Spectrum Kindness: Isabel Soto-Luna Reflects on Giving Back

(https://ec.ala.org/donation/DIV-9182-SPCSCH)

By Isabel Soto-Luna

Receiving the Spectrum Scholarship was a game changer for me and opened up a world of support and opportunity. I feel a responsibility to give back and to ensure that future librarians have even more opportunities available to them. It is only when we work together to help others that everyone is able to succeed and I want to be part of my future colleagues' success. That is one of the reasons I volunteered to serve on the Spectrum Advisory Committee which led to me stepping up as Chair of the Giving Back Circle. It has been an honor to convene a group of over twenty Scholars volunteering their time to thank the many supporters of the Spectrum Scholarship Program. We've been collectively building our skills around donor relations and fundraising through finding free professional development to take together and coming together as a learning community around these topics.

As a professional fundraiser, I am aware of how many wonderful organizations participate in #GivingTuesday (https://www.givingtuesday.org/) which seeks to harness the generosity of people around the world to bring about real change in their communities.It unites a unique blend of partners— nonprofits, civic organizations, businesses and corporations, as well as families and individuals—to encourage and amplify small acts of kindness. As a global movement, #GivingTuesday shares our capacity to care for and empower one another, which gives us a perfect opportunity to recognize a program that is truly centered on providing a community of care. As we approach #GivingTuesday, I wanted to reflect on the myriad ways Spectrum Scholars give the donation of time, resources and talents to one another through large and small acts of everyday kindness. Support our Spectrum family with a gift on Giving Tuesday and all donations up to $20,000 will be doubled thanks to matching donors (https://ec.ala.org/donation/DIV-9182-SPCSCH).

Spectrum is an amazing team of epic, inspiring individuals who are always ready with a kind word or a virtual hug. We cheer each other on, we share stories and opportunities, we push each other to be the best we can be while making sure that we still feel supported by each other. That is an empowering feeling and I don't tell them enough how much it means to me when I see us lifting each other up. I'm so proud to be a part of the Spectrum family.

~Lorisia MacLeod

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Scholar Acts of Kindness

- Welcoming the future of the library profession: the majority of applicants for Spectrum Scholarships learn about the program (and other opportunities to fund a library degree) through past Spectrum Scholars. Moreover, we frequently help applicants write their personal essays, identify professional references or provide letters of recommendation ourselves.

- Peer mentoring: we get together to assist one another with job interview prep and review each others cover letters and CVs. We collaborate on conference presentations and publications, creating an encouraging space to develop skills together while challenging each other to try new things. We look over tenure portfolios.We identify opportunities and recruit people to apply for professional development, cheering each other on and giving one another the energy to put together application after application. Since singing one's own praises can be hard, especially for folks struggling with imposter syndrome, we remind our friends and mentors just how much they have accomplished.

- Community-building that emphasizes care: Scholars help each other deal with microaggressions (http://lismicroaggressions.tumblr.com/). We build personal bonds to combat isolation and professional communities where we can talk openly about racial trauma and lateral violence. We share our stories openly to remind ourselves we are not alone. We inspire one another, and help each other build, shine and maintain our armor for the battle of equity, justice and belonging.

- Getting by with a lot of help from my friends: simply put, Scholars take care of one another. We room together at conferences so we can split the costs and more of us can get some Spectrum family love at conferences to see us through to the next gathering. We drive one another to job interviews if someone's car breaks down. We put together a fundraiser to help a colleague who has had setbacks finish that final semester of their degree. We eagerly welcome new folks to the family by inviting them out for coffee if we discover other Scholars in our area (https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1p33F9EWRec6IJxP93mQXvaqRYNYPfsX-&ll=44.553305320776765%2C-114.37528644999998&z=4). If we are in the position to do so, we treat another Scholar to lunch and talk about the day when they'll be a director and treating us.

I worked as a 3rd grade teacher—a profession with similar racial and ethnic demographics as librarianship. I experienced the isolation of being the "only one" in a room, and the joy of meeting and collaborating with educators of color across the country. It can take time to build a community where you truly feel at home. Spectrum offers a ready-made space to be yourself and look around a room filled with others like you, as well as with mentors you can emulate.

~Carli V. Lowe (also pictured Darnetta Bolton)   #GIVEALA

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Help us Amplify Kindness

As you can see, Spectrum Scholars are tremendously kind and generous to one another. This Giving Season, help us recognize and give back to this amazing community of care by amplifying its kindness with a little of your own. Here's how anyone can help:

- Make a gift to the Spectrum Scholarship Program (https://ec.ala.org/donation/DIV-9182-SPCSCH) on Tuesday, November 27th, all gifts on #GivingTuesday2018 will matched dollar for dollar up to $20,000 thanks to our matching donors!

- Share our message on social media (see sample posts below) and spread the kindness.

- Help us get the word out to current and prospective students (http://www.ala.org/advocacy/spectrum/apply) from underrepresented groups in graduate programs for library and information science about the wonderfully supportive network of Spectrum alumni interested in helping them fund their degree!

Sample Social Media Posts

- Join me in donating to @ala_spectrum this #givingtuesday and signaling your support of this incredible program! Donate before midnight and your gift will be DOUBLED: https://ec.ala.org/donate (https://ec.ala.org/donate) #giveala
- I'm donating to @ala_spectrum this #givingtuesday b/c we need diverse leaders in the library field. Will you join me in ensuring the program's success? Donate before midnight for your contribution to be MATCHED: https://ec.ala.org/donate (https://ec.ala.org/donate) #giveala
- 1100+ library leaders of color have benefited from funding, community building, & opportunities to collectively advance equity, diversity, & inclusion as part of @ala_spectrum. Help us continue this mission by donating to Spectrum this #givingtuesday: https://ec.ala.org/donate (https://ec.ala.org/donate)
- @ala_spectrum builds a critical mass of students, professionals, & LIS faculty invested in advancing social justice initiatives in library services and library spaces. Join me this #givingtuesday by donating to ensure the program's success: https://ec.ala.org/donate (https://ec.ala.org/donate)
- The most significant part of @ala_spectrum is the relationship-building within & across Scholar cohorts 20+ years in the making. Donate to Spectrum this #givingtuesday to contribute towards the success of the next 20+ cohorts of diverse library leaders: https://ec.ala.org/donate (https://ec.ala.org/donate)

Isabel Soto-Luna is currently the Development Specialist for Pikes Peak Library District. Prior to this, Isabel was an Archives Assistant for the Colorado State University – Pueblo Library where she realized that working in a public library was a calling. Isabel aspires to an outreach position that will allow her to use her skills as a bilingual professional and professional interpreter and translator to work closely with the community. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications and Bachelor of Arts in Spanish. Isabel is a strong believer in social justice and our responsibility to our community and each other, especially now more than ever.

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