

# REACHING FORWARD

Friday, May 10, 2024

Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont

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# 2024

## Reaching Forward North Committee

# Conference Information

**Rosie Camargo**, Chair  
South Holland Public Library

**Wendy Roe-Chapman**, Chair-Elect  
Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library  
District

**Sara Horn**, Past Chair  
Green Hills Public Library District

**Nicole Cowan**  
Chicago State University and Chicago  
Public Library

**Shawn Erens**  
Palatine Public Library District

**Jennifer Hovanec**  
La Grange Public Library

**Elizabeth Lugo**  
South Holland Public Library

**Matt Matkowski**  
Palos Heights Public Library

**Bill Ohms**  
Evanston Public Library

**Georgia Pichinos-Anderson**  
Niles-Maine District Library

**William Pleas**  
Highland Park Public Library

**Liz Poppenhouse**  
Indian Trails Public Library District

**Liz Reyes**  
Open Door Advisors

**Hayley Rightnowar**  
Elmhurst Public Library

**Jessica Rodrigues**  
Steger-South Chicago Heights Public  
Library District

**Jen Ryjewski**  
Downers Grove Public Library

**Martha Sullivan**  
Forest Park Public Library

**Maurice Thomas Jr.**  
Chicago Public Library

**Fallon White**  
Chicago Public Library

### Badges

Conference badges must be worn at all times to gain admission to programs and exhibits.

### Coffee

Morning Coffee, sponsored by RAILS, will be available from 8:30 to 9:30 A.M.

### Exhibit Hours

8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

### Handouts

Handouts are available on the PheedLoop conference website if speakers have made them available. You can browse through the sessions or search for specific sessions in the search field. If handouts are available, they will be linked underneath the session’s description.

### Hashtag

#ILARF2024

### Lost and Found

Articles may be turned in and reclaimed at the Help Desk.

### Lunch

A luncheon buffet will be served in the ballroom. The luncheon menu is available at [www.ila.org/RF](http://www.ila.org/RF).

### Mothers’ Room

A Mothers’ Room is located between the North Ballroom restrooms, near the exhibit hall.

### Quiet Room

Need to take a break? Room 27 will give you a place to relax and refresh.

### WiFi

The Convention Center offers complimentary WiFi through their Boingo WiFi network, and you sign in for free, 45-minute sessions. You can sign in for repeating free sessions throughout the day.

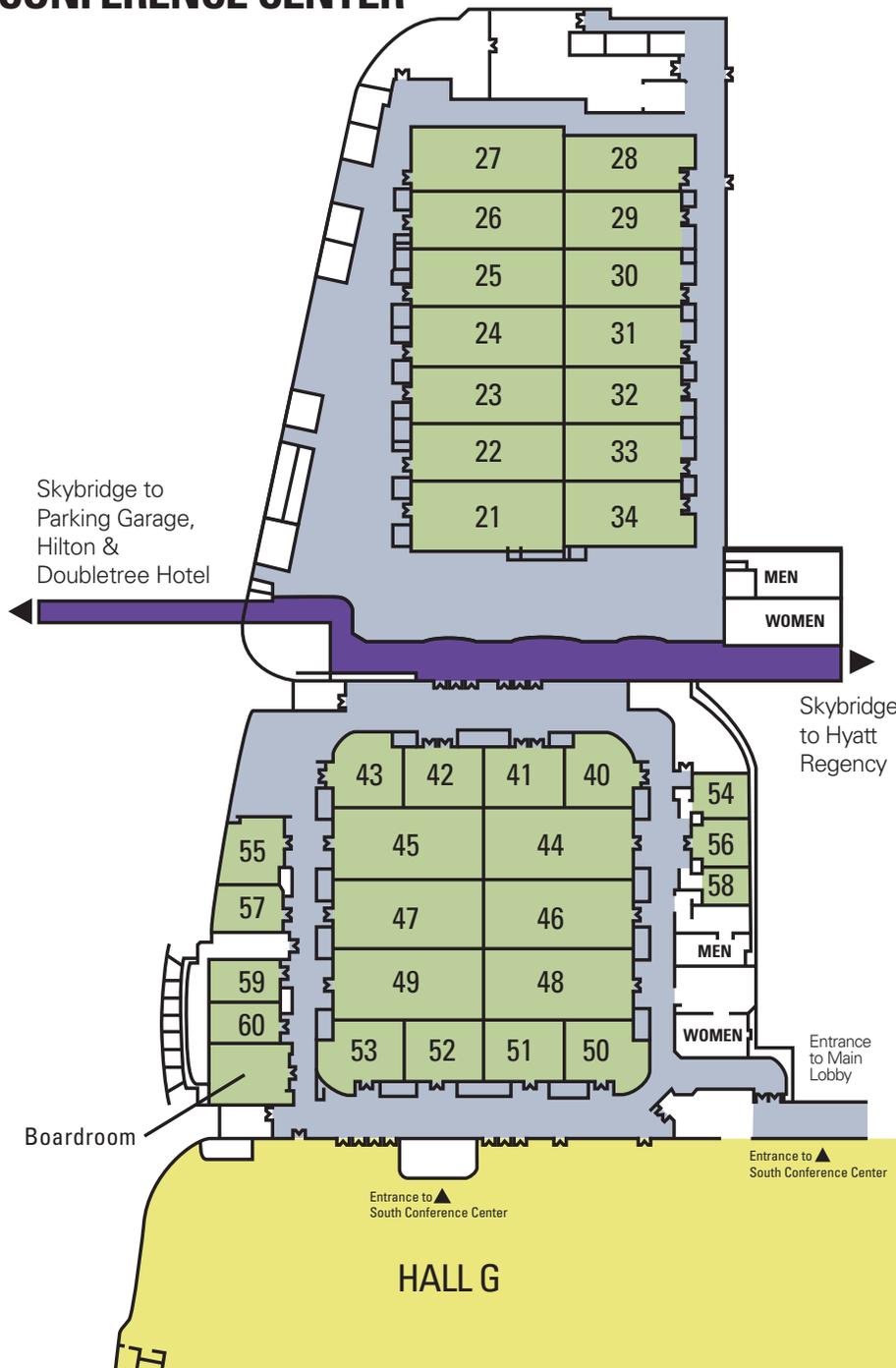
# Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 A.M	Morning Coffee, Exhibits, and Networking
9:15 – 10:15 A.M.	Breakout Session 1
10:30 – 11:30 A.M.	Breakout Session 2
11:45 A.M. – 12:45 P.M.	Luncheon and Awards Presentation
12:45 – 1:15 P.M.	Exhibits Break
1:15 – 2:15 P.M.	Breakout Session 3
2:30 – 3:30 P.M.	Breakout Session 4

# Floorplan

**LEVEL 2**

## CONFERENCE CENTER



## Congratulations to Our 2024 Award Winners

*Oberman and Rich  
Reaching Forward  
Conference Grant*

**Kathleen Schaefer**  
Dixon Public Library

*Robert P. Doyle  
ILA Conference Grant  
for Support Staff*

**Alejandra Nieto**  
South Holland Public Library

# Program Schedule

9:15 – 10:15 A.M.

## ***Library Worker? Trustee? Why Not Be Both?***

Trustees, whether elected or appointed, play a very large role in the overall work of the public library. Many library workers volunteer their time in their home communities as library trustees because they believe that they can make a difference for every library worker. Join this panel of library workers/trustees to learn why they have chosen to take the chance of advocating for their home libraries. In this program, attendees will learn about the diverse experiences of library workers who are trustees in their spare time, what it looks like to run for elected office, and how to walk the fine line between library trustee and library employee. The speakers will represent a variety of voices, geographic locations, and populations to tell their stories both good and bad.

**Speakers:** Monica Boyer, Aurora Public Library District; Jennifer Cutshall, Steger-South Chicago Heights Public Library; Jennifer Hovanec, La Grange Public Library; Jessica Rodrigues, Steger-South Chicago Heights Public Library; Alex Vancina, Helen Plum Library; Vanessa Villarreal, Highwood Library & Community Center

**Location:** Room 21

## ***Building a Library of Things***

Want to expand your library collection beyond books? Looking to create a Library of Things but you're not sure where to start? Or maybe you already have a Library of Things that's not circulating as well as you'd like? Our library launched a now-thriving Library of Things collection and learned many valuable lessons in the process. Learn from our successes and missteps as we detail how we built our Library of Things from the ground up. We'll give an overview of how we chose our starter items, including the survey data we gathered from our community and staff. We'll talk about budgeting, cataloging, packaging, displaying, and storing our items. We'll also discuss waivers and procedures for making checkouts go smoothly. We'll share our promotional tools, social media strategies, and more. We'll even reveal our most and least popular "things"! You'll leave with a step-by-step plan for building – or revamping – your own Library of Things. This roadmap will guide you through the process of planning, developing, and launching your collection.

**Speakers:** Katie Allan, Orland Park Public Library; Theresa Hildebrand, Orland Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 26

## ***Virtual Reality: Yes, You Can!***

In November of 2023, the Bensenville Public Library and the Wood Dale Public Library began offering virtual reality experiences to middle school students. This program will discuss how the libraries used virtual reality for middle school programming; how much it cost; where the money came from and how other libraries can afford it; the technology involved; the learning curve; how the kids reacted; and ideas for using virtual reality in adult programming. Those attending the program will have an opportunity to put on a headset and experience virtual reality for themselves.

**Speakers:** Bill Erbes, Wood Dale Public Library District; Al Garcia, Bensenville Community Public Library District; Najera Miljevic, Wood Dale Public Library District; Sandy Sanchez, Wood Dale Public Library District

**Location:** Room 25

## ***Creating Opportunities for Clients with Disabilities to Learn, Grow, and Enjoy Your Library***

The library is a place of lifelong learning and discovery for people of all abilities and is incomplete without the participation of people with disabilities. Skokie Public Library is committed to providing opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities aged 18 and older who are transitioning out of the universal school system. If you want to learn more about developing and implementing progressive programs for adults with developmental disabilities, this session is for you. Through this presentation, you will gain valuable tools and insight into collaborating with community partners to create and implement successful programs from inception to completion.

**Speakers:** Anni Braverman, Shore Community Services; Dawn Wlezien, Skokie Public Library

**Location:** Room 24

## ***I Stream, You Stream: Offering Customizable Streaming Apps for Checkout***

Streaming services are more popular than ever, but the field is increasingly costly and crowded. Learn how you can provide access to your patrons to a menu of streaming app options. Using library Roku devices, patrons are able to stream movies and television episodes from the Internet to their home TV using high-speed wireless Internet. Tips and tricks on how to organize accounts, payments, and package configurations will be shared to help you launch your Roku collection or streamline an existing program.

**Speakers:** Andrew Cook, Downers Grove Public Library; Van McGary, Downers Grove Public Library

**Location:** Room 33

## ***Beyond Hierarchies: Building a Culture of Mutual Accountability in the Workplace***

This presentation will explore the dynamics of accountability within teams, focusing on how peer employees can hold each other accountable and promote teamwork without always involving their managers. We will discuss tools and strategies for fostering a culture of peer accountability, emphasizing curiosity over blame, and the importance of addressing patterns rather than one-off mistakes. Attendees will learn how to approach situations where mistakes occur, emphasizing the value of gentle reminders and direct communication with colleagues. In addition, the session will cover the often challenging task of holding supervisors/managers accountable. This includes engaging productively with managers to effectively discuss goals in order to ensure clarity and alignment and to pursue growth and development opportunities. Attendees will gain insights into how to navigate these interactions effectively and respectfully, ensuring that accountability flows in both directions within the organization. By the end of this session, participants will be equipped with practical strategies to cultivate a culture of personal and mutual accountability, where individuals at all levels feel empowered to take ownership of their actions and contribute to a positive and productive work environment.

**Speaker:** Candace Fisher, HR Source

**Location:** Room 29

## ***Libraries Are for Everyone!***

Libraries are for everyone! It's not just a statement, it is the groundwork of what we, as librarians and library staff, firmly believe in. Join us as we offer an interactive discussion of the importance of libraries in today's world and how our work impacts all who come through our doors. Learn the significance of a library mission statement, ALA's Library Bill of Rights, and how the state of Illinois is leading the rest of the country in the profound right of intellectual freedom.

**Speakers:** Mary Adamowski, Orland Park Public Library; Dorothy Koll, Acorn Public Library District

**Location:** Room 22

## ***Anyone Can Be a Library Advocate With ILA's Ready, Set, Advocate!***

Advocacy is such an easy word, yet so complicated in the minds of many. Why is it that so many library supporters, who themselves are strong community members, don't understand the importance of speaking out in support of their libraries? The Ready, Set, Advocate package has been created for you, the library supporter, so that you can learn to be a true library advocate. Your voice will make a difference, especially if it is heard at the right time and in the right place and by the right person. You can be that person to tell the important library story and make a difference. This session will give you the tools you need to tell your library's story to your users, board members, community stakeholders, and legislators.

**Speaker:** Joanna Bertucci, Park Ridge Public Library

**Location:** Room 31

# Program Schedule

10:30 – 11:30 A.M.

## ***Community Impact of Makerspaces***

Makerspaces are a great creative outlet for library patrons, but on a day-to-day basis, what does that look like? Who is using these spaces, and for what purposes? Learn how, in addition to crafters and hobbyists, makerspaces are becoming essential for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and creative professionals in the community.

**Speakers:** Selicia Applegate, Palatine Public Library; Jimmy Gonzalez-Vicker, Skokie Public Library; Todd Miller, Nilis-Maine District Library; Liz Poppenhouse, Indian Trails Public Library District

**Location:** Room 31

## ***Rooted in Your Community!***

The Rochester Public Library District has hosted the Community Farmers Market for the past 7 years. Patrons can use their SNAP benefits at our Library Market. The Library received a Link Up matching funds grant for EBT/SNAP funds from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. This year we added two new beneficial programs to the Farmers Market. With donated funds we created "Take a Plant, Leaf a Plant," which is a community-based plant exchange initiative. It's a platform for sharing gardening tips and plant care advice. Participants can learn from one another and enhance their gardening skills. So that the youth have a fun experience at the Farmers Market we added a new program, "The Power of Produce," which provides a fun opportunity for children to engage in the local food system through conversations directly with farmers, educational games and demonstrations, and exposure to new fruits and vegetables. At the end of this session, participants will learn how and why to add a Farmers Market program for their community. Participants will also learn how and why to add "Take a Plant, Leaf a Plant" to their community. Finally, participants will learn how and why to add "The Power of Produce" to their programs.

**Speakers:** Lorachelle Eck, Rochester Public Library District; Janet McAllister, Rochester Public Library District

**Location:** Room 25

## ***Networking Builds Great Ideas***

Participants will learn the importance of networking, making connections, building relationships, and developing ideas, using steps and practices that the presenters have used to build countless numbers of library programs.

**Speakers:** Betsy Adamowski, Wheaton Public Library; Kathy Parker, kathyparker consulting

**Location:** Room 33

## ***Avoiding Renovation Blues***

A list of the dos and don'ts for presenting children's and teen's programs during a construction project or partial library closure. Includes videos and examples of successful projects and programs from Antioch, Lake Villa, and Highwood Public Libraries. Recommendations include instructions on process art programs, virtual story times, outdoor programs, community partnerships, and more.

**Speakers:** Elisa Gueffier, Lake Villa District Library; Rachel Stine, Antioch Public Library District; Vanessa Villarreal, Highwood Library & Community Center

**Location:** Room 22

## ***Get Your Crafting On With Tweens & Teens!***

One can spend hours looking for crafts to make with kids... eventually falling down the Pinterest rabbit hole! Join us for a hands-on presentation of tried and true, yet affordable, crafts that tweens and teens enjoy and love to make. Whether your library has in-person programs or you offer make & take kits, you'll be able to tweak each featured craft to suit your patrons' needs. These crafty creations are easy to duplicate and fit the programming budget of any size library.

**Speakers:** Elizabeth Lugo, South Holland Public Library; Daniela Martinez, Maywood Public Library District; Nancy McKay, Byron Public Library; Wendy Roe-Chapman, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 21

## ***Social Services in the Library: Support Your Community!***

Public libraries are adding a social services area to meet the needs of the community, patrons, and staff. This presentation will describe the role of the Highland Park Public Library in serving vulnerable populations by being aware of the changing needs and trauma, community navigation, advocacy, and trauma-informed training to library staff. The presentation will include outreach efforts with seniors, migrants, and Spanish-speaking communities.

**Speakers:** Diana Alvey, Highland Park Public Library; Cary Rositas-Sheftel, Highland Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 29

## ***7 Ways to Make Your Library More Cyber Secure***

Make your library more secure from cyber threats with 7 ways that you can personally protect your library, your patrons, and yourself. You will learn what you can personally do to feel much more empowered when it comes to cybersafety by being more aware of the cyber threats facing your library, how you can help mitigate them, and how you can be proactive in continuing to maintain your library's and your own cybersecurity.

**Speaker:** Matt Surdel, Cyber Castellan

**Location:** Room 26

## ***Departments Work Better Together: Cross-Training at Your Library***

Have you ever wondered what happens outside your department? Short staffed? Who picks up the slack? How does someone get a library card? Who orders those books, paper, pencils, etc.? We had all these questions and decided why not have cross-training within the departments? Join us for a few tips and tricks on how to get cross-training up and running in your library. Be successful in working together as a team.

**Speakers:** Kathleen Alberts, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District; Barb Bronkala, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District; Sandra Leyva, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District

**Location:** Room 24

# Program Schedule

1:15 – 2:15 P.M.

## **Library Skills on the Move**

Wanting to make a move but not sure where or how? This panel will discuss what opportunities there are not only in the library but also outside the library but still using the skills you learned while in the library field. It can be done! In this program, you will hear from people who have made their way to a variety of positions including: remote work, working for library vendors, and combining skills from multiple departments to find a job that truly suits your journey.

**Speakers:** Maria Fonseca-Gonzalez, Novelist; Jennifer Hovanec, La Grange Public Library; Jez Layman, Elmhurst Public Library; Lizzie Matkowski, Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC); Matt Matkowski, Palos Heights Public Library; Dulce Porrás-Goldstein, Bensenville Community Public Library

**Location:** Room 24

## **Onramp to Accessibility**

Creating welcoming, accessible, and sensory-rich environments to aid patrons in adapting to the active modern library plays a huge role in developing programs and spaces to ensure all have positive, enriching experiences when visiting. The library is a cornerstone of our communities, and it is vital that its offering is accessible and welcoming to the diverse needs of its patrons. By addressing the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and diverse requirements, libraries can become true community hubs that empower and serve every member of society. Whether you are hoping to begin programs, or would like to expand your library's current services, our stories, suggestions, and recommendations will contribute to advancing your library's commitment of inclusion for all patrons, no matter their abilities or age.

**Speakers:** Mikey Orzechowski, Nilas-Main District Library; Hayley Rightnowar, Elmhurst Public Library; Wendy Roe-Chapman, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 22

## **LGBTQIA+ Staff Experiences in Libraries**

Join Stuart, Bill, Kennedy, and Kirsten as they share their experiences working in libraries as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Our panel will discuss how they've felt supported by their libraries and/or departments, how they've brought their identity into the library, and how they've experienced their libraries become more inclusive.

**Speakers:** Betsy Bird, Evanston Public Library; Stuart Griner, Chicago Public Library; Kennedy Joseph, Evanston Public Library; Bill Ohms, Evanston Public Library; Kirsten Vallee, University of Chicago

**Location:** Room 33

## **Treat Yo' Self! How to Be a Happy Library Worker**

It's hard being a library worker right now. Some days we get big smiles and thank you's from our patrons. Some days we get yelled at, cussed out, and become human punching bags. And after a hard day we have to pick ourselves up and go back day after day. SO! How do you fill your empty cup back up with joy, hope, self-love, and appreciation?! How is your library bringing you joy? How can you and/or your library motivate, support, and help provide you with self-care?

**Speakers:** Rosie Camargo, South Holland Public Library; Georgia Pichinos-Anderson, Nilas-Maine District Library; William Pleas, Highland Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 25

## **Readers' Advisory 101**

Do you freeze up when patrons ask you for a book recommendation? Have no fear, readers' advisory is here! Everyone working in a library will be asked for a reading suggestion at some point. Turn that question into a positive customer service interaction. In this program, we'll share quick and easy strategies to help that patron find a great book. Readers' Advisory 101 will cover appeal elements, resources, and book talking basics.

**Speakers:** Heather Booth, *Booklist*; Susan Maguire, *Booklist*

**Location:** Room 29

## ***AI-Powered Productivity: Unleashing the Potential of Artificial Intelligence in Your Everyday Life***

Have you ever wished you had a personal assistant who could help you make meal plans, draft emails, or pick out something new to read? Learn how new, freely available AI tools can help you stay organized and make your life easier at home and at the library. Bring your smartphone, tablet, or laptop if you would like to try out new tools and prompt engineering techniques together.

**Speaker:** Jessica Rodrigues, Steger-South Chicago Heights Public Library

**Location:** Room 21

## ***Take the Next Step – Become a School Librarian!***

Do you love reading? Research? Working with people? Creating and sharing information? Working with technology and makerspaces? Do you love your day to have a lot of variety and to work with students and staff across ages and specialties? Have you considered becoming a school librarian?

**Speaker:** Nichole Folkman, Association of Illinois School Library Educators

**Location:** Room 31

## ***Thinking Inside the Box: Turning Subscription Boxes into Successful Programming***

Over the past few years we have started using subscription boxes like Hunt a Killer and Universal Yums to create in-house and virtual programming. Using mystery and international snack boxes, we created low-cost, easy-prep programs that were implemented for teen and adult audiences. We have found much success running these programs for both age groups at our small/mid-size library.

**Speakers:** Laura Foutch, Messenger Public Library; Rebecca Gal, Messenger Public Library

**Location:** Room 26

# Program Schedule

**2:30 – 3:30 P.M.**

## ***Youth Services Travel Kits: Learn How to Create Kits for Kids***

Traveling kids need travel kits! In this informational session, we will discuss the benefits of creating book and activity kits for children to utilize the library's resources and learn unique ways to create kits based on your library's budget and resource availability.

**Speakers:** Elizabeth LaMore, New Lenox Public Library; Liz O'Neill, New Lenox Public Library

**Location:** Room 33

## ***Serving Customers With Disabilities – History, Language, and Etiquette***

As we approach the 34th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act and reflect on what we have done and still need to do it is important that we ensure our organizations understand the history of the disability rights movement, the demographics of disability, how language is important in what we say and write, and how our interactions affect the diverse audiences that we serve. This session is designed to share information and insights as well as discuss strategies for ensuring your library is welcoming to persons with disabilities.

**Speaker:** Robin Jones, Great Lakes ADA Center

**Location:** Room 24

## ***Movin' On Up! Helpful Tips and Advice to Obtain Your Next Promotion***

Discover useful information for growth in your organization. We'll cover improving your resume, interviewing tips, and general practices.

**Speakers:** Jennifer Hovanec, La Grange Public Library; Maurice Thomas Jr., Chicago Public Library; Fallon White, Chicago Public Library

**Location:** Room 21

## ***Let's Get This Par-Tea Started!***

An afternoon tea – what a lovely way to spend time at the library! The Orland Park Public Library has hosted several successful afternoon teas with varying themes since 2021. Whether it's a cozy mystery, *Bridgerton*, Galentine's Day, or even a Taylor Swif-tea-themed gathering, adult patrons can gather with friends and make new ones. Session attendees will learn how to host their own various tea parties for adults, source reusable materials, and find exciting ways to keep the fun alive.

**Speakers:** Kelli Adams, Orland Park Public Library; Natalie Finlon, Orland Park Public Library

**Location:** Room 29

## ***Is This the End of Social Media? Break Your Reliance on the Algorithm and Promote Your Library on Your Own Terms.***

It's time to face it: the social media landscape is in chaos. Between the upheaval at Twitter, allegations of espionage by TikTok, and never-ending algorithm changes, the future of social media seems very uncertain. Platforms are losing followers and even if you have built a large follower base, it's likely that most of those users aren't even seeing your posts. But don't despair! In this session, you'll learn how to harness the power of more effective library marketing tools: email, blogs, and your staff. Get practical, up-to-the-minute advice for building an audience using your owned properties. Find out how to deliver irresistible content to maximize your reach without spending all day on promotions (unless you want to!).

**Speaker:** Angela Hursh, NovelList

**Location:** Room 25

### ***Billion-Dollar Broadband in the Heartland: Digital Equity Opportunities for Libraries With the Illinois Office of Broadband***

Learn about how the Illinois Office of Broadband can help with upcoming funding opportunities, programming, and partnerships. Boost broadband access, affordability, and digital skill building in your community. Whether you are a frontline staff member or a system administrator, new to the world of digital equity or a seasoned professional, we can help!

**Speakers:** Hillary Rains, Illinois Office of Broadband; Anne Slaughter, RAILS

**Location:** Room 26

### ***Low Cost Circulation Desk Programming***

Everyone in your library can have great ideas and plan programming – Circulation Clerks included! Staff who enjoy their work are more engaged, so why not encourage everyone to share their passions with the library by saying, “Yes! Let’s do it!” The library is for everyone, and chances are, your staff share interests with residents of your community. This session will share successful programs executed at our Circulation Desk by our frontline staff on a shoestring. Some had more participation than programs in departments with dedicated programming staff and funding!

**Speakers:** Delaney Collura, Prairie Trails Public Library District; Liz Crawford, Prairie Trails Public Library District; Amy Prechel, Prairie Trails Public Library District

**Location:** Room 22

### ***Without Borders: Embracing Cultural Differences in Your Community and Developing a Plan to Execute Your Ideas***

This session raises awareness of the various cultures of our library users and how they influence the development of library collections to ensure materials and services are inclusive and diverse. Speakers will explore cross-culture marketing and outreach initiatives and techniques that will resonate with diverse audiences and promote library services effectively across cultural boundaries. Additionally, they will consider how to measure the impact of these services and share metric and assessment tools that will communicate to decision makers the importance of aligning library services with the needs of a diverse community.

**Speakers:** Rosie Camargo, South Holland Public Library; Rene Leyva, Fossil Ridge Public Library District; Laura Rodríguez-Romani, Los Amigos Books; Vanessa Villarreal, Highwood Library & Community Center

**Location:** Room 31

# Performers' Showcase

The Reaching Forward Performers' Showcase is designed to introduce the work of performers to library staff who book outside performers for library events throughout the year.

**Location:** Room 55–57

## 9:15 – 10:15 A.M.

### *Youth Showcase*

- Little Miss Ann
- Comic Book Workshop
- Firefly Family Theatre
- Drag Queen Storytime w/ Candi Forest

## 1:15 – 2:15 P.M.

### *Youth Showcase*

- Planet Circus
- Getting Excited About Science & Belliveau Magic
- Little Lunas
- Drag Queen Storytime w/ Masala Sapphire

## 10:30 – 11:30 A.M.

### *Adult Showcase*

- Blissful Light Yoga
- Mosaic Players
- Rebecca Spectre, Magician
- Irish Music School

## 2:30 – 3:30 P.M.

### *Adult Showcase*

- Tai Chi w/ Thomas Wilkens
- Fruteland Jackson
- John Behling, Guitarist
- DJ Soul

# Reaching Forward 2024 Exhibitors

## Library Products, Services, and Professional Development

### **American Library Association (ALA)**

[www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)  
[mdowling@ala.org](mailto:mdowling@ala.org)

The ALA is the national association providing professional development opportunities for library staff to increase their knowledge and advance their careers. ALA's Library Support Staff Round Table (LSSRT) focuses on developing skills, networking opportunities, and supporting programming for staff on the front lines, in the back rooms, and everywhere in between.

### **The Arc of Illinois**

[www.thearcofil.org](http://www.thearcofil.org)  
[rocio@thearcofil.org](mailto:rocio@thearcofil.org)

The Arc of IL is a statewide not for profit organization. The Arc advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), families, and community organizations to ensure that people with disabilities can live, work, learn, and play in their communities across the state. The Arc offers resources and information to support families in their individual advocacy efforts & trains and educates people with disabilities, families, and professionals.

### **ATLAS Libraries (Sponsor)**

[www.atlaslibraries.org](http://www.atlaslibraries.org)

ATLAS (Area Training for Library Administrators and Staff) was officially inaugurated in September, 2011, by adopting a set of bylaws. It grew out of Project Phoenix, a task force for succession of continuing education for library staff when Metropolitan Library System ran out of funding in 2008. Its predecessor, Zones 8 & 9, had a long history of joint programming and training. ATLAS provides continuing education opportunities for all staff levels, from frontline through administration as well as annual library trustee training. ATLAS also facilitates special projects such as geocaching in the summer and a directors' discussion group on a monthly basis. ATLAS applied for and received an FEIN in the fall of 2013. ATLAS continues to develop with a growing membership.

### **Chicago State University**

[www.csu.edu/cimst/infostudies/lib\\_info\\_science\\_ms.htm](http://www.csu.edu/cimst/infostudies/lib_info_science_ms.htm)  
[lis@csu.edu](mailto:lis@csu.edu)

The Chicago State University Library and Information Science Program (CSU LIS) prepares future librarians, archivists, and other information professionals to work in a variety of settings including schools, colleges and universities, public libraries, archives, and other organizations. The MSLIS is accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) and is available fully online. In addition to the master's degree, the program offers an endorsement-only option in the area of School Library Information Specialist to licensed teachers in Illinois and a post-baccalaureate certificate in archives and records management.

### **College of DuPage**

[www.cod.edu/Ita](http://www.cod.edu/Ita)  
[musacchioa@cod.edu](mailto:musacchioa@cod.edu)

The Library and Information Technology program at the College of DuPage provides fundamental and advanced education and practice that will enable you to enter the workforce as library technical assistants. Students will gain knowledge in a broad range of library and information technology topics, including acquisition of materials, cataloging and classification, librarianship, library technology, public service, and reference and information. The program combines classroom lectures, hands-on exercises, and field trips. An active advisory committee of local librarians ensures that coursework reflects the needs of library employers in the area.

### **Dominican University SOIS (Sponsor)**

<https://sois.dom.edu>  
[sois@dom.edu](mailto:sois@dom.edu)

As one of the two American Library Association (ALA)-accredited Master of Library and Information Science programs in the Chicago area, we offer a distinct degree experience. Here, you'll earn an MLIS degree that upholds the core values of librarianship while giving you the skills you need to succeed in an ever-changing field.

### **ELM USA**

[www.elm-usa.org](http://www.elm-usa.org)  
[jheinzen@elm-usa.com](mailto:jheinzen@elm-usa.com)

We manufacture the finest digital media preservation systems to remove scratches from CD/ DVD, Game Discs, and Audio Books.

# Reaching Forward 2024 Exhibitors

## **iLEAD Trustee Learning Portal (Sponsor)**

[www.ileadtrustee.org](http://www.ileadtrustee.org)  
[ilead@illinoisheartland.org](mailto:ilead@illinoisheartland.org)

iLEAD Trustee is your one-stop resource for becoming the best Illinois Public Library Trustee you can be. LEAD with confidence by knowing the laws and best practices for serving your library community. New information and updates will be added quarterly.

## **Illinois State Treasurer's Office (Sponsor)**

[www.illinoistreasurer.gov](http://www.illinoistreasurer.gov)  
[info@epay.com](mailto:info@epay.com)

The Illinois State Treasurer's Office provides treasury management services for local governments and agencies, like libraries, looking to conduct business safely and efficiently. The Illinois Funds is a \$19 billion local government investment pool servicing 1,500 local and state participants, ePAY offers competitively priced payment processing options. The office also offers free cybersecurity training and encryption technologies to our participants.

## **iREAD (Sponsor)**

[www.iREADprogram.org](http://www.iREADprogram.org)  
[iREAD@ila.org](mailto:iREAD@ila.org)

iREAD is a flexible, nonprofit reading program designed by librarians featuring appealing incentives, compelling and adaptable themes, and a comprehensive resource guide chock full of ideas and reproducibles. Developed by the Illinois Library Association (ILA), the program is adopted in other states including Alaska, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington, and worldwide by the Department of Defense for libraries on military bases. iREAD is implemented in thousands of individual libraries across the country. Bring iREAD to YOUR library!

## **Joliet Junior College**

[www.jjc.edu/lta](http://www.jjc.edu/lta)  
[librarian@jjc.edu](mailto:librarian@jjc.edu)

Be a part of the 21st century information transformation! Using cutting-edge technologies, along with tried-and-true techniques, as a Library Technical Assistant (LTA) you will help unite people, data, and materials in our exciting and constantly changing information environment. The program consists of 9 courses, 8 of which are fully online, for a total of 26 credit hours. Online courses offer both synchronous and asynchronous learning. The final capstone course is an in-person practicum at a library local to you. JJC's online LTA certificate program recognizes the need for skilled paraprofessional workers in today's libraries and offers students the opportunity to acquire, develop, or update their job skills. By providing a comprehensive overview of all facets of library work, students are trained for a modern information career where they are an integral part of a library team.

## **LACONI Library Administrators Conference of Northern Illinois**

[www.laconi.net](http://www.laconi.net)  
[laconi@ymail.com](mailto:laconi@ymail.com)

LACONI provides both continuing education through workshops, panels, and discussions as well as opportunities for networking and volunteering for library workers.

## **Los Amigos Books**

<https://losamigosbooks.com>  
[lr.losamigosbooks@gmail.com](mailto:lr.losamigosbooks@gmail.com)

Los Amigos Books is an independent bookstore that specializes in Spanish language and bilingual books for readers of all ages, with a special focus on books for children and young adults. We source our books from publishers in Latin America, Spain, and the United States. We believe that all readers should be able to see themselves respectfully and authentically represented in the books on our shelves.

### **Martina Mathisen**

info@MartinaMathisen.com

Speaker and trainer Martina Mathisen presents communication solutions for engaging with the public. Martina's mission is to help public library staff build confidence through enhanced communication skills in a fun and dynamic way. As demands and pressures on libraries continue to grow, your staff will require new skills. Sessions like, "Keep Cool Under Pressure," "Standing Ovation Customer Service," and "Defuse the Time Bomb" will transform In-Service days into opportunities for productive growth.

### **RAILS Reaching Across Illinois Library System (Sponsor)**

www.railslibraries.info

communications@railslibraries.org

RAILS offers a wide variety of programs/services for all levels of library staff, including continuing education, networking opportunities, e-resources, discounts, and much more for over 1,200 academic, public, school, and specialized library agencies in northern and west-central Illinois.

### **RMC Imaging/ST Imaging**

www.stimaging.com

stviewscan57@gmail.com

Sales and service of the ST VIEWSCAN 4 Digital Library Reader Printer.

### **TBS Today's Business Solutions (Sponsor)**

www.tbsit360.com

jfarrell@tbsit360.com

TBS – Today's Business Solutions was established in 1991 and is a software and hardware solutions provider specializing in the Public Library and Higher Education markets. TBS provides BookScan Stations, Print Management, MyPC Computer booking, and Web-Based Printing Portals as well as a full line of payment devices. Payment devices range from low-cost coin towers to combination systems of coin, bill, and debit cards; to "networked" terminals connected to a centralized server. Payment devices control access and charge for such things as copies, printing, scanning, fax, laundry, vending, Point of Sale, PC time access, and door access. Our solutions can also integrate a Web-Base credit card gateway which will allow users to use their credit cards or debit cards (Master Card, Visa, American Express, etc.) for such purchases. Our solutions decrease your cost of operating your business while increasing your patron's overall satisfaction. In addition to being an equipment provider, TBS provides: Sales Support, Technical Support, and can custom design support and implementation programs to meet any customer's requirements.

### **Wintrust Government Funds (Sponsor)**

www.wintrust.com/govfunds

jboland@wintrust.com

You're an expert at managing the libraries that improve our quality of life and are a trusted source of information for people of all ages in our communities. Wintrust Government Funds is an expert in providing the financial services libraries and other local government entities require. We have professionals who focus exclusively on public sector clients, including libraries, municipalities, school districts, fire districts, sanitary districts, park districts, and counties. Our services are offered through your local Wintrust Community Bank, and include flexible financing structures, customizable treasury management solutions, investment options, and public sector specific accounts, including our MaxSafe™ Public Fund accounts which provide up to 15 times the typical FDIC insurance coverage of municipal deposits. Best of all, as a community bank, taxpayer funds are kept local and reinvested back into our communities.

# Reaching Forward 2024 Exhibitors

## Library Programs and Performers

### Cheryl Brown

[www.KiddielandRemembered.com](http://www.KiddielandRemembered.com)  
[KiddielandRemembered@gmail.com](mailto:KiddielandRemembered@gmail.com)

I am a historian, a professor at Oakton College, and a member of the National Amusement Park Historical Assoc. I was recently a consultant for the upcoming PBS TV *Chicago Stories* episode on Chicago Amusement Parks. My programs have taken me as far north as Lake Villa and as far south as Blue Island. Many times these programs had large audiences at full capacity. My programs are: Kiddieland Remembered, Lego Remembered (new), Riverview Remembered, Chicago's Sweet Bakeries Remembered, and Fisher-Price Toys Remembered.

### Culture Shock Chicago

[www.cultureshockchicago.org](http://www.cultureshockchicago.org)  
[chicago@cultureshockdance.org](mailto:chicago@cultureshockdance.org)

Culture Shock Chicago brings a high energy, entertaining, and interactive performance to any event or special occasion. We work with your staff to create a stress-free and successful program. Performances can be tailored to fit a variety of library/assembly topics and budgets and our show appeals to audiences of all ages and diversity. Culture Shock Chicago can also help your organization celebrate special occasions such as parties, end-of-year events, anniversaries, picnics, block parties, festivals, and much, much more. We bring the party with us, including a full sound system, turntables, DJ, Emcee, and highly skilled dancers. We'll take care of everything and have your audiences on their feet!

### DuPage County Health Department (Sponsor)

[www.dupagehealth.org](http://www.dupagehealth.org)  
[Laura.Cochran@dupagehealth.org](mailto:Laura.Cochran@dupagehealth.org)

DuPage County Health Department is located in Wheaton, Illinois and has a population of just under one million residents. DuPage County Health Department's Protect Swimmers 10 Million (PS10M) initiative aims to reach at least 10 million Illinois residents to prevent child drowning. PS10M is funded through a competitive two-year federal Consumer Product Safety Commission Pool Safely Grant.

### FunReadingShows

[www.funreadingshows.com](http://www.funreadingshows.com)  
[booking@brentallan.com](mailto:booking@brentallan.com)

FunReadingShows.com provides entertaining and educational shows for libraries and schools. These programs are built around a variety of themes (such as the iREAD summer theme), and are made up of wacky puppets and hilarious magic that kids and parents will both enjoy!

### GoCreative Programs, LLC

[www.GoCreativePrograms.com](http://www.GoCreativePrograms.com)  
[hamlet@gocreativeprograms.com](mailto:hamlet@gocreativeprograms.com)

Being Bilingual Rocks! Family Concert Series is an interactive, one-of-a-kind experience created by Parents Choice Award Winners Alina Celeste and Mi Amigo Hamlet who are based in Chicago, and travel the country sharing bilingual music, games, and culture. They weave an eclectic blend of original and traditional songs from Latin America, taking kids and families on a musical journey with their mix of bossanova, rumba-flamenco, contemporary Caribbean beats, and bluegrass flavors. Everyone will sing, dance, learn Spanish/English, and play musical games in a joyful, utterly unique blend of cultures, sound, and language.

### The Great Boodini Magic & Juggling Company

[www.thegreatboodini.com](http://www.thegreatboodini.com)  
[thegreatboodini@gmail.com](mailto:thegreatboodini@gmail.com)

Introducing the award winning magician, juggler, card trick expert, and balloon artist, The Great Boodini! Mr. Boodini consistently receives 5 star ratings from clients for customer service, professionalism, and providing amazing magic and entertainment for all age groups. His shows include *Star Wars* shows, Harry Potter illusion shows, spooky fun Halloween shows, all-ages super skills activities shows, magic shows, and more!

### Green Thumb at Your Service

[www.greenthumbatyourservice.com](http://www.greenthumbatyourservice.com)  
[greenthumbatyourservice@gmail.com](mailto:greenthumbatyourservice@gmail.com)

Green Thumb at Your Service is a garden coaching organization dedicated to helping gardeners of all kinds – home, corporate, house of worship, etc. Our mission is to inspire people to become independently healthy by coaching them on how to grow their own food. We can provide programs on vegetable gardening, home cheesemaking, and home mushroom growing.

### **Historic Voices**

www.LauraFKeyes.com  
LFKeyes@gmail.com

Laura Keyes of Historic Voices has been portraying women from history since 2008, including Laura Ingalls Wilder, Mary Lincoln, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and (new for 2024!) Elizabeth Packard. Laura also offers lectures on historic topics such as the Hershey Chocolate Company, Lighthouses and Lighthouse Keepers, L. Frank Baum and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and (new for 2024!) the making of the film *White Christmas*.

### **Histories for Kids/HFK Presents**

www.hfkpresents.com  
hfktales@gmail.com

Histories for Kids/HFK Presents focuses on historical portrayal and storytelling suitable for all ages. Through engaging 45-minute, one-man interactive performances, audiences gain a fresh, firsthand insight into key figures and events from history and culture. Prior to booking, kindly review the age recommendations and specify the age group. These programs are accessible throughout the year.

### **IncredibleBats, Inc.**

www.Incrediblebats.com  
Incrediblebats@gmail.com

We give interactive multimedia presentations that will educate and engage people of all ages. Our bat shows include current topics that will challenge perceptions on bats and the impact they have on the environment. But with our many other animals acquired over the last few years, we also offer programs that don't require an AV component and are quite engaging with our live animals. Our newest animal ambassadors, Armando the Armadillo, Fiona the Fennec Fox, and Rico the Two-Toed Sloth have made our shows even more incredible! We can do age specific programs from preschool to adult programs, and also engaging, all-ages presentations.

### **Miss Jamie's Farm**

www.miss-jamie.com  
jamie@miss-jamie.com

Singer and guitarist Miss Jamie captivates family audiences with her adorable farm-themed interactive music show. Little kids love to dance and the whole family can sing along with her fresh take on children's classics. Bite-sized entertainment keeps kids moving with singing and answering trivia, and even her puppet farmyard friends come out for learning and laughs! With over 10 years in the Chicagoland area, Miss Jamie is easy to work with, prompt and professional, and always a fan favorite. The pig says oink, the cow says moo, Miss Jamie's sweet songs will have you singing and dancing too!

### **Miss Make-Believe**

www.missmakebelieve.com  
littlemissmakebelieve@gmail.com

Miss Make-Believe performs The Kindness Show, a fun and educational journey for kids of all ages. The variety show includes handmade props and puppets, vibrant magic tricks, original music, and lots of laughs. We explore different ways we can be kind to ourselves and others.

### **Mobile Adventure Company**

www.mobileroomescape.com  
info@mobileadventurecompany.com

The Mobile Adventure Company specializes in immersive adventures that travel directly to your library's event location! Our attractions include mobile escape rooms, mobile axe throwing, mobile racing challenge with high speed remote control cars, mobile game shows, and mobile lawn games. Our attractions are exceptional for both youth and adult programming and special events. We are the ultimate experience that brings the fun to you!

### **Nanny Nikki Music, LLC**

www.nannynikkimusic.com  
nannynikkimusic@gmail.com

Grammy® Nominated Artist Nanny Nikki loves to sing, and to bring life to classic children's songs as well as some original music. Join her for a fun, high-energy, and interactive musical show including sing-along songs, dancing, puppets, and more! Sing & Soar!

# Reaching Forward 2024 Exhibitors

## **The Natural Naturalist**

[www.thenaturalnaturalist.com](http://www.thenaturalnaturalist.com)  
[kiwhite1@gmail.com](mailto:kiwhite1@gmail.com)

I offer programs for adults and children. Adult programs consist of a PowerPoint Presentation. Some programs will also have animal ambassadors or artifacts. Children's programs will consist of a story, animal ambassadors, and artifacts. Programs can be in person or virtual.

## **The phazelFOZ Company, LLC**

[www.djcorchin.com](http://www.djcorchin.com)  
[dj@phazelfoz.com](mailto:dj@phazelfoz.com)

The *I Feel...* Children's Series is an award-winning series on emotions most recently featured in Tom Hanks' movie *A Man Called Otto*. Celebrated by educators, therapists, and early childhood professionals, the books are a fun and witty way to start the conversation around complicated topics. Additional books like *A Thousand NO's* and *Do You Speak Fish?* are best-selling titles that focus on growth mindset, communication, and more.

## **ScribbleMonster**

<https://scribblemonster.com>  
[mail@scribblebooks.com](mailto:mail@scribblebooks.com)

Musical Play with ScribbleMonster is an interactive show fueled by your creative ideas! With songs recognized by National Public Radio, the Parents' Choice Awards, and *Parenting Magazine*, Jim's approach to collaborative music, games, and play sparks the imagination and provides children with open-ended opportunities for creative expression. Sing, think, play, dance, share ideas, and get creative with ScribbleMonster!

## **Smarty Pants**

[www.smartypantsworld.com](http://www.smartypantsworld.com)  
[smarty@smartypantsworld.com](mailto:smarty@smartypantsworld.com)

Smarty Pants presents the Big Balloon Show – a theatrical-style balloon stage show featuring magic, comedy, and Smarty's uniquely amazing giant balloon props since 2006!

## **Strictly Self Defense**

[www.linktr.ee/strictlyselfdefense](http://www.linktr.ee/strictlyselfdefense)  
[lindsey@strictlyselfdefense.org](mailto:lindsey@strictlyselfdefense.org)

Strictly Self Defense provides Trauma Informed Self Defense Workshops throughout Chicagoland (and beyond). Our mission is to make self defense training accessible, affordable, and always age appropriate. We offer training for families, youth, teens, adults, and seniors. A variety of workshop themes are available.

## **Young Artists Workshops**

[www.youngartistsworkshops.com](http://www.youngartistsworkshops.com)  
[terri@youngartistsworkshops.com](mailto:terri@youngartistsworkshops.com)

Children's media illustrator and former iREAD illustrator Terri Murphy searches for inspiration in her own studio and brings art workshops to youth, teens, and adults in a library setting. As an artist, she has a keen sense of guiding others on the journey of creativity and style. Whether emulating the method of a famous artist, or discovering a new technique or medium, Terri's step-by-step instruction ensures that everyone has the chance to explore, engage, and create something unique to themselves in a setup similar to her own studio. All materials supplied.

## **Gift Products for Work/Life Balance**

### **A Taste of Michigan Cherries**

<https://store.atasteofmichigancherries.com>  
[june@atasteofmichigancherries.com](mailto:june@atasteofmichigancherries.com)

A Taste of Michigan Cherries is focused on providing high quality cherry products, service, and customer satisfaction. We will do everything we can to meet your expectations. With a wide variety of offerings to choose from, we're sure you'll be happy with the quality, freshness, and unique tastes of our products. We pride ourselves on homemade recipes; all natural ingredients; no preservatives; no or low sugar products; no artificial sweeteners; and absolutely no high fructose corn syrup!

### **Fable-ous Finds**

<https://fableousfinds.etsy.com>  
[fable.ous.finds@gmail.com](mailto:fable.ous.finds@gmail.com)

Fable-ous Finds is a black woman-owned small business aimed at those that love to get lost in a good book. The product mix includes bookish apparel, accessories, digital downloads, and jewelry. The owner, Amanda, creates all of the printed designs that are then fulfilled via a 3rd party and she lovingly crafts each and every bookmark and jewelry piece by hand. Amanda's inspiration and passion comes from a life-long love of fairytales, fables, mythology, and folklore. Her mission is to empower and inspire others and to keep the fairytale magic alive and relevant for future generations.

### **Fine Jewelry by Karen**

[zagonekaren@gmail.com](mailto:zagonekaren@gmail.com)

Sterling silver jewelry. Lots of simplicity pieces.

### **Hardback Yoyo**

[www.hardbackyoyo.com](http://www.hardbackyoyo.com)  
[hardbackyoyo@gmail.com](mailto:hardbackyoyo@gmail.com)

HardbackYoYo is a micro-enterprise that repurposes and upcycles discarded media into art decor and writing journals, keeping great books in circulation, with a touch of whimsy and a green attitude.

### **Ivy Nicole Natural Remedies**

[www.ivynicolenaturalremedies.com](http://www.ivynicolenaturalremedies.com)

Ivy Nicole Natural Remedies was founded with the intention of using nature's bounty of herbs, flowers, and weeds to produce healthy, sustainable products for your home, health and beauty remedies, and skincare products. We have created these beautiful products with pure, sustainable ingredients and have completely eliminated harmful chemicals such as synthetic preservatives, colors, and fragrance. We believe that pure ingredients produce more noticeable effects on skin, beauty, and overall health.

### **Marlaina – The Pottery Lady**

[www.marlainamathisen.com](http://www.marlainamathisen.com)  
[marlainamathisen@gmail.com](mailto:marlainamathisen@gmail.com)

Pottery by Marlaina is one young woman who is pursuing a career through sharing her passion of teaching and selling ceramic art. From teaching wheel throwing at the University of Madison, Wisconsin, to running the Ceramics Department at Camp High Rocks, Marlaina's been on a mission to spread the clay love far and wide.

### **Sheets by Karen**

[www.sheetsbykaren.com](http://www.sheetsbykaren.com)

Sheets by Karen has been offering luxurious 1,800 thread count Egyptian comfort sheets at unbeatable prices for over 12 years.

### **Suds & Sarcasm**

[www.sudsandsarcasm.com](http://www.sudsandsarcasm.com)  
[mysudsandsarcasm@gmail.com](mailto:mysudsandsarcasm@gmail.com)

Put a little sass in your bath and grin on your skin with bath and body products from Suds & Sarcasm! From our women's body scrubs, lotions, bath bombs, and soap to our men's line of soap and beard products, each handcrafted item is designed to make your skin feel and smell great while bringing a smile to your face.



Opening Keynote

**Nick Offerman**

Award-Winning Actor, Best-Selling Author, & Acclaimed Woodworker

President's Program  
**Mychal Threats**  
California Librarian & Viral Sensation for Spreading 'Library Joy'



Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast

**Oge Mora**

Award-Winning Author & Illustrator;  
iREAD 2025 Featured Illustrator



**Annual Conference 2024**

October 8–10 | Peoria, IL

#ILAAC24

[ila.org/conference](http://ila.org/conference)

Registration Opens July 22.



Illinois Library Association