



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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**Jennifer Asimakopoulos Selected as 2024 Recipient of the
Illinois Library Association Readers' Advisory Service Award**

Jennifer Asimakopoulos, Head of Adult Services at the Wheaton Public Library, is the 2024 recipient of the Illinois Library Association (ILA) Readers' Advisory Service Award. The award, sponsored by the Adult Reading Round Table (ARRT) and the ILA Awards Committee, recognizes excellence in the planning, development, and delivery of readers' advisory service for adults and teens.

One of the first Readers' Advisory (RA)-centered initiatives she launched was a "GenLit" collection for 18-35-year-olds at Indian Prairie Public Library. Her goal was to build a collection that would keep teens in the library after adulthood, supporting their life goals and interests. Within two years of launching the collection, 800 titles were in GenLit. Asimakopoulos created the GenLit book club to host monthly meetings to discuss books and connect with other 20- and 30-somethings.

To increase readers' advisory services at Wheaton, she implemented a Book Match form and started hosting regular Book Match events on Facebook. During these events, patrons share books they've enjoyed, and staff respond in real time with personalized recommendations. She also introduced themed displays, staff picks, and bookmarks with booklists. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the promotion of readers' advisory services on social media. Asimakopoulos also advocated for the creation of a readers' services coordinator position.

Throughout her career, Asimakopoulos has strongly advocated for staff development in readers' advisory, utilizing resources such as NoveList and ARRT workshops. She leads RA development activities during staff meetings, such as creating and sharing reader profiles and exchanging book titles. Her fiction reviews are regularly featured in the *LibraryReads* newsletter. Since 2016, she has been a member of the ARRT Steering Committee, where she played a crucial role in evaluating and revising "The ARRT Popular Fiction List: A Self-Evaluative Bibliography for Readers Advisors." This tool is designed to help library staff assess their adult fiction reading experience and has been acquired by NoveList.

Asimakopoulos has done amazing work innovating new programs and collections to provide RA to patrons. Her willingness to share her work and knowledge in panels and through ARRT benefits library workers across the board. The work and research that goes into her contributions to Genre Study and the fiction handbook provide excellent shareable tools.

The Illinois Library Association Readers' Advisory Service Award will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2024 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 8-10, 2024, in Peoria, Illinois.

For more information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

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About the Illinois Library Association

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) is a professional membership organization that represents Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. Founded in 1896, it is the third-largest state library association and serves as a chapter within the American Library Association. ILA is comprised of 2,000 personal and more than 500 institutional members, made up of public, academic, school, and special libraries, as well as librarians, library staff, trustees, students, and library vendors.