whose lives and interests inform and affect their ability and enthusiasm in the jobs that they do in libraries. Sessions throughout the day focus on communication, skills, motivation, culture, and wellness, while the exhibit hall offers library materials, vendor relationships, continuing education opportunities and information, professional networking, and products and services designed to enrich lives above and beyond the library’s walls. One conference attendee adds: “A family member calls this ‘the earring conference’ because I go to so many it can get confusing, but she remembers the beautiful gift I bought her here.” The conference has offered talk tables, office yoga instruction, retirement-planning assistance, seminars from Nordstrom on business attire, mentoring, and even live animal vendors.

CHANGING LIBRARIES, CHANGING CONFERENCE

The past thirty years have seen seismic shifts in the way that libraries perform and the expectations of our communities, both internal and external. Ever responsive and proactive in the programming it offers, Reaching Forward’s planners also modified the schedule of the day itself. The decision was made to eliminate a keynote speaker to create space for more than ten individual sessions, ensuring that attendees can make the most of their day and library administrators get the most training for their dollar. A program proposal submission process was introduced in 2017, paving the way for a more streamlined workflow and facilitating the balance amongst the various topics and tracks that the conference offers each year.

Four Performer Showcase events were added in 2015 after a local library performer showcase held by another organization migrated online, in recognition of our attendees’ reliance on seeing potential performers in person before making a booking decision. In addition to the exhibit floor, where attendees can find many varied library program and performer options, having the Showcase ensures that our conference is offering curated selections of tried-and-true program presenters so that library staff planning programs can book events with confidence.

REACHING TOWARD 2019... AND BEYOND!

Reaching Forward has had a strong collaboration with the Illinois Library Association ever since it became affiliated with the association under the leadership of former executive director Bob Doyle, and in recent years has formalized that partnership to become a forum of ILA, complete with bylaws. Currently, progress is being made to convert the Reaching Forward Forum into a committee of the Association, which is more in keeping with the operation and purpose of the group as the steering body for an annual event. New members are welcomed every fall, as previous ones move on to other opportunities, change positions, or even retire. “We always kept a light, friendly banter, and that’s why people want to be on the committee. It was always a labor of love and joy,” says Oberman. Over the years, awards in honor of Doyle and longtime co-chairs Tobi Oberman and Tom Rich were added to recognize outstanding service from library staff and sponsor their attendance at the Reaching Forward and ILA conferences. And this year, special additions are being planned to celebrate the fact that after three decades of serving library staff, we are poised to keep reaching into the future for both our inspiration and our library leaders of tomorrow. We are, literally, “Reaching Forward!” 



R E A C H I N G
FORWARD

is **30 years** old – help us celebrate!

Friday, May 3, 2019

Reaching Forward Annual Conference
Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, Illinois

Mark your calendar and save the date!
www.ReachingForward.net

Book Box: How a Cardboard Box Became our Trendiest Teen Program

IF YOU BOX IT, THEY WILL COME

How does a public library serve a time-crunched, option-rich, high-achieving group of teens? One perfectly packaged book at a time.

When Youth and Young Adult Librarian Melisa Martinez was searching for new ways to connect with busy readers, she had to look no farther than her own front porch. She and her coworkers were outsourcing the selection of some of their must-have products to subscription services. Would suburban teens take a chance on a “Book Box” modeled on well-designed, custom packages from companies like Blue Apron, Owlcrate, and Stitch Fix?

Not only did they take a chance—they loved it, surpassing expectations and increasing “subscriptions” 200% in the first 18 months. And their moms and little siblings loved it, too—so much so that one year later the library launched “Book Box Jr” for kids and “HPL Book Box” for adults.

FROM PLANNING TO PRACTICE

Hinsdale is an affluent community 20 miles west of Chicago. A town of 16,800 with a 2016 average household income of \$264,672, Hinsdale was named America’s 30th “Richest Place” by Bloomberg in 2018. The closest public high school, Hinsdale Central, was ranked #13 in Illinois and #489 in nationally last year by US News and World Report. The Book Box program can be implemented in libraries with much smaller budgets, though; its strength is in its creative approach rather than a great deal of financial investment.

A challenge for Hinsdale Public Library is that many Hinsdale teens have the means to purchase recreational reading materials on-demand. What they don’t have is a lot of time to explore what that next great read should look like. As a report from The Carsey School of Public Policy points out, “students in higher-income families are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities than their peers in lower income families.”

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Thank you for checking out the
HPL Teen Book Box!

Contents include:

- all kinds of fun treats
- a hand selected newly released teen book

Read the book and keep your treats, but please remember to return the book and the box to the Children's Desk. You will not be able to receive the next month's box without returning this one. If you would like the next box, register online. Enjoy!





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Almost all libraries also compete with after school jobs, long travel times, and responsibilities at home for teens' time and attention. With a few tweaks, libraries of any size or budget can create a program that personalizes book (or movie, music... even video game) recommendations and makes the "reveal" part of the appeal.

When Hinsdale Public Library staff were looking for a way to offer bespoke book recommendations to highly-scheduled teens, they took a page from subscription boxes like Birchbox. Martinez created a prototype "Book Box" that would include a hand-selected book, surrounded by goodies and packaged in an attractive, well-branded box.

Once she had the green light for the project, she consulted with the library's Marketing and Outreach Manager, Molly Castor, on presentation. The library worked with Packlane to produce sturdy, colorful boxes that complement the library's logo.

Martinez and Youth and Young Adult Services Manager Ridgeway Burns agreed that one way the library's Book Boxes would be different from other subscription services was that they wouldn't be delivered. Teens would come to the library during an assigned date range to pick up their box. They would be responsible for returning the box and book, too.

Burns decided to fund this initiative from the department's programming budget. He rationalized this decision by explaining that participants have a shared library experience every month—they just aren't all experiencing it in the same physical space. The library would, whenever possible, use books that were already part of the collection. So, program costs would be limited to boxes, crinkly protective filler, and the little themed tchotchkes that readers get to keep.

At first, the Book Box started off with a choice of four genres for teens and a capacity of twelve. A sample box and a photo of a completed box were all the publicity the program needed to get off the ground. Library staff promoted the program at school visits and in the print newsletter. Word of mouth about the Book Box spread quickly amongst teens and parents. By the next quarter, registration for the Teen Book Box filled up quickly and additional capacity was needed. In the ensuing months, the library added Book Boxes for adults and younger readers in grades 4–5.



KEEPING UP

Inside each box are non-perishable treats like candy or tea, bookmarks or stationery (branded with the Library logo, when possible), brightly colored packing materials to cushion each title, a response card, and the book selected for the patron.

The monthly cost per Book Box averages around \$4 including the boxes themselves, the packing material, treats, and 2 to 3 small trinkets. Add-ins range from Oriental Trading Company-style erasers and figurines to candy and tea.

The custom boxes from Packlane cost an average of \$3/box. Boxes can circulate about six times before they need to be retired. It will come as no surprise to parents or children's librarians, boxes circulated to younger kids do not last as long as boxes circulated to adults and teens.

Each "subscription" cycle lasts for three months. During peak times like summer, one-month-only "Book Box Samplers" have helped meet demand.

When registering, patrons indicate their preferred genres and a couple of their favorite books. Genres include mystery/thriller; horror; fantasy; science fiction; historical fiction, romance; literary

fiction; biography; self-help and more. Choosing the right title for each Book Box can be an involved process just like in-person reader's advisory. Starting with the two genres and favorite books each patron provides at signup, library staff collaborate with subject area experts to identify titles that will match the patron's interest.

Any library that has hard-to-reach readers can scale a program like HPL's Book Box to engage with patrons they may not otherwise be able to meet. Butcher paper and string can stand in for custom boxes and a fun bookmark or repurposed storytime craft can replace candy or an inexpensive toy.

Adult patrons have appreciated having an option to request that the titles chosen for them do not contain topics such as physical abuse, animal death, or excessive profanity.

After reading each month's selection, recipients fill out the response card included in every box, rate the title they were given from 1 to 5 stars, and share any comments. This helps library staff build a profile for each reader. These interactions with patrons have allowed selectors to not only pick a good book for that reader's Book Box but also to build out collections that better serve the library's power users.

[continued on page 20]



[continued from page 19]

Readers have enthusiastically embraced the Book Box. Over 90 patrons received boxes in June and July. The Teen Book Box is one of the most popular services the Library has ever offered for teens and has been a great way for passionate staff to connect with the “power readers” in the community. Patrons have been very loyal users of the Book Box: 6 teens have been signed up since the inception of the Teen Book Box two years ago.

Though similar to previous reader’s advisory services, the Book Box has found a niche by presenting a traditional service in a fresh format.

WHY SUBSCRIBE WON’T SUBSIDIZE

So, why did this stick when so many other recommendation services quickly fizzle out? Zuora founder Tien Tzuo would say it’s because we are entering the “Subscription Economy,” a model that seems to have gone from fad to fixture overnight. According to a March 2018 *Forbes* article, “The subscription e-commerce market has grown by more than 100% percent a year over the past five years, with the largest retailers generating more than \$2.6B in sales in 2016, up from \$57.0M in 2011.”

Book Boxes combine the best of retail subscriptions and monthly rental or streaming services. Patrons receive a hand-picked item that comes in beautiful box, that they open to reveal other small items selected to surprise and delight them. And, by borrowing the book rather than purchasing it, readers have all the benefits of access without the burden of ownership.

In Tien Tzou’s *Subscribed: Why the Subscription Model Will Be Your Company’s Future—and What to Do About It*, he writes about his early days at Salesforce,

We had to reevaluate the whole purpose of a software company, changing the fundamental question from “How many products can I sell?” to “What does my customer want, and how can I deliver that as an intuitive service?” (Tzou, 5)

Subscription services are built on recurring interactions with users and the opportunity to tailor services or product offerings to them based on use and feedback. As so many industries, libraries included, are shifting from counting products sold (checked out, in our case) to experiences had, the Instagram-able experience of discovering a great new read is the perfect fit for a 21st century library.

This subscription service is also a smart fit for teens. In *Subscribed*, Tzou writes, “The Amazon versus Walmart battle has been framed as ecommerce versus traditional retail, but that’s always been a false dichotomy. It’s about starting with the customer instead of the product. It’s about establishing ongoing relationships. It’s about flipping the script—starting with the digital experience, and then building the store.” (Tzou, 26)

It can be tough to establish relationships with teen readers. There are the logistical issues of school, sports, work and socializing. And then there are the developmental obstacles of connecting with readers who are in a near constant state of transition. Subscriptions allow teen readers to identify their interests in isolation and then choose how much to share about their reading experience on their own terms.

Subscriptions and libraries are, obviously, not a new thing. Subscription libraries, like Benjamin Franklin’s Library Company of Philadelphia, were the precursor to the public libraries we enjoy today. Our periodical and database collections are subscriptions we maintain on behalf of our users. What is new is an audience that prioritizes and expects custom content and memorable, camera-ready experiences. New subscription models, like Book Box, create a recurring experience with readers that demonstrates high quality curation and uses feedback to continuously improve the appeal of the delivered product. Subscription services are a smart, scalable way to match the best of hands-on librarianship with an audience primed to expect personalized services and product selection.

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The complex block features four photographs showcasing architectural designs. The top-left photo shows a large, bright library interior with a high ceiling, wooden accents, and a central reading area. The top-right photo shows a library interior with a curved reading area, large windows, and modern lighting. The bottom-left photo shows the exterior of a library building at dusk, featuring a covered entrance and large glass windows. The bottom-right photo shows a library interior with a curved reading area, bookshelves, and a modern design.

2018 Sylvia Murphy Williams Scholars



Aicha Azzaoui



Xena Becker



Amanda V. Lopez



Katherine Sharon Lopez



Cynthia Medrano Torres



Teresa Helena Moreno



Jennifer Patino

The Sylvia Murphy Williams Scholars program will be supported in 2019 and forward by the ILA Diversity Scholarship Fund; please consider supporting this important initiative by visiting ila.org/support-ila.

Since 2003, ILA has honored former ILA President Sylvia Murphy Williams by awarding ILA Annual Conference scholarships and a one-year membership to the Association to ALA Spectrum scholars attending graduate programs in library and information science in Illinois, thanks to support from a fund established in honor of the late Sylvia Murphy Williams, 2002 ILA President. ILA Williams Scholars are also connected with mentors via ILA's Diversity Committee. This year, we are pleased to welcome seven Williams Scholars to Illinois librarianship! Nearly all were able to attend the conference in Peoria in October. Several of them contributed these impressions of the conference, comments about librarianship, and their hopes, aspirations, and motivations; we welcome all of them as future members of the profession.

Xena Becker

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

Thank you to the Illinois Library Association and the ILA Diversity Committee for inviting me to attend the ILA annual conference as a Williams Scholar. This was my first experience at a professional conference and I was overwhelmed by the support I received and the information I absorbed at the event. I entered library school with a plan to become a special collections instruction librarian and while my commitment to that goal has not changed, my classes have expanded my vision of what I can do in that role. However, when classes are my only frame of reference, it can be difficult to picture what I will actually be doing when I start my career. Sessions at the ILA Conference such as *Embedded Librarianship as a Means of Promoting Student Retention and the IACRL Unconference* gave me a better frame of reference for what my work will consist of in the future.

The ILA Conference also offered me the opportunity to think about aspects of librarianship that I had previously not given much thought, such as political advocacy and staff training. Programs like *Learn Effective Advocacy to Legislators from Legislators and Now Train This!: Creating Dynamic Staff Training That Is Useful, Inclusive, and Embraced by All* were engaging, unique, and nothing like what I learn in class. This was what made attending the conference so valuable to me. I hope that being a part of ILA will mean that I continue to find the parts of librarianship that I don't learn much about in school and illuminate them in engaging and fruitful ways.

[continued on page 24]

Amanda V. Lopez

University of Kentucky School of Information Science

As a child, I thought my local librarian had the best job in the world. She had access to all the new books, knew right where to find information on obscure topics, and she lived in the library! As I got older, I learned that you don't get to live where you work, but I was right about one thing; she had my dream job. I started in libraries as a youth services associate, dabbling in everything from program planning to collection development. I loved the constant discovery, the flow of creativity, and patron interactions that made up my day. But it wasn't until I enrolled in library school that I truly learned what libraries advocate for and their profound value to society. The values that we uphold as librarians are ones that I discovered I agreed with on a personal level, so the path to librarianship was clear. My favorite class so far has been Youth Literature for a Diverse Society, which aimed to develop a better understanding of various cultures through literature, and the importance of representation and cultural authenticity.

I currently work as a youth services programming specialist in a public library, and I have no reservations about becoming a youth services librarian. I want to engage children and their families through programming that encourages learning and makes the library a destination. I also hope to increase my focus on collection development and pair that with new ways to increase awareness of the resources offered.

ILA was my first library conference, and thanks to the Sylvia Murphy Williams award, I was able to attend, and the experience has left me eagerly anticipating the next one. Meeting other library professionals from around the state and attending panels where colleagues shared their passion for their work was incredibly reaffirming. The "Libraries: All Inclusive" theme was strongly supported by the panels offered. I met fellow scholars for the first time and got to learn more about their experiences and goals, and the Awards Luncheon left me in admiration of the accomplishments of those around me. I'm excited to continue meeting others while participating in professional development opportunities. I'd like to be an active member in committees that I share special interests with, and eventually I would love to present at the Conference myself!

Cynthia Medrano Torres

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,
School of Information Sciences

I made the decision to come to library school after participating in Adult Do-It-Yourself events at my neighborhood's library branch. It was one of the first times I met a librarian that looked like me and engaging with a community that became so closely knit made me feel like I could do this! I had a similar feeling while attending the ILA conference. For someone that doesn't have experience working in a library, I am curious and proactive in learning what exactly librarians do and discovering where I can fit in. The conference was overwhelming, yet eye-opening for all the different avenues of public librarianship I could take in my career.

Shout out to my mentor, Miguel Ruiz, who introduced me to folks at the conference and gave me valuable advice for choosing classes and finding networking opportunities! Learning about his career path also reminded me that nothing is set in stone and that the library profession holds so many transferrable skills. I found the session *From Inclusion to Equity: Policies, Programs, and Partnerships to Serve the Homeless* informative and I appreciated the discussions that arose with the audience and panelist. I also loved exploring the poster sessions and the iRead showcase, which was super nostalgic.

My favorite class in library school so far has been Reading Romance in the Library, which introduced me to reader's advisory and offered new ways to understand how censorship and librarian bias can affect patrons in a community. It also pushed me to pursue my interests of serving Spanish-speaking patrons, particularly through collection development and reader's advisory.

I'm so excited to meet more Spectrum Scholars and develop connections throughout ILA. I am beyond grateful to be a member of this community and I thank everyone that has welcomed me so far. I'm looking forward to one day becoming a mentor and encouraging students like me who felt a little lost about what's next.

"As a child, I thought my local librarian had the best job in the world. She had access to all the new books, knew right where to find information on obscure topics, and she lived in the library!"

Teresa Helena Moreno

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

I decided to enter the field of librarianship with the hope of creating change within the field. With a background in gender studies and black studies, I was drawn to the field because of the kinds of interventions that could be made within the field with these lenses. My favorite class so far in library school is Digital Humanities! I really enjoyed learning about how to reframe scholarship coming from the humanities as well as all the creative expressions of the scholarship that digital humanities makes space for.

I feel very blessed to say that I just joined the library faculty at the Daley Library at the University of Illinois at Chicago at the start of this academic year. It has been a wonderful experience so far! My overall goal and objective is to assume an administrative leadership position within an academic library, perhaps as a dean. My hope is to create change through leadership within the field.

While I have yet to be able to attend an ILA, I am looking forward to attending in future years. My hope is to be connected with other library practitioners in the state with the hopes to learn more from my colleagues in the state and how various libraries are. For the profession, my hope is to see a shift that centers voices at the margins and brings them to center. This is both in terms of our collections and contents, but also with the diversifying of the field as a whole.

Jennifer Patino

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences

I am so grateful to have been chosen as a Spectrum Scholar and to have received the SMW award. I wouldn't have been able to attend the 2018 ILA conference without it, so it really means a lot to me to have had this opportunity. It was especially exciting because it was my first library conference ever! I had such a great time and was able to connect to some really amazing people who made me feel truly welcome. One of my favorite parts of the conference was attending the awards ceremony. It was so inspiring to hear about the work librarians are doing throughout different parts of Illinois. It really helped me envision the kinds of contributions I can make in the field over the course of my career. I got into the field of library science through volunteering with Sixty Inches From Center, which is an online arts archive/publication hybrid that supports community archiving efforts and works to increase diversity in archives in Chicago. I am really interested in new approaches and new ways that tech in libraries can be used to increase accessibility for marginalized communities, so I appreciated all that I learned from the sessions I attended, including *Embedded Librarianship as a Means of Promoting Student Retention*, *Building an Accessible and Inclusive Catalog*, and *Reaching the Pod People—How to Launch a Library Podcast*. I look forward to putting all my new skills to use.

ILA

Library Jobline of Illinois



<http://www.ila.org/jobline>

Positions for Librarians and Support Staff

All employer job openings are listed on the ILA website (www.ila.org/jobline) for 30 days and the cost is \$100.

2018 Annual Conference Awards



Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award

Sponsored by the ILA Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Fund. Award presented by Leslie Bednar, Illinois Heartland Library System (l) to Essie Harris, Champaign Public Library (r).



Crosman Memorial Award

Sponsored by Dominican University School of Information Studies. Award presented by Kate Marek, Dominican University SOIS (l) to Emily Johnson, University of Illinois at Chicago, Library of Health Sciences—Peoria (r).



Intellectual Freedom Award

Sponsored by the ILA Intellectual Freedom Fund. Award presented by the ILA Intellectual Freedom Committee to O'Fallon Public Library. From left to right: Julie Turns, Ryan Johnson, Molly Scanlan, Teri Rankin, Jessi Baker, Annetta Works-Salley, O'Fallon Public Library



Librarian of the Year Award

Sponsored by Today's Business Solutions, Inc. (TBS). Award presented by Vivienne Porter, TBS, Inc. (l) to Betsy Adamowski, Wheaton Public Library (r).



Golden Ticket Award

Award presented by Vince Sovanski, Youth Services Forum Awards Chair, to Marissa Elera, Berwyn Public Library.



Davis Cup Award

Sponsored by ABDO Publishing. Award presented by Heather Vulpone, ABDO Publishing (l) to Jennifer Bueche, Gail Borden Public Library District (r).



Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award
Sponsored by the ILA Robert McClarren Fund. Award presented by Celeste Choate, the Urbana Free Library to Illinois State Senator Scott Bennett.



Deborah Dowley Preiser Marketing Award
Sponsored by Oak Park Public Library. Award presented by David Seleb, Oak Park Public Library (l) to Sasha Vasilic, Niles-Maine District Library (r).



Alexander J. Skrzypek Award
Sponsored by the Illinois State Library. Award presented by Sharon Ruda, Illinois State Library to David Kelsey, St. Charles Public Library District.



Young Adult Librarian of the Year Award
Sponsored by Sourcebooks. Award presented by Evan Mather, Arlington Heights Memorial Library to Elizabeth Lynch, Addison Public Library.



Illinois Academic Librarian of the Year Award
Sponsored by Library Juice Academy. Award presented by Lindsay Harmon, Naperville Public Library to Rob Morrison, National Louis University.



Readers' Advisory Service Award
Sponsored by Adult Reading Round Table (ARRT). Award presented by Maggie Thomann, Northbrook Public Library, (center left) to Melissa Stoeger, Adult Services Department, Deerfield Public Library (center right). In back (from L-R): Claire Steiner, Dylan Zavagno, Vicki Karlovsky, Amy Falasz-Peterson, Adult Services Department, Deerfield Public Library.

2018 Annual Conference Awards



TBS, Inc. Technical Services Award

Sponsored by Today's Business Solutions, Inc. (TBS). Award presented by Vivienne Porter, TBS, Inc., to Lucas McKeever, Elmwood Park Public Library.



Oberman and Rich Reaching Forward Conference Grant

Sponsored by Reaching Forward. Awarded to Carla Lasky, Indian Trails Public Library District.



Reference Services Award

Sponsored by Ancel, Glink. Award presented by Britt Isaly, Ancel, Glink (l), to Anthony Kierna, Schaumburg Township District Library (r).



Robert P. Doyle ILA Conference Grant for Support Staff

Sponsored by Reaching Forward. Awarded to Teresa Schwenneker, River Valley District Library.



Trustee of the Year Award

Sponsored by Peregrine, Stime, Newman, Ritzman & Bruckner, Ltd. Award presented by Roger Ritzman, Peregrine, Stime, Newman, Ritzman & Bruckner, Ltd. to Katrina Arnold, Broadview Public Library District.



Resources and Technical Services Forum Scholarship

Sponsored by the ILA Resource and Technical Services Forum. Awarded to Mara Fass, Champaign Public Library.



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2019 ILA Annual Conference
Tinley Park Convention Center
October 22-24, 2019



2018 Annual Conference Statistics

Total attendees: 1,118

Exhibit booths: 107

Conference Registration

	2018 Peoria	2017 Tinley Park	2016 Rosemont	2015* Peoria	2014 Springfield	2013 Chicago	2012 Peoria	2011 Rosemont	2010 Chicago	2009 Peoria
Full	542	616	641	837	555	620	538	623	673	460
Single day	267	543	527	451	170	611	197	643	575	138
Preconference only	13	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL	822	1,159	1,168	1,308	670	1,231	735	1,266	1,248	654
Speakers	32	50	42	47	49	81	84	80	147	65
Exhibits only	44	46	61	89	101	131	102	169	220	91
Exhibitor representatives	220	290	270	250	267	378	203	430	469	187
TOTAL	1118	1,545	1,541	1,694	1,087	1,821	1,124	1,945	2,084	997

* Joint conference with ISLMA.

Hotel and Booth Statistics

Hotel Rooms Reserved by ILA	905	402	475	1,325	980	491	810	685	685	994
Hotel Rooms Used	865	398	354	1,190	921	352	729	432	384	737
Number of Companies	97	114	113	116	113	124	111	125	149	101
Number of Booths (including any paid canceled booths)	107	126	128	138	131	141	124	145	170	118
Total Booth Square Feet	10,700	12,600	12,800	13,900	13,100	13,300	12,400	14,500	17,000	11,800



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On the Scene at Annual Conference 2018



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

Ellis Systems, Brookfield, WI

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Lemont-Bromberek CSD 113A, Lemont
Lincoln College McKinstry Library, Lincoln

PERSONAL MEMBERS

Nicholas Hyten, Zion-Benton Public Library District
Tom Malinowski, Glen Ellyn Public Library
Stephanie Miller, Frankfort Public Library District
Nicholas Poignant, Bradford Public Library District
Luke Rathburn, Grayslake Area Public Library District

STUDENT MEMBERS

Aicha Azzaoui, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
School of Information Sciences
Xena Becker, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School
of Information Sciences
Jennifer Patino, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
School of Information Sciences
Kelsey Pietens, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
School of Information Sciences
Cynthia Medrano Torres, University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign School of Information Sciences

TRUSTEE MEMBERS

Sue Bukas, Freeport Public Library
Jennifer Cheng, Warren-Newport Public Library
Mary Clements, Bellwood Public Library
Gwen Crow, Freeport Public Library
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2019

Legislative Meet-Ups

ILA's annual series of Legislative Meet-Ups offer library staff, trustees, and supporters and elected officials to connect with one another over a meal and discuss legislative priorities of mutual interest. Registration will open in mid-December at ila.org.

Friday, 2/1/19

South Suburban Breakfast

Tinley Park Public Library
Doors open 8:00; breakfast available
Program 8:30–10:00 A.M.

Chicago Lunch

Harold Washington Public Library
Winter Garden
Doors open 11:30; lunch available
Program 12:00–1:30 P.M.

Monday, 2/4/19

Central Illinois Breakfast

Bloomington Marriott Conference Center
Doors open 8:00; breakfast available
Program 8:30–10:00 A.M.

Western Illinois Lunch

Galesburg Public Library
Doors open 11:30; lunch available
Program 12:00–1:30 P.M.

Friday, 2/8/19

Metro East Breakfast

Sunset Hills Country Club
Doors open 8:00; breakfast available
Program 8:30–10:00 A.M.

Southern Illinois Lunch

Effingham Public Library
Doors open 11:30; lunch available
Program 12:00–1:30 P.M.

Friday, 2/15/19

West Suburban Lunch

Oak Brook Marriott
Doors open 11:30; lunch available
Program 12:00–1:30 P.M.

Monday, 2/18/19

Presidents' Day Breakfast

Arboretum Club, Buffalo Grove
Doors open 7:45; breakfast available
Program 8:30–10:00 A.M.

They'll make a day of it.



Michigan City Public Library
Michigan City, IN

Michigan City Public Library's transformed Youth Services Area was recently unveiled. The unique building now has furniture and shelving that measures up to its stunning translucent walls and bold green duct work! Library staff worked with Product Architecture + Design to add engaging spaces for collaborating, learning, and experimenting. LFI proudly provided the furniture and shelving needed to bring the design and programming goals to life. See what LFI can do for your children's library!



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