

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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The Illinois Library Association Reporter

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



ON THE COVER

ILA presented Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias with his own *Land of Lincoln Reads Freely* t-shirt in appreciation for his dedication to Illinois libraries and the Freedom to Read. If you love the design, you can buy a shirt, sweater, or travel mug for yourself at www.illinoislibraryassociation.threadless.com.

Photograph by Alex Pryber, Verso Design Corp.

INNER PHOTO

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias showed his support of Illinois libraries at the 2023 ILA Annual Conference. During the Membership Meeting and President's Program, he presented ILA with a generous

donation to contribute to the funding of a forthcoming advocacy campaign that ILA is preparing to champion the Illinois library community! This collaboration with the Illinois State Library, the library systems, and ILA will provide resources for libraries of all sizes and types that are facing threats and emergency situations. Pictured from left to right: ILA Executive Director Cyndi Robinson, Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, ILA President Ryan Johnson.

Photograph by Dennis Pryber, Verso Design Corp.

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

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

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

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Warming Up to Winter: Exploring Winter Reading Programs at Libraries

As summer reading programs wrap up, many library staff plan for their successor: the winter reading program. Though not as commonplace as summer reading programs, winter reading programs are beginning to gain momentum. I wanted to gain more information on winter reading programs, and what library staff have planned, thus I created a survey and collected responses online and over the phone from various library staff members. As a result, three libraries are highlighted in this article to examine the variety and format of winter reading programs.

Keeping things simple, the Kenosha Public Library runs a winter reading program called More Than 4. Brandi Cummings, the Head of Community Programs and Partnerships, shared the inspiration behind this program. After participating in the winter reading challenge with Beanstack, a web and mobile app that tracks independent reading, Cummings wanted to revamp the program and find “a more accessible way to encourage adult reading.” Thus, More Than 4 was born. The program runs from December to the end of February, when the library typically sees lower program engagement. The goal of More Than 4 is for adults to exceed the national reading average for American adults and read more than four books in three months.

In comparison with the summer reading program, in which Kenosha Public Library patrons are asked to count pages towards a collective goal, the winter reading program is “more focused on books with only individual goals.” Adults log at least five books or audiobooks in a three-month period. This straightforward, individualized approach has paid off, with the target demographic responding very positively to the program and log format. Cummings notes that during the first year of More Than 4 the library had “more adults complete the program than in the previous year’s summer reading.”

In contrast with a multitude of winter-themed reading programs, Carbondale Public Library focuses on a more specific subject matter with their Black History Month Reading Challenge. This winter reading program runs during February, coinciding with Black History Month. The program, logged through Beanstack, asks patrons to read books by Black authors, books featuring Black characters, or books about Black history. Participants are challenged to read for twenty minutes daily throughout the month to win a book. Additionally, badges earned on Beanstack enter patrons into the grand prize drawing. In 2022, the grand prize for the Black History Month Reading Challenge was a gift card from a Black Chamber of Commerce of Southern Illinois eatery.



Book display promoting Carbondale Public Library's Black History Month Reading Challenge.

How many years has your library been conducting a Winter Reading Program?

20 responses





Library discards and shirts available in the Eisenhower Public Library's pop-up bookshop.

Library Director Jennifer Robertson says that this all-ages winter reading challenge began in 2019 when she was working in adult programming. After the initial year, Robertson says, "We have continued doing it annually as a way to showcase great books by Black authors." In addition to providing guidelines for readers to choose their reading material, Carbondale Public Library also creates displays and reading lists for patrons to take home. Robertson notes that the library is excited to highlight the importance of Black History Month and hopes to expand the reach of their winter reading program.

After years of running a youth winter reading program, Eisenhower Public Library, located in Harwood Heights, wanted to try something new with the adult demographic. Following a department initiative to encourage reading fun in 2022, Assistant Head of Adult Reference Molly Bitters and a colleague created and previewed a new winter reading program with a pop-up bookshop to match. The program ran from the beginning of January to the end of February, with patrons self-reporting their logs and reading at the librarian's desk. Each book read earned one physical ticket. Readers were also entered into a drawing for one of three prizes for each ticket submitted. To create an in-house "book store," Bitters filled a study room with library discards, donations, vendor swag, and handmade mugs, plushies, and keychains that a staff member created to promote the maker space.



Raffles and prizes made in the library's maker space available in the Eisenhower Public Library's pop-up bookshop.

The reaction to the program and bookshop was overwhelmingly positive. Readers enjoyed browsing the prizes and exploring the space which was made available to patrons during the month of February. Bitters reports that library staff received comments from patrons such as, "I've got to hurry up and read another book to get that polar bear plushie!" Mugs, featuring literary designs and slogans and made with the maker space Cricut, were difficult to keep in stock due to their popularity. After seeing the positive response during winter reading in 2022, Eisenhower Public Library repeated the same concept during adult and teen summer reading, bringing in the best sign-up and participation statistics the library has ever seen for a summer reading program. Bitters notes that adult and teen patrons were happy to have a program that is "something as fun as the kids get."

Behind the unique approaches and programs, the core of winter reading reflects libraries' ethos of literacy and community engagement. Andrea Vaughn Johnson, the Youth Services Manager at Wilmette Public Library, shares that the reader's goal in their reading program is not to track minutes, pages, or books, but rather "to establish or maintain the daily reading habit." With each innovative program, the future of winter reading programs shines brightly. They are a reminder that reading and the joy of discovery know no season.

A special thanks to all those who were interviewed over the phone or completed the survey to share their experience. More than twenty-five libraries contributed to the data collection through the online survey or through phone or email interviews. **ILA**

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A Day in the Life of a Museum Librarian and Head of Library Collections

I begin my day as Museum Librarian and Head of Library Collections at the Marie Louise Rosenthal Library of the Field Museum by entering the great Stanley Field Hall under a suspended Spinosaurus cast. The green oxidized metal doors have just been opened and early bird visitors are waiting inside. I take the staff elevator upstairs to the third floor where the Main Library is located. There are nine stack areas throughout the building next to their collection areas, e.g. the Birds Library is next to zoology colleagues who work with birds, an intentional design of the building when it opened in 1921.

The Library of the Field Museum opened alongside the rest of the Museum in 1894 at its first location, the site of the Palace of Fine Arts and the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Its collection grew out of the transfer of books from the libraries of various departments of the World's Columbian Exposition; materials brought to the Museum at this time included 1,400 titles from the Exposition's Department of Ethnology and the 6,300-title geology collection of George Frederick Kunz, mineralogist and gemologist with Tiffany and Company. Today, the Library contains approximately 275,000 circulating volumes and 7,500 rare books in its Rare Book Room. Photo Archives and Museum Archives are also under the Library's umbrella. The Library primarily serves staff, volunteers, interns, visiting researchers, and members of the public by appointment. Through its participation in interlibrary loan programs, cooperative collection development, the Biodiversity Heritage Library, and other digitization efforts, the Library seeks to expand access to its materials outside the boundaries of the Museum.



Staff circa 1909 in front of the first site of the Field Museum; Elsie Lippincott, the only female pictured, was the Museum Librarian at the time.



Sobek the Spinosaurus greets visitors to the Field Museum.

I started at the Field Museum in 2016 as the Reference & Interlibrary Loan Librarian. Prior to coming to the Museum, I worked in public libraries (Downers Grove and Oak Park) as well as university libraries (DePaul and University of Chicago). In each of these settings I provided reference services. That said, I almost didn't apply for the Field Museum job because I assumed a lot of others would (and I was right!) and I wasn't sure of my chances. After turning on the lights, computers, and opening the stacks, more staff start trickling in, including a new employee from Botany who wants to know if we've turned the page on the Audubon yet. I gather two other Library staff members to help me, get the keys, and wash and dry my hands thoroughly since I'm about to handle a book that is also one of the most valuable objects in all of the Museum's collections. It takes three of us to open the glass case and position it to stay open. I then turn the pages of Audubon's *Birds of America* (1827-1838) until landing on a gorgeous trumpeter swan. I encourage our visitor to get close so she can smell the book in its case and take a picture, too. Happily, I ended up in a job

and in a place I'm really passionate about—the Field Museum has been my favorite museum since I moved to Chicago in 2005, and I'm always learning more about natural history, which I find fascinating.

Later that morning we have a Library staff meeting attended by the new interim director of collections, where much of the conversation is about heating and cooling—always a challenge with such an old building—as well as recent unionization and organizational changes. Happily, the HVAC issues in the Rare Book Room have been rectified and I no longer need to empty a dehumidifier each day to keep it balanced. Afterwards I continue work on labels for a Library exhibit on Japanese woodblock prints, which will be on display in three cases in the Reading Room. I send emails until three new hires of the Adler Planetarium's library arrive for a lunch meeting in which we all get to know one another, exchange ideas, etc. They are all recently hired, whereas one of our staff has been at the Field Museum for 40 years, and a few have been here at least 30.



Mary W. Runnells Rare Book Room at the Field Museum.



Image of the Trumpeter Swan from Audubon's *Birds of America*.

In the afternoon I send more emails and work on interlibrary loans, a holdover duty from when I was first hired as Reference and Interlibrary Loan Librarian in 2016. (I became Museum Librarian in 2019.) I send the first physical book that I've sent since prior to the pandemic, as well as four scanned article copies. I also send one follow-up email to a visiting researcher from the previous week regarding a symposium I am helping to organize on Berthold Laufer, the first curator of anthropology at the Museum. Near the end of the day I open up an unused office space under my purview that may be repurposed as a digitization space and discuss pros and cons with my supervisor. I check my calendar and emails for tomorrow, which will include a meeting with our network administrator about setting up a self-checkout station in the Fishes Library. It's been a more complicated onboarding than I expected since I've been getting conflicting information from our ILS vendor and the self-checkout vendor. I send a question to HR on behalf of a staff member and then shut the lights of my office off before heading home after a productive day. **ILA**

“...and then shut the lights of my office off before heading home after a productive day.”



The Power of Partnerships: Multi-Library Banned Books Week Webinar

As the planning for Banned Book Week was underway at our library, Vernon Area Public Library District, our collaborative Community Engagement department became inspired by the succinct but poignant phrase “Free People Read Freely.” The Freedom to Read Foundation’s motto echoed our feelings about intellectual freedom and our library’s commitment to access to information.

In 2022, the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom reported the highest number of attempted book bans since they started tracking this data more than 20 years ago. Trends in 2023 suggest a new record will be set this year.

Compelled to take action, we began planning a webinar, “Book Challenges on the Rise: Support Your Freedom to Read,” which took place on October 2, 2023. We envisioned an ambitious event with two goals. First, we wanted to assemble a first-rate panel of speakers to explore how libraries and readers can support intellectual freedom. Second, we wanted to partner with as many Illinois libraries as possible to amplify the message.

Momentum for the event began to build when we secured Secretary of State and State Librarian Alexi Giannoulias as a panelist. Giannoulias is an outspoken defender of the freedom to read and the author of Illinois’ landmark anti-book ban legislation.

Adding their expertise to the panel were Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) Executive Director Monica Harris and two Illinois-based authors, Jarrett Dapier and Jasmine Warga. Noted syndicated columnist Heidi Stevens, who appears in the *Chicago Tribune*, agreed to moderate the discussion.

Originally, we hoped to partner with 20 libraries to co-host the webinar. When more than 75 signed on, it became clear we’d identified a need. Through networking support including RAILS and ILA, the word spread across the state.

Ultimately, more than 800 library patrons joined the webinar from Chicago to Rock Island, and Harvard to Carbondale. Many submitted questions in advance, but the resounding theme was “how can individuals support libraries and the freedom to read?”

RAILS Director Monica Harris provided action steps for library users who oppose book challenges, such as joining a friends of the library foundation, attending a school or library board meeting, writing an op-ed to a local newspaper, or running for office in your library or school board. “We’ve seen so many surveys that show somewhere between 70 and 90 percent of people in this country, across political lines, do not support taking books out of public libraries. If you mobilize an effort to make sure people in your community know that these things are happening, people will show up. But they need you to make your voice heard and get things started,” said Harris.



Harris further explained that most concerns about books that are brought up by a community member are addressed with a conversation: A librarian “will explain to the person that though this material might not be right for them or their family, the library is for everyone. And for most people that is where a challenge stops. They understand that while they have the right to determine what is right for their families, they don’t have the right to determine what everyone should read.”

Secretary Giannoulis provided insight into the nation-leading legislation that protects libraries in Illinois against attempts to ban or restrict access to books or other materials. “We’re very lucky in Illinois to have leaders that stand up for the freedom of speech and the freedom to learn. The outpouring of support from librarians has been tremendous,” said Giannoulis. “We have heard from other states and others are working on legislation. The state of California and New Jersey have reached out. I am very optimistic that other states will follow suit.”

Authors Jarrett Dapier and Jasmine Warga discussed their first-hand experiences of having their books challenged or banned from certain libraries, a situation many authors are increasingly forced to face.

Dapier shared his experience when his picture book *Mr. Watsons’ Chickens* was challenged at an Alabama library by a parent who felt the book contributed to indoctrination. The book tells the story of a same-sex couple who live on a farm and raise chickens together. In support of the library, another parent in Alabama responded to the challenge by taking action, collecting testimonials from Dapier and community members, submitting a packet to the library board, and providing public comment at the meeting. Ultimately, the board voted unanimously to keep the book on the shelf.

“Libraries are a cornerstone of democracy, but democracy requires participation,” said Dapier. “Do everything you can to make sure your board is good and does everything they can to support libraries, and doesn’t actually want to defund libraries.”

Warga discussed her 2020 Newbery Honor book, *Other Words for Home*, a sweet and hopeful story about a 12-year-old girl and her family’s move from Syria to the U.S. “When I was a kid I never saw myself represented in books as an Arab American and Muslim American,” Warga explained. “When this book was challenged, this took me back to being 12 years old and not feeling like I fit in and looking on the library shelf hoping to find that type of belonging.”

It was heartening to hear the passion around this subject from the library community: patrons, librarians, library directors and trustees. One library’s board of trustees even watched the conversation as a group prior to the start of their monthly meeting.

One participant shared, “I think this was a real eye opener locally...everyone involved added a well needed perspective.”

“...as a 20-year library trustee — thank you for a very informative program!”

“As a children’s librarian who works in a library where children’s books that include LGBTQ information are being stolen and defaced, I appreciate that this is something we’re talking about,” added another participant.

Given the urgency of this subject to libraries and readers everywhere, it was of importance to us that the program and its message have the biggest impact possible. An online format allowed us to freely partner with libraries across the state without concern for how many audience members fit in the room or how far audience members would need to travel — making it an ideal opportunity for a multi-library partnership.

Event promotions benefit from the multiplier effect, too. When local news outlets see that an event is hosted by multiple libraries, they take greater notice and are more likely to cover it. When patrons see the same event advertised across a variety of social media channels, library newsletters, and local news media outlets, they take greater notice and are more likely to participate.

These partnerships allow libraries to easily expand their program offerings simply by signing on as a partner. And as more libraries offer more partnership opportunities, we all benefit from a richer catalog of programs for our patrons.

In this instance we were able to amplify the message of “Free People Read Freely.” We hope you and your libraries are emboldened to pursue opportunities for collaboration. With a little effort and commitment, large-scale partnerships are attainable and put libraries in a pivotal position to inform and motivate our communities around critical issues. **ILA**

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Making Decisions Centered Around EDI

Many library associations recognize the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), including the Illinois Library Association, Public Library Association, and American Library Association. In response to the Associations' call to action, many libraries have committed to EDI work which regularly translates to training for staff and issuing broad statements. While these are important steps, library staff have reported they are unclear about how to apply what they have learned to their daily work. To combat this, the Downers Grove Public Library has developed an EDI Decision-Making Tool to help staff members and the Board of Trustees when beginning the decision-making process. With explicit consideration of EDI in these moments, libraries can move past the more obvious methods and regular strategies of doing the work. Staff members of every level are encouraged to utilize the EDI Decision-Making Tool, which will help them develop strategies and actions to be more mindful as they go through a choice point that will impact library services. Because this tool was purposefully designed for all staff members, it can be applied to any library regardless of type, size, or budget.

The tool consists of four questions to ask yourself when making a decision that can impact internal and external library services:

- How is my decision being influenced by white supremacy or dominant culture?
- Is a historically, intentionally, and traditionally marginalized people group (HITMPG) being harmed directly or indirectly by my decision?
- Who has a voice in making this decision besides me?
- How does your decision affect other staff and community members, in the short term and long term?

“Library staff have reported they are unclear about how to apply what they have learned to their daily work.”

“The tool is most effective when library workers use it at the beginning of the decision-making process.”

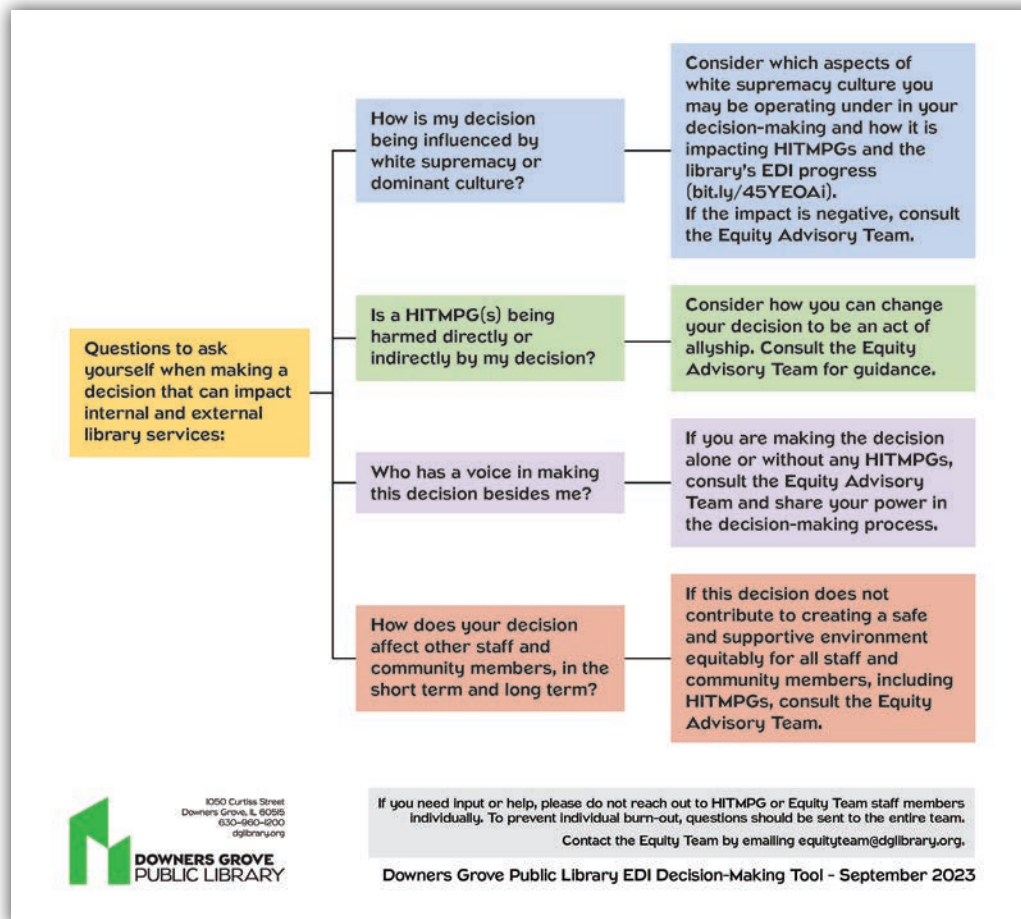


The tool then has suggestions to consider how to reflect on the questions and explore the potential impact of your actions. For the Downers Grove Public Library, we encourage staff who are unclear and looking for additional guidance to reach out to our Equity Advisory Team, which consists of staff members, a Board Trustee, and community members. If your library does not have an Equity Advisory Team, it is important to seek help from a resource or organization that would have direct experience in that area instead of reaching out to an individual HITMPG staff member. For example, when posed a question about inclusive language on a Disability Awareness Month bookmark, a member of the Equity Advisory Team reached out to multiple disability advocacy and awareness organizations who provided valuable feedback. In this instance, the team offered a recommended response, however, in many cases the team will refer staff members to resources and offer suggestions. The ultimate goal of the EDI Decision-Making Tool is to empower staff to make informed decisions on their own with an always-on EDI lens.

The EDI Decision-Making Tool is not a checklist or decision tree to arrive at a final answer, but rather, it is a guide to help you walk through your process by proactively asking questions and being intentional. Working through the tool is a nonlinear process and can feel cyclical at times. There is never one right answer or way to proceed. Instead, the focus is to work on cultivating ideas and suggestions that are both effective for the organization and that are equitable, diverse, and inclusive. While the EDI Decision-Making Tool does not need to be applied to every situation, it is best used for choices that can impact internal and external library services, such as (but not limited to): policies and procedures, large communications, hiring practices, large purchases, proposal items, programs, and safety protocols.

The tool is most effective when library workers use it at the beginning of the decision-making process. The tool can also be used after a decision has been made, in reflection, to hold yourself accountable on your personal EDI journey, as well as to evaluate the outcomes of previous decisions. As we continue to learn and grow, we can improve our decision-making and re-examine our past choice points; this may result in recognizing a need to change a previous decision.

Downers Grove Public Library's EDI Decision-Making Tool. Credit: Cindy Khatri and Van McGary.



In order to make sure that the EDI Decision-Making Tool is used effectively and consistently, it is important to make sure that all staff are trained on the tool on a regular basis. For the Downers Grove Public Library, this includes onboarding training, annual training, and regular discussions throughout the year. To provide a visual reminder and allow for easy access, the tool is posted in all workrooms, in all managers' offices, and on our Staff Wiki, which is our internal webpage.

This tool has been successfully implemented in various situations at our library. For example, when we received the American Indian Library Association Talk Story Grant to fund collection items and programming featuring Native experiences, we intentionally supported Native vendors. Not only were the materials made by and about Native peoples, the vendors chosen were also Native-owned and supported Native causes. Utilizing the EDI Decision-Making Tool helped encourage us to support HITMPGs beyond the program's presenters.

Another example was a question presented to the Equity Advisory Team by library programmers about how to be inclusive when planning an activity kit for Lunar New Year. Staff were unsure what terminology to use (Lunar New Year vs. Chinese New Year), what language to utilize on the handout, and what crafts to include in the bag. Utilizing the tool, the team made recommendations to the programming staff for them to further explore, learn, and reflect before making their decision.

To supplement the EDI Decision-Making Tool, the Downers Grove Public Library has introduced the Curious Q&A newsletter and drop-in sessions. The internal newsletter documents how the Equity Advisory Team utilizes the tool to demonstrate the process while discussing a choice point. Additionally, staff members are invited to share their own experiences and insight on a topic, as well as pose additional questions, at the drop-in sessions.

With regular use of the EDI Decision-Making Tool, it becomes a part of who we are and how we function in work and in life. This will help library workers uphold the core value of serving everyone by incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion into all that we do. **ILA**

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Library Clue: Bringing Fun Back to the Library

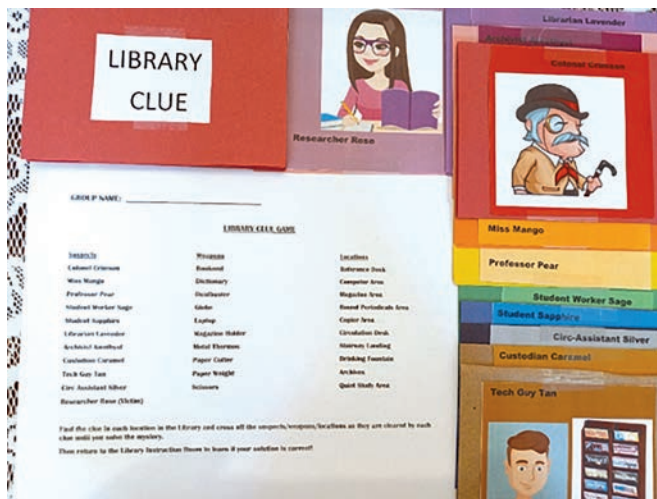
INTRODUCTION

Now is the perfect time for librarians to come up with fun ways to bring people back into library spaces! After finding fun ways to transition library activities online over the past few years, our next mission, should we choose to accept it, is to welcome patrons back to the library, ideally with a fun experience that will keep them coming back. To that end, here are a couple of inspiring examples I found of other librarians' creative ways to either add fun to the online library experience, or to bring in-person fun safely back into the library, followed by a recap of a Library Clue game played here at Waubonsee Community College's Todd Library. Hopefully, these ideas will provide you with some inspiration as well.

ONLINE LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

The first idea I found intriguing was a Harry Potter-themed "Hogwarts Digital Escape Room," developed by Sydney Krawiec for the Peters Township Public Library in McMurray, Pennsylvania. This online game tapped into the popularity of the literary character Harry Potter to provide fun puzzles, clues, and questions for players to solve to successfully complete the activity. Its success also offered evidence in support of the idea that everyone loves a mystery!

Another idea I loved involved adding a fun mascot to online library videos to increase student engagement. In the article, "He's Ready for His Close-Up: Peter the Anteater's Guide to the Library," librarians from the University of California-Irvine created a sock puppet version of their school mascot, Peter the Anteater, to feature in their library videos. This led to increased viewings of the videos, demonstrating that bringing an element of fun to the library is not just enjoyable, but also has the potential to increase usage statistics as an added bonus.



Game card and character sheets created for Library Clue.



IN-PERSON LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

As library spaces were starting to reopen, I next viewed Paula Willey and Andria L. Amaral's fantastic webinar, "The Candy Corn Question: Passive Programming that Pulls People In," which details numerous examples of how to use displays and simple whiteboard questions like "Candy Corn: Love It or Hate It?" to get students who walk into the library to express their opinions in dialogue with library staff and fellow students, increasing their engagement and sense of belonging in the library, and demonstrating that even brief interactions can help students feel seen and validated.

My biggest inspiration came from Nichole Novak's webinar, "Adding a Little Mystery to a University FYE [First Year Experience] Program: How Librarians Developed a Mystery Game to Teach Fundamental Search Skills to First Years," which described the development of a library orientation mystery game with fun clues and puzzles tailored specifically to their university for the new students to work through to familiarize themselves with the library.

LIBRARY CLUE

With these inspirations, I began developing a mystery-themed orientation activity customized for students at Waubensee Community College. I decided to borrow the basic idea of the board game Clue, revising the locations to ten areas in the library, and devising ten library-themed weapons and characters. In addition, I invented a Waubensee-specific story to introduce the game to students. Then I made up a game card to pass out to students, and printed out several slightly different ones, changing the order of the locations so that the students would be spread throughout the library.

I used library-related, alliterative, color-themed names like Librarian Lavender, Professor Pear, and Student Worker Sage for the characters. A creative coworker found graphics online to make the characters come to life, and then I used colorful construction paper to create a rainbow of different color backgrounds for the character cards.

For the clues, I created clue cards with alibis for each character; for example, "Professor Pear was observed on the stairway landing, studying a globe." These were taped around the library in the matching location, each made of red construction paper with "Library Clue" on a liftable flap, and I reminded students to leave the clues in place for other players to find.

To begin the game, I told the students, "An incident has occurred in Todd Library. Researcher Rose has been found wandering in the library with a bump on her head and no memory of what happened. She only remembers that she was doing research on Chief Waubensee, an area Indian chief who was rumored to have left buried treasure somewhere on the campus of Waubensee Community College. As Rose is whisked off to the hospital to be checked for a concussion, we will be trying to solve the mystery of what happened to Rose: Who did it, with what instrument, and where in the library."

It was late October, so the winning student who solved the mystery was rewarded by getting to pick first from a bowl of Halloween candy. With those instructions, the students set off with their game cards, searching for clues around the library. Once they had all the clues, solving the mystery took a few more minutes, as there were actually two clues to find in the Quiet Study Area, one indicating that Researcher Rose (the victim) was there, and the other indicating that Colonel Crimson (the perpetrator) was also there. A clue from a nearby area, the Archives, indicated that Archivist Amethyst had heard Researcher Rose exclaim, "Wow! It's Chief Waubensee's long-lost treasure map!" This led to suspicion of the Archivist, but eventually the correct solution was determined: It was Colonel Crimson, with the Dictionary in the Quiet Study Area.

In the follow up afterwards, I explained, "Colonel Crimson, who was in the Quiet Study, also heard Researcher Rose's exclamation, and impulsively used the Dictionary to knock her on the head and steal the treasure map. When confronted, he confessed to the crime, and the stolen treasure map was returned."

LEARNING GOAL

The activity fulfilled a few learning goals:

1. Students became familiar with Todd Library.
2. Students learned about the different types of activity that can be done in the library.
3. Students were shown that library research has the potential to lead to valuable discoveries in addition to an increased knowledge about important issues.

The game was played by a group of dual credit Yorkville High School students brought to Todd Library by English 101 instructor Michelle Lillig to research their papers and attend a library instruction led by Faculty Librarian Adam Burke. After the game, a group photo was taken of the students holding their character cards from the game, and the students returned to researching their papers. Hopefully the students enjoyed their experience playing Library Clue, and afterwards their instructor mentioned that she thought it was a really cool idea!


REFLECTION

In conclusion, I found it very rewarding to review other librarians' creative ideas, and to develop an in-person activity to bring a little bit of fun back to the library, and I would encourage other librarians to give it a try as well! After all, as librarians, part of our mission, should we choose to accept it, is to help students develop the research skills necessary to seek solutions to some of life's greatest mysteries, and what better way to get them excited about library research than a fun crime-solving game of Library Clue?

To adapt Library Clue to your own library, create your own Library Clue game card and find ways to personalize the locations, story, and characters to fit your specific library, school, or town history. For example, maybe the valuable item found in the library could be a previously undiscovered manuscript by an author from your town, or the map to a long-lost area copper mine, or a treasure map left by the city's founders. In terms of scalability, the game can work for either up to ten individual players or for teams, depending on the size of the library and the time allotted.

For other sources of inspiration, in addition to library presentations and publications, ideas for fun library activities can be found all around us, including pop culture, video games, books, movies, and television. Any of these, depending on the age level and interest of the target audience, has the potential to be developed into a fun and/or educational library game or activity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I was inspired to write this article after viewing a presentation by our Library Director, Spencer Brayton, encouraging community college librarians to share their experiences through publication. In addition, I felt encouraged to tap into my creativity by the example and enthusiasm of a pair of Humanities professors whose courses I was embedded in, Dr. Aaron Lawler and Steven Zusman. My coworker Deb Chan did the graphics for the game and provided additional useful feedback. Gratitude as well to Adam Burke and my other library coworkers. The positive feedback of other current and former librarians and teachers was also helpful — thank you to Julie Adamski, Brenda Ammeraal, Joyce Bokun, Beverly Meyer, and Brittany and Susan Neil. 

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ILA Welcomes New Members

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Infobase/Credo, New York, NY
Illinois State Treasurer's Office, Springfield
Pondering Leadership, Columbia, SC

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Creve Coeur Public Library District, Creve Coeur
Hamilton Public Library, Hamilton
Illioopolis/Niantic Public Library District, Illioopolis
Lovington Public Library District, Lovington
Mattoon Public Library, Mattoon
Moweaqua Public Library District, Moweaqua
Olney Public Library, Olney
Philo Public Library District, Philo
Rantoul Public Library, Rantoul
St. Elmo Public Library District, St. Elmo
St. Joseph Township-Swearingen Memorial Library, St. Joseph
Sumpter Township Library, Toledo

TRUSTEE MEMBERS

Kimberly Alberth, Gail Borden Public Library District
James Daunis Jr., Fountaindale Public Library District
Heather Evenson, Nippersink Public Library District
Morgan Kolecke, Ella Johnson Memorial Public Library District
Steven Marx, Peoria Public Library
Sofia Neri, Addison Public Library
Lindsay Prigge, Barrington Area Library
Christopher Pudelek, Addison Public Library
Donna Reboletti, Addison Public Library
June Rokita-Kennedy, White Oak Library District
Patricia Sanchez, Schiller Park Public Library
Lisa Stordahl, Cary Area Public Library

STUDENT MEMBERS

Alyssa Brown, Champaign
Laurel Darling, Champaign
Quentella Davis, Chicago
Abigail DeWeese, Elsau
Travis Givens, Naperville
Taylor Keahey, Evanston
Courtney Langdon, Jacksonville
Victor Lopez, Chicago

Jenny Lucas, Flossmoor
Laura McCammack, Chicago
Ella Omi, Homer Glen
Brandy Quant, Chicago
Henrique Rodrigues, Park Forest
Kat Rowe, Carbondale
Amy Slagter, Lombard
Alisha Smaby, Round Lake
Dawn Smith, Metamora
Sarah Szeszol, River Grove
Stacey Van Kley, Bourbonnais
Hilda Vazquez Medina, Chicago
Sally Vinanzaca, Chicago
Amanda Waller, Chicago
Emma Watkins, Indian Head Park

PERSONAL MEMBERS

Kat Anderberg, Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS)
Rupangi Bakshi, Aurora Public Library District
Natalie Carbery, Cary Area Public Library
Kathy Condon-Boettcher, Six Mile Regional Library District
Mikayla Contreras, Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District
Samantha Daly, Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS)
Ashleigh Enghausen, Cheney's Grove Township Library
Lydia Frank, Lake Forest Library
John Fruit, Maywood Public Library District
Maura Given, O'Fallon Public Library
Marissa Guzman, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District
Fatima Hernandez, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District
Leah Herzig, Alpha Park Public Library District
April Jensen, Lincoln Public Library District
Kelly Kerckhove, Dunlap Public Library District
Ashley Mangin, O'Fallon Public Library
Riley McLaughlin, Alsip-Merrionette Park Public Library District
Bill Ohms, Evanston Public Library
Julie Perenchio, Elmhurst University
Sophie Popovich, Geneva Public Library District
Terri Purcell, Joliet Public Library
Liz Reyes, Green Hills Public Library District
Trinity Roland, Anne West Lindsey District Library
Kathy Rosa, IDOC BMRCC Library
Deborah Roycroft, Gail Borden Public Library District
Jessica Silva, Austin, TX
Michelle Simmons, Western Illinois University
Dustin Smaby, Vernon Area Public Library District
Jill Trevino, Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS)
Maria Tudela, Illinois State University
Gretchen Wallet, Schiller Park Public Library

New Illinois Library Luminary



Jill Donovan has lent her creative mind to ILA since the mid-90s but was officially hired to start working with iREAD in 2002. Since then, Jill has served as the Creative Director for iREAD and will be greatly missed with her retirement in October 2023. The program as we know it would not exist without Jill's contributions over the past 21 years.

Whether you loved Christian Robinson's fun Gaston art, from iREAD's 2018 theme of "Reading Takes You Everywhere!" or were drawn to the simple yet beautiful illustrations from Hervé Tullet in 2021's "Reading Colors Your World," you have Jill to thank for recruiting and negotiating with ALL of the artists since 2002.

Regardless of if you are actively involved with planning summer reading at your library, take part each summer as a participant, or simply enjoy watching your library be decorated for each year's theme, you have Jill to thank. She has created every flier, catalog, branded incentive, and piece of print (both physical and digital) for the past twenty years. Not only that, she has made it a priority and personal mission that the art reflects age, gender, disability, body, and racial/ethnic diversity so that everyone using iREAD has an opportunity to see themselves reflected in the art available and in the artists themselves.

As if that wasn't enough, she is the reason we have the amazing Resource Guide to send to libraries across the globe! Due in large part to Jill's hard work and dedication, we have partners like the Department of Defense using iREAD for their base libraries and statewide adoptions but it doesn't stop there. Libraries across the US, Bermuda, and even as far away as New Zealand, use the program to create summer reading for their communities.

Since 2003, ILA has honored former ILA President Sylvia Murphy Williams by awarding ILA Annual Conference sponsorships and a one-year membership to the Association to ALA Spectrum Scholars who live in Illinois and who are attending graduate programs in library and information science in the state, thanks to support from a fund established in honor of the late Sylvia Murphy Williams, 2002 ILA President, now known as the Diversity Scholarship Fund. ILA Williams Scholars are also connected with mentors via ILA's Diversity Committee. This year, we are pleased to welcome nine Williams Scholars to Illinois librarianship! Several of them contributed these inspiring comments about what motivated them to become librarians, favorite courses in graduate school, professional goals, hopes for librarianship, and anything else they'd like to share. We welcome all of them as future members of the profession.



CRISTINA BUENO

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"Look, I... I may not be an explorer, or an adventurer, or a treasure-seeker, or a gunfighter, Mr. O'Connell, but I am proud of what I am.

And what is that?

I... am a librarian."

The Mummy (1999) featuring Rachel Weisz and Brendan Fraser had a profound impact on my life. It got me interested in the field of archaeology and in museums. As a kid, I devoured every book about ancient Egypt and archaeology at my local library. I wanted to be like Evie from the movie. I related to her adventurous spirit and her love of history and artifacts. Year after year my passions were archaeology and education. I went on to earn a BA in Archaeology from Saint Mary's College and an MA in Museum Education from The University of the Arts.

In 2017, I moved back to Illinois and happened upon my first public library job. I absolutely loved developing and implementing youth programs and I utilized many of the skills I had learned and employed in museums. I've even gotten to do archaeology programs for elementary students. I kept thinking I'd return to museums but the longer I stayed in the library world the more I began to realize how suited I was for it. I was always a big reader and an avid library user but I had NEVER thought of becoming a librarian. I am still shocked that the idea had never crossed my mind. It's thanks to many amazing colleagues and mentors that I began to see a future in libraries and realized I would love to become a Youth Department Manager someday. So back to school I went.

I am currently a second year at the University of Illinois iSchool working on my MLIS degree. I've gotten to take some really interesting classes with incredible professors. This past semester I took Asian American Youth Literature with Dr. Sarah Park Dahlen where I learned a lot about Asian American literature and a bit about how to evaluate books that are good representations. I also really upped my readers' advisory game for a variety of genres. I've learned a lot on the job over the years but it's nice to dig deeper into librarianship and make new connections.

Speaking of connections, it was really nice getting to attend this year's ILA Annual Conference and meet library workers from across the state. I also got to meet three of my classmates (and fellow Williams Scholars) in person! That was the best part for me. I hope being a part of ILA and the cohort of Spectrum and Williams Scholars will allow me to continue building my library community, especially with fellow BIPOC and Queer library workers. I love sharing knowledge and ideas, especially for developing programs and expanding access and services at my library. I hope I can be a positive contributor to the profession, inspiring future readers and librarians alike. I look forward to continuing to share my passion for archaeology and cultures through programs. My hope for the library profession is that it holds strong against oppression and bigotry in the coming years. I hope that it reflects on what neutrality truly means and whether libraries are or should be "neutral" spaces. Personally, I believe libraries are not neutral and shouldn't keep trying to be.

So maybe I didn't end up spending every day excavating ancient sites but I think I ended up where I was meant to be... I ended up as a youth librarian.



ABIGAIL DEWEESE

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The various social justice elements of the information sciences field really appealed to me, especially during and after the pandemic. As an Asian American, I have experienced discrimination, but this reached a peak during the pandemic when the narrative that the COVID-19 virus originated in China created a domino effect that saw a rise in attacks against Asians worldwide. Through my work, I would like to be able to help people be aware of where and how we receive information, as well as how to responsibly use it. Librarians encourage people to be compassionate global citizens by emphasizing the conscientious management and dispersion of information.

My favorite class so far in library school is Foundations of Information Processing. Learning to dive right into coding has been a rewarding challenge!

I hope to make connections from ILA’s extensive network of professionals who understand the importance of libraries in society, and collaborate on innovative ways libraries can keep up with our increasingly interconnected world.

Looking forward, I hope to see greater diversity in librarianship so that there are more people and perspectives being represented and have a voice at the table.



SARAH REBECCA GAGLIO

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In September 2019, I attended a talk featuring Nell Taylor, founder and executive director of Chicago’s Read/Write Library. As Nell spoke, one statement rang out above the rest: “Helping people find the information that matters to them is a librarian’s highest calling.” I have thought about these words often, about how they encapsulate something that I find exciting and energizing about the work of a librarian. It’s my interest in working with others, supporting students in navigating complex information systems, accessing information, and critically evaluating that information that drove me towards a career in librarianship.

I am working towards a career as a reference and instruction librarian in an academic setting, and my favorite class so far has been Instructional Strategies and Techniques for Information Professionals. The class exemplified what I am finding most exciting about my MSLIS coursework. As a professional degree program, there is a high level of emphasis placed on career readiness and practical skill building. At the same time, we are provided with strong theoretical foundations to help guide those practical aspects of the work. In my Instructional Strategies course, I was supported in reflecting on and developing my personal instructional practices, in rooting my work in critical, feminist pedagogy, and walked away with concrete examples of instructional design that I can use in future job settings.

My time at the ILA Annual Conference was energizing and encouraging. It solidified my commitment to this profession and reminded me that this career pivot was the right decision. I appreciated the chance to see the wide variety of work being done by early career and seasoned librarians and was inspired by the creative solutions to complex problems being put forth by my future colleagues. Participating in the IACRL Unconference was a definite highlight – I loved the format of that morning and the chance to really think expansively about the role of libraries in an academic community. As an online student, it was also wonderful to get to meet some of my classmates in person for the first time. I look forward to continuing to find ways to get involved in ILA, and to find community with librarians interested in bringing a critical, justice-oriented lens to our work.



ANDREA SERNA

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

I chose to pursue librarianship after interning at the Chicago History Museum (CHM) during my undergrad at DePaul University. Before this internship, I didn't even know that library school or librarianship was an option. At CHM, I had the opportunity to work with the *American Medina* exhibit which included oral histories of Muslim Americans living in Chicago. This experience was so powerful and showed me that I can highlight the stories and experiences of people from marginalized communities in information centers like museums and libraries. After I graduated from DePaul, I wanted to further explore working in information centers, so I worked at my local public library, Arlington Heights Memorial Library, for a year before starting library school. My experience working in a public library taught me a lot about what services and resources people come to the library for and how important libraries are to their communities.

My favorite class in library school so far is Information Services for Diverse Users taught by Barbara Alvarez. It has been a really wonderful class that explores how we can serve diverse populations, and I've learned a lot about diverse communities other than my own. I've also had the chance to reflect on my own identity and experiences and how they shape my work as a future librarian.

I hope to work in an academic library as a student success librarian or as an outreach and instruction librarian. I love working with undergraduate students, not just in a formal research and instruction setting, but I'm also passionate about fostering meaningful relationships with campus groups to boost library resources and services. I hope to make academic libraries more accessible to groups not traditionally represented in higher education.

My impression of the ILA Annual Conference was that it was great to meet other people in the field and learn from others! It was my first time in Springfield, so it was nice to see our state capitol, as well. I'm also currently in Emily Knox's Intellectual Freedom and Censorship class so it was really great seeing her in person during the opening keynote. I also finally got to meet some classmates in person, as well as catch up with a former colleague from Arlington Heights Memorial Library, which was wonderful. I'm excited for more conferences in the future!

My hopes for my ILA membership is that I continue to meet other librarians in the field and continue learning from others. I also hope to stay up to date with what libraries across Illinois are doing and hopefully continue engaging with professional development opportunities.

My hope for the library profession is that more people from marginalized communities enter our profession and pursue a career in libraries. I would like to see more people that look like me in the field, and I hope that we continue to critically reflect on how we can make our profession more accessible and inclusive to others.

Thank you for selecting me to be a Williams Scholar! As a born and raised Illinoisan, I am honored and excited to continue working in libraries in Illinois.

Turn the Page on Wasted Energy



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Energy Efficiency PROGRAM

2023 ILA Awards Showcase



Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award for Interlibrary Cooperation

Sponsored by the ILA Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Fund. Award Winner Illinois Libraries Present.



Crosman Memorial Award for New Library Workers

Sponsored by Dominican University School of Information Studies. Award recipient Lizzi Ogle with Award Sponsor Don Hamerly from Dominican University SOIS.



Intellectual Freedom Award

Sponsored by the ILA Intellectual Freedom Fund and Ancel Glink. Award presented by Britt Isaly from Ancel Glink to award recipients Christine Bristow, Samantha Lego, and Aimee Villet, Youth Department of the Glen Carbon Centennial Library.



Librarian of the Year Award

Sponsored by Today's Business Solutions (TBS, Inc.). Award presented by Mickey Smith, TBS, Inc. to Jeannie Dilger.



Young Adult Library Professional of the Year Award

Sponsored by Sourcebooks. Award recipient Randi Carreno, Fountaindale Public Library District.



Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award

Sponsored by the ILA Robert R. McClarren Fund. Award presented by Kyla Waltermire, chair of the ILA Public Policy Committee to Illinois State Senator Laura Murphy.



Deborah Dowley Preiser Marketing Award

Sponsored by the Oak Park Public Library to Evelyn Shapiro and Gloria Roubal, Champaign Public Library Promotions Team with Award Sponsor Oak Park Public Library Director Joslyn Bowling Dixon.



Youth Services Achievement Award

Sponsored by Brainfuse. Award presented by Past Manager Ann Baillie to Debbie Roycroft.



Youth Services Librarian of the Year Award

Sponsored by Children's Plus Inc. Award presented by Rob Innes, Children's Plus Inc. to Heidi Knuth.



Illinois Academic Librarian of the Year Award

Sponsored by Library Juice Academy.
Award recipient Jade Kastel.



TBS, Inc. Technical Services Award

Sponsored by Today's Business Solutions (TBS, Inc.). Award presented by Mickey Smith, TBS, Inc. to Karen Toonen.



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 Becky Keane.



Resources and Technical Services Scholarship

Sponsored by the ILA Resources and Technical Services Forum. Scholarship recipient Astrid E. Larson.

AWARDS

2023 Annual Conference Statistics



Conference Registration

	2023 Peoria	2022 Rosemont	2021 Virtual	2020 Virtual	2019 Tinley Park	2018 Peoria	2017 Tinley Park	2016 Rosemont	2015* Peoria	2014 Springfield
Full	472	688	782	747	661	542	616	641	837	555
Single Day	160	233	–	–	584	264	543	527	451	170
Preconference Only	–	0	–	–	0	13	0	0	20	0
SUBTOTAL	632	921	–	–	1,245	822	1,159	1,168	1,308	670
Speakers	27	24	–	–	22	32	50	42	47	49
Exhibits Only	7	45	–	–	98	44	46	61	89	101
Exhibitor Representatives	158	240	100	164	300	220	290	270	250	267
TOTAL	824	1,210	882	911	1,665	1,118	1,545	1,541	1,694	1,821

* Joint conference with AISLE.

Hotel and Booth Statistics

Hotel Rooms Reserved by ILA	1,044	322	–	–	342	905	402	475	1,325	980
Hotel Rooms Used	889	358	–	–	263	865	398	354	1,190	921
Number of Companies	78	76	33	50	109	92	114	113	116	113
Number of Booths	78	98	–	50	121	102	126	128	138	131
Total Booth Square Feet	8,300	9,800	–	–	12,100	10,200	12,600	12,800	13,900	13,100



AT THE HEART OF IT

Illinois Library Association Annual Report 2022–2023

Dear ILA Members and Friends,

It has been such an honor to serve our members and represent libraries and library workers in the State of Illinois.

Over the past year, we've worked together to ensure that Illinois libraries remain accessible, inclusive, and reflect the needs of the communities we serve. We came together to advocate, learn, and make positive changes in ourselves and our communities.

It was a joy to work with the 2022 Conference Program Committee to coordinate and host our first in-person conference in three years! It was a privilege to be "at the heart" of library workers coming together to share how they innovate, support their communities, and support each other. As President, I was also fortunate to be able to continue to learn from presenters and meet with attendees throughout the year at the Illinois Youth Services Institute (IYSI) in Bloomington-Normal in March, at Reaching Forward South in O'Fallon in April, and at Reaching Forward North in Rosemont in May.

I was also grateful to participate in chapter events at LibLearnX in New Orleans in January 2023, and I was so proud to have been invited to represent Illinois Libraries and deliver welcome remarks at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago's opening session in June. At every event, I learned more about the many ways library workers come together to do great things, and my commitment to advocacy deepened.

More than ever, the events of this past year demonstrated how critical it continues to be to advocate for your library and your community at the state, local, and national level. Your voice really matters! Together we rallied library supporters to submit over 1,100 witness slips in support of HB 2789, which provides that in order to be eligible for state grants, libraries or library systems shall adopt the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, or provide a written statement to prohibit the proactive banning of books within libraries. We worked together with library organizations across the state to advocate for funding statewide access to online resources. We supported the development of equitable access to learning materials in higher education by awarding five \$500 awards in support of the adoption of Open Access Educational materials (OERs).

I would also like to highlight that we were able to award three \$1,000 travel stipends for Illinois librarians from underrepresented populations to attend their first national conferences, and establish the Peggy Sullivan DEI Fund to continue to honor her legacy.

I truly believe that the more we work together, the more we can do for our libraries and our communities. Libraries connect people and ideas, and the Illinois Library Association helps connect us to each other. Amplify your voice by attending workshops, webinars, or future conferences, volunteering for a committee, or nominating yourself or someone else for the board.

Thank you,



Heather Jagman

2019–2023 ILA Strategic Plan

Vision

Collaboratively shaping a new future for libraries in Illinois

Mission

Leadership, advocacy, partnership, and learning for the benefit of Illinois libraries

Core Strategic Values

- Energizing, visionary leadership
- Adaptation to change
- Long term strategic perspective/direction
- Member service focus
- Partnerships and alliances
- Diversity and equity of opportunity

Core Values of the Profession

Information access, equity, intellectual freedom, and objective truth

Strategies, Goals, and Desired Outcomes

Strategy: Advocacy

Goal: Legislative Advocacy

- Invest in advocacy. Educate and mobilize activist groups and other professional associations to understand and support the cause and critical nature of libraries.
- *Desired outcomes:* Activated strategic alliances and informed advocacy at all levels achieve adequate funding for libraries. Governmental decision-makers increase support for libraries.

Goal: Community Advocacy

- Develop education and tools for library leaders and staff to establish clear understanding of libraries' worth among the people served, resulting in community and stakeholder ambassadorship and engagement.
- *Desired outcomes:* The communities and people served value the presence and vitality of libraries. The communities and people served are vocal advocates for libraries.

Strategy: A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion

Goal: In the Profession

- Develop education for library leaders and staff about increasing diversity in collections and programs and creating an inclusive environment in libraries and librarianship.
- *Desired outcome:* Library leadership and staff are cultivated and engaged in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the communities they serve.

Goal: In the Association

- Review and revamp the committee and volunteer system for functionality, diversity, inclusivity, and recognition. Increase awareness, understanding, and commitment to creating an inclusive environment in ILA.
- *Desired outcomes:* Members recognize their ownership in and have equitable access to participate and be heard in ILA's volunteer structure. Members connect collaboratively for sharing and creation of knowledge.

Strategy: Delivery of Member Value

- **Goal:** Assess and refresh programs and services, integrating new approaches and technologies to deliver member value in programming, communication, and involvement.
- *Desired outcome:* Members in every segment find relevant value from ILA programs and services.

Strategy: Leadership

- **Goal:** Convene critical conversations with partners in the library ecosystem including the Illinois State Library, the three systems, AISLE, and other related consortia and organizations.
- *Desired outcomes:* Access to library service continually expands to increasing numbers of Illinois residents. Librarians, library staff, and trustees are supported effectively and efficiently by the library ecosystem in the state.

Strategic Progress

2022–23 is the fourth full governance year with ILA’s strategic plan, which was developed in 2018-19 and approved in April 2019. Originally intended to be a three-year plan in effect from 2019-20 through 2021-22, it was extended for one year by Executive Board vote in September 2021, to run through 2022-23. The Executive Board voted in November 2022 that the plan be extended for an additional year with an updated plan in 2024. A July 2023 assessment included the following progress toward the association’s strategic priorities since the prior (2022) report:

Strategic Priority: A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion in the Association

- Continuing “Courageous Conversations” and “Otter Tech Code of Conduct Enforcement Workshops” training for Executive Board members and staff
- Elizabeth Lindsay-Ryan presented “Navigating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion within Our Organization” to the Executive Board at the January 2023 meeting
- Initiated a mentorship program designed to lay a solid professional foundation for the mentee to grow, learn, and thrive in the field of librarianship in Illinois

Strategic Priority: A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion in the Profession

- Awarded three \$1,000 travel stipends for Illinois librarians from underrepresented populations to attend their first national conferences
- Published article “SIUE’s Diverse Librarianship Career Training and Education Program A Lack of Diversity: A Call to Action” by Tammie Busch, Lora Del Rio, Elizabeth Kamper, Shelley McDavid, Lamonta Swarn, & Simone Williams, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, in the September 2022 *ILA Reporter*
- Published article “My Turn: Neurodivergence in Libraries” by Alex Towers, The Joseph Sears School, Kenilworth, in the June 2023 *ILA Reporter*

Strategic Priority: Legislative Advocacy

- Participated in the development of HB 2789 with the office of Secretary of State, Alexi Giannoulas, which provides that in order to be eligible for state grants, libraries or library systems shall adopt the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights or provide a written statement to prohibit the proactive banning of books within libraries
- Rallied Illinois libraries to submit witness slips for HB 2789, which received more than 1,100 witness slips from proponents
- Advocated for Statewide Access to Online Resources, which has been included in Secretary Giannoulas’ 2023–24 budget

Strategic Priority: Community Advocacy

- The Advocacy Committee presented “Ready, Set, Advocate” programs at the ILA Annual Conference, Illinois Youth Services Institute, Reaching Forward, and Reaching Forward South
- Held a “Ready, Set, Advocate” virtual training for members and a virtual meetup with new Legislators in February

Strategic Priority: Leadership

- The first in-person Annual Conference since 2019 was held in Rosemont, with more than 90% attendees saying they were happy or very happy with the conference
- The first Director’s University 2.0 was held in August 2022 and a second session was held in April 2023
- The ILA Executive Board approved funding for open education resources (OER) for IACRL to award five \$500 awards to support creation of new OERs
- The ILA Executive Board voted to support AISLE’s Statement of School Library Programs Staffed by Licensed School Librarians

Strategic Priority: Delivery of Member Value

- In addition to Illinois, the 2023 iREAD campaign, *Find Your Voice*, was adopted by nine states – Alaska, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington
- Becca Boland joined the ILA staff as its newly created iREAD Content & Development Manager, the first position fully dedicated to supporting iREAD
- The Peggy Sullivan DEI Fund has been created to honor Peggy’s legacy, which is supported by her bequest to ILA
- The Best Practices Committee has been sunsetted, as all ILA committees should seek out best practices, rather than centering it in one committee
- The Reaching Forward Forum has become the Reaching Forward Committee, which focuses on organizing the one-day conference for library staff in May
- The Nominating Committee made recommendations for procedure and timeline changes for inclusive pronouns, adding an email option to notify candidates that cannot be reached after multiple phone calls, and to avoid any perceived conflicts of interest
- The ILA office moved from its home of thirty-five years on Grand Avenue to a smaller and significantly less-expensive office in the West Loop, at 560 W. Washington Boulevard

ILA'S Advocacy Efforts

In Illinois

In January 2023, the ILA legislative agenda focused on statewide access to resources, amending the local records act to streamline disposal of records, and general fund flexibility. Little did we know what would happen when Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias was inaugurated on January 9. The transition report on library enhancements commissioned by Secretary Giannoulias focused on championing access to information by equitably distributing library resources, including online education resources, databases, and e-books.

In addition to the enhancements included in the report, the Secretary had two pieces of legislation of his own. House Bill 2789 required libraries to adhere to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and required libraries to create written policies against the practice of banning books in order to qualify for state grants. The bill was sponsored by Representative Anne Stava-Murray in the House and Senator Laura M. Murphy in the Senate. Senate Bill 2419 created the License to Read Act, which provided that the State Librarian may negotiate with publishers of ebooks and audiobooks on behalf of libraries. Additionally, it would establish a grant program to provide funds to libraries and library districts to pay for digital licenses. The bill was sponsored by Senator Laura M. Murphy in the Senate and Representative Nabeela Syed in the House. On June 12, HB 2789 was officially signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker, with a number of ILA leaders on hand for the event, along with representatives from RAILS, IHLS, CPL, and AISLE, and SB 2419 was signed into law on June 30, 2023.

In addition to the legislation, the Secretary of State's FY2024 spending package includes "annual library technology grants and for direct purchase of equipment and services that support library development and technology advancement in libraries." The Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$5,580,000 for this purpose. Statewide access to online resources was the primary proposal on ILA's 2023 legislative agenda and we thank Secretary of State Giannoulias for his continuing support throughout the FY2024 budget process.

While ILA's primary legislative priority, statewide access to resources, was successful, we will continue to advocate for amending the local records act to streamline disposal of records, and general fund flexibility.

On the Federal Level

ALA submitted comments to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees calling for IMLS/LSTA funding of \$232 million, IAL funding of \$50 million, and initial library facilities funding of \$20 million — a new request of Congress this year. This followed on the heels of the Dear Appropriator letters and the work of library advocates during the in-person Fly-In events in March. Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth both signed the LSTA and IAL letters; eight Representatives signed the letter in favor of IMLS/LSTA and five signed the letter in favor of IAL.

Conference and Events



ILA held its first in-person Annual Conference since the 2019 Annual Conference in Tinley Park. Held at the Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, the conference attracted 921 attendees and 240 exhibitor representatives! The theme – At the Heart of It – focused on what brings us together and how we can share our passion and positions to make positive change in ourselves and our communities. Conference Co-Chairs Lora Del Rio and Heidi Knuth lead a committee that built a strong array of speakers: Amy Tureen, Keynote Speaker; Illustrator Angela Dominguez, Youth Services Forum Author Breakfast; Dr. Anthony Dunbar, IACRL Luncheon; Elaina Norlin, DiversiTEA, and Heather Hathaway Miranda, President’s Program.



There were more applicants for the first Directors’ University 2.0 than there were spaces in August 2022. Due to demand, a second DU 2.0 session was held in April 2023. The Directors’ University events are collaborative projects of ILA, IHLS, RAILS, and the Illinois State Library and are intended to give new directors—and now, with DU 2.0, seasoned directors—the information and connections with colleagues they need to succeed.



The Reaching Forward South Conference held Friday, April 14, 2023 at The Regency in O’Fallon, IL was a success. The location and group discount contributed to high attendance and positive feedback with an 84% increase from 2022 Reaching Forward South.



The Reaching Forward Conference held Friday, May 5, 2023 at the Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, IL was successful. The variety of exhibitors and program topics contributed to high attendance and positive feedback with a 21% increase from 2022 Reaching Forward.



The Library Trustee Forum again presented its series of spring workshops online, which has enabled greater attendance from trustees all over the state. Topics covered included the March 4 session “Library Buildings — Planning for the Future,” Speakers: Rick McCarthy and Scott Delano, StudioGC; April 1 session “Library Finance for Trustees,” Speaker: Kelly Zabinski, Zabinski Consulting Services, INC; and May 13 session “A Meeting of the Kleintown Public Library: A Look Inside How to Run an Efficient and Effective Library Board Meeting,” Speaker: Carmen Forte Jr., Klein, Thorpe & Jenkins.



The “Noon Network,” a series of midday micro-learning webinars on various topics designed to help achieve professional development goals, continued for its third year. Webinars are held at noon on Mondays and Wednesdays for 20 to 30 minutes followed by a question-and-answer session. Topics included “The First-Year Experience: Surviving and Thriving in Your First Year of Librarianship” and “Intellectual Freedom Trends.”

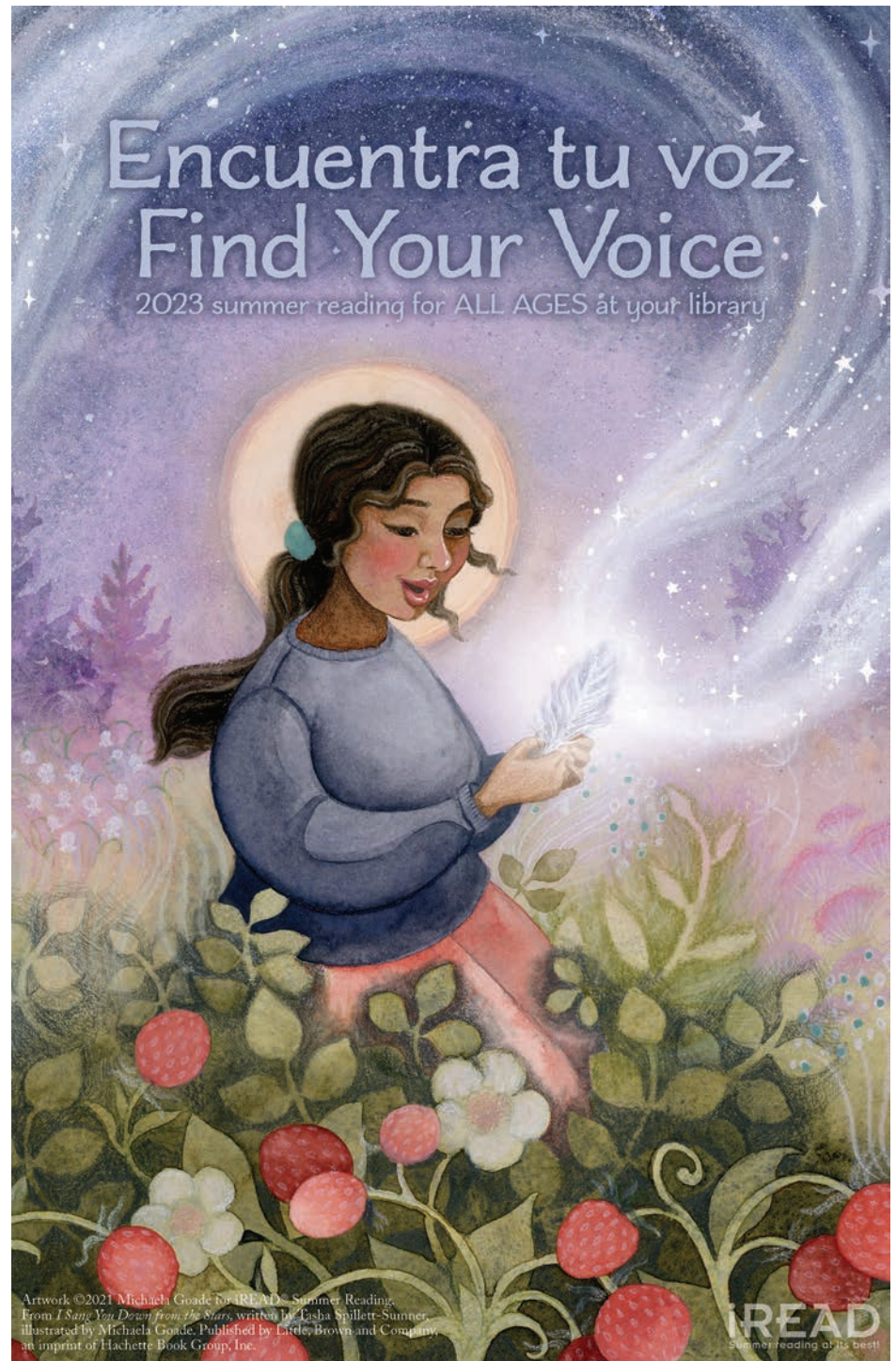
“ILA enjoys a diverse array of revenue sources, making the association unique among state chapters of ALA”

Realizing Revenue

ILA enjoys a diverse array of revenue sources, making the association unique among state chapters of ALA. Membership, continuing education, and publications are all traditional sources of revenue; the iREAD® summer reading program enables ILA to survive and thrive as traditional revenue sources face pressure from tight budgets and changing environments. The Fund for Illinois Libraries continues to offer ILA institutional members who do not have their own associated foundations or friends groups a way to accept monetary donations, primarily from corporations that require a 501(c)3 for their philanthropy. Our long-term investments help ensure the Association's continuity; although the portfolio is managed conservatively, we do historically see investment growth over the long term.

More than 1,250 libraries in 43 states, plus Department of Defense base libraries worldwide, libraries in Australia, New Zealand, and Bermuda participated in iREAD® in 2023, themed "Find Your Voice!" Our voices have power. We use our voices to share stories, express ourselves, and spark change. Our voices include not only the sounds we make, but the words we write, the art we create, the movements we perform, and the actions we take each day to impact our world. iREAD® 2023: *Find Your Voice!* / *¡Encuentra tu voz!* provided context for exploring books, history, social justice, and STEAM fields as well as developing library programs and services that empower patrons of all ages to make their voices heard.

Contributions to the association also continue to increase, most notably through the Illinois Library Luminaries program, which supports the ILA Endowment and saw two new inductees in 2022–2023: Roberta Koscielski and Diane Foote. Contributed income also helps build ILA's array of restricted funds, which primarily support awards and scholarships, including the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Fund, the Diversity Scholarship Fund, the Intellectual Freedom Fund, the Legal Defense Fund, the Valerie J. Wilford Memorial Fund, and the Robert R. McClarren Fund.



Fiscal Report (Year Ended June 30, 2023)

Revenue

General Operations	\$109,279
Membership	\$281,817
Conference	\$402,287
iREAD	\$2,353,312
Publications	\$17,881
Public Policy	\$0
Awards	\$6,650
Endowment Contributions	\$4,185
Workshops/Projects	\$156,070
Reaching Forward	\$118,588
Donor Restricted Funds Contributions	\$3,635
Total Revenue	\$3,453,704

Expenses (reflecting allocation of staff salaries, taxes, and benefits to functional areas)

General Operations	\$302,561
Membership	\$168,980
Conference	\$393,813
iREAD	\$2,133,722
Publications	\$8,334
Public Policy	\$171,087
Awards	\$26,188
Workshops/Projects	\$219,540
Forums & Committees	\$8,148
Reaching Forward	\$109,665
Total Operating Expenses	\$3,542,037

Operating Net	\$-\$88,333
Other Revenue: Gain on Long-term Investments	\$121,558
Other Expenses: Amortization, Depreciation	\$-5,874
Increase in Net Assets	\$27,350
Net Assets at end of FY 2022	\$2,601,616
Net Assets at end of FY 2023	\$2,628,965

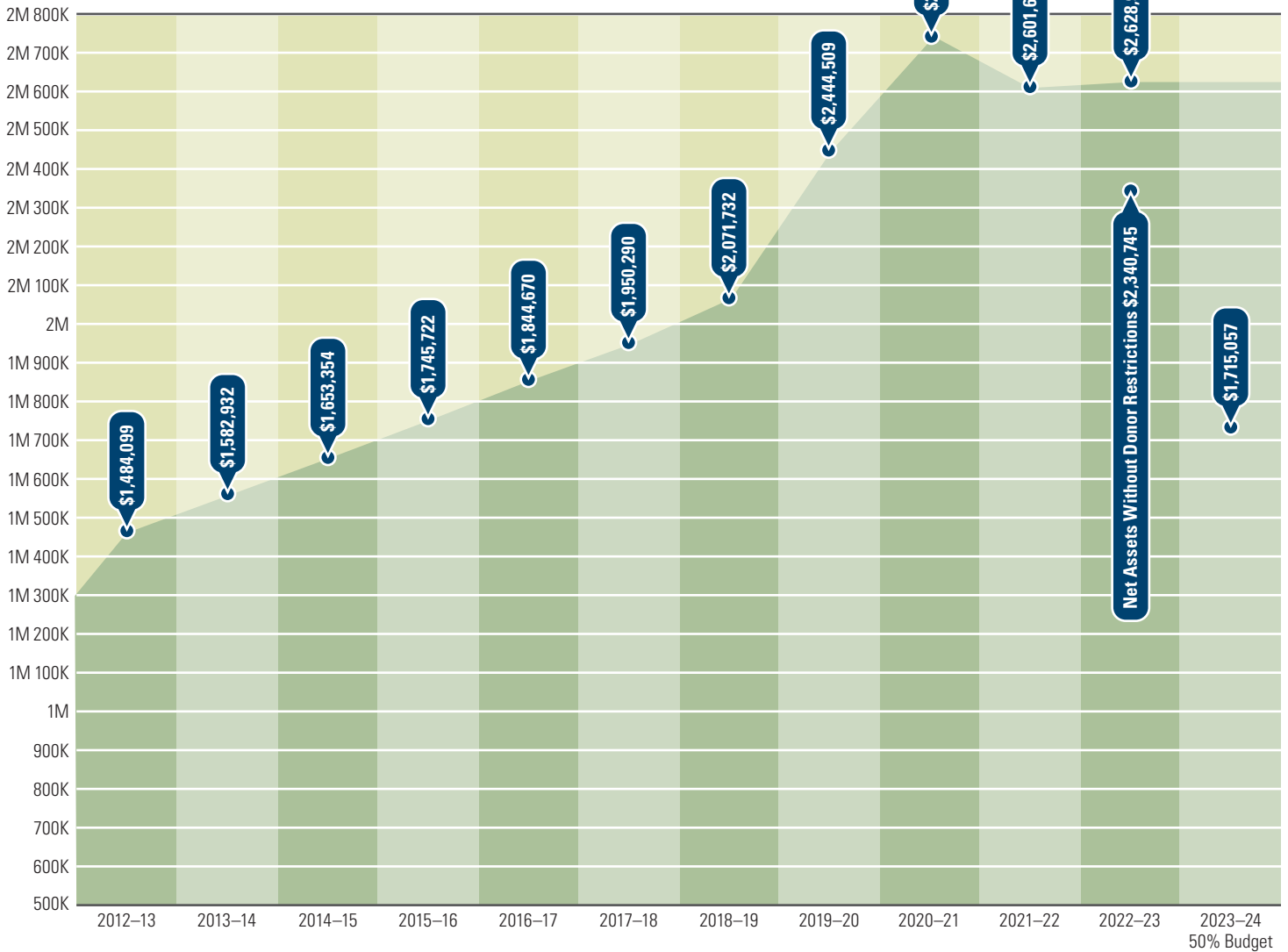
Net Assets Comprise:

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	\$2,340,745
Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	\$288,220

- Atkinson Memorial Award: \$10
- Robert R. McClarren Award Fund for Legislative Development: \$8,718
- Legal Defense Fund: \$1,195
- OCLC Users Group: \$25,266
- Valerie Wilford Fund: \$15,055
- Diversity Scholarship: \$172
- Diversity Scholarship (Board Designated): \$0
- Intellectual Freedom Fund: \$883
- Endowment Fund: \$213,722
- Unappropriated Endowment Fund Earnings: \$23,199

Total Net Assets at End of FY 2023	\$2,628,965
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Net Assets Ensure Long-Term Stability



Cumulative Surplus

The growth in ILA's net assets, particularly net assets without donor restrictions, has been a conscious strategy over the past 20-plus years, with the goal of producing an annual budget surplus that will build up a reserve fund of net assets without donor restrictions equal to at least 50% of the subsequent year's budgeted expenses, according to ILA fiscal policy. This goal has been achieved since 2013; this year, of the net assets listed in the chart above, \$2,628,965 are without donor restrictions. The expense budget for 2022-23 totals \$3,542,037; 50% is \$1,715,057.

2022-2023	\$27,350
2021-2022	-\$144,209
2020-2021	\$301,314
2019-2020	\$372,777
2018-2019	\$121,442
2017-2018	\$105,620
2016-2017	\$98,948
2015-2016	\$92,368
2014-2015	\$70,422
2013-2014	\$98,833
2012-2013	\$353,247
2011-2012	\$178,331
2010-2011	\$193,267
2009-2010	\$372,938
1896-2009	\$386,316
Grand Total	\$2,628,964

Thank You to Our Donors

Help light the way forward for libraries in Illinois! The Illuminate initiative is designed to encourage individual giving with universal recognition of all gifts of \$5 or more, and additional honors for increasing levels of cumulative lifetime support. Contributions to ANY fund or purpose at ILA count toward Illuminate recognition.

SPARK

We thank all donors who sparked change with a gift during the 2022-23 fiscal year (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023).

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IGNITE

We thank donors who ignited possibilities with cumulative gifts of at least \$1,000 in their lifetime.

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Julie Milavec
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Sharon Reese
Carol Steffensmeier

ENERGIZE

We thank donors who energized Illinois librarianship with cumulative gifts of at least \$1,500 during their lifetime.

Gail Bush
Margaret Cousin
James Farrell
Kate Marek
Pattie Piotrowski



We thank donors who inspired the profession with cumulative gifts of at least \$2,500 during their lifetime or via estate plans.

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John Shales
Amanda E. Standerfer
Peggy Sullivan
Myung Sung
Alex C. Todd
Sharon Wilford

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- Writing that considers a "how to think about..." approach rather than "how to do..."
- Submissions from all geographic areas of the state
- Submissions that relate to ILA's strategic goal area of a culture of diversity and inclusion, both in the profession and the association



Illinois Library Association

View submission guidelines at www.ila.org/publications/ila-reporter
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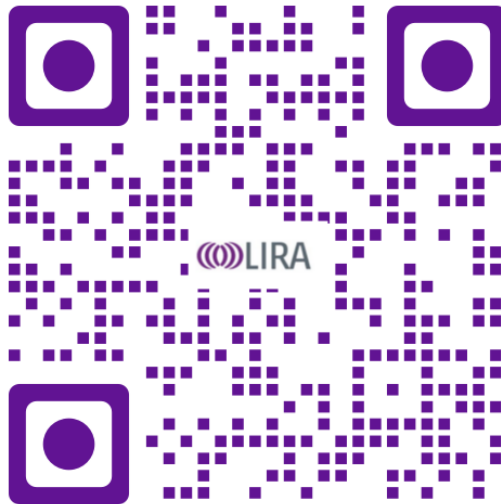
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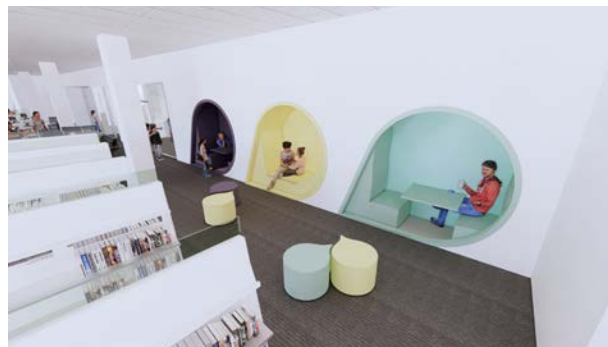


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