



Haben Girma explains why communities should advocate for accessibility.

## Getting Past the Barriers

Attendees thoroughly enjoyed listening to Haben Girma at the second PLA Big Ideas Session Friday morning. Girma, a talented storyteller, was the first deaf-blind person to graduate from Harvard Law School. Girma took the stage with Milo, her guide dog, and opened by saying, “Due to my disability, I turned to my strengths and one of my strengths is my sense of touch. I have a computer that allows me to interact and my assistant, Cameron, is taking audio and visual descriptions from the audience and sending them to me so I know when you applaud or laugh. Feel free to move around or leave, but remember, I know what you’re doing.” She said the name Haben comes from Ethiopia where her mother grew up during a time of violence. “Stories are powerful. They influence what we design and build. My mother heard stories of a land of opportunity and civil rights so she walked for three weeks to Sudan and was in a refugee camp for 10

months.” But she said it’s not geography that creates justice, it’s people that create justice. “I define disability as a challenge to come up with a new way to do things.” She gave examples of deaf people who couldn’t hear language so they created a visual language and deaf-blind people who gained access to language through a tactile interface. “My disability doesn’t stop me, but sometimes communities try to stop me.” She said she went tandem surfing with a guide and loved it. “You can feel the vibrations of the waves, feel the wind, the sun, so I wanted to find somewhere to take surfing lessons. Society is constantly setting limits for me. Everywhere I inquired about lessons, they told me they had never heard of a deaf-blind surfer. But I kept trying and I finally found a place.” While an undergraduate, she had a problem with the school’s cafeteria.

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## Closing Session With Samantha Bee

Wrap up the PLA 2020 Conference with one of the most unique and sharp comedic voices on television, Samantha Bee, star of the late-night show Full Frontal with Samantha Bee.



successful “Not the White House Correspondents Dinner” on April 29, 2017 (the evening of the traditional White House Correspondents Dinner), which received an Emmy Award in the category of “Outstanding Variety Special.”

Born and raised in Toronto, Canada, Bee began her career performing as a member of the all-female sketch comedy troupe The Atomic Fireballs.

Critics have appreciated Bee’s “fiery and fierce” delivery (*The New York Times*) and embraced Full Frontal with Bee

Bee was a part of the “Best F#@king News Team” on Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show* from 2003 to 2015, making her the show’s longest-serving regular correspondent. Bee hosted the wildly

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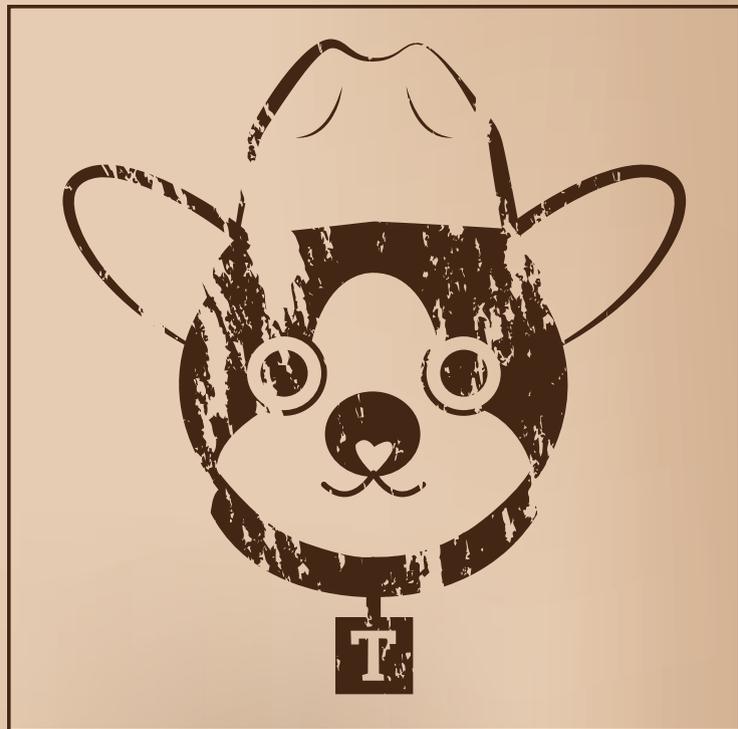
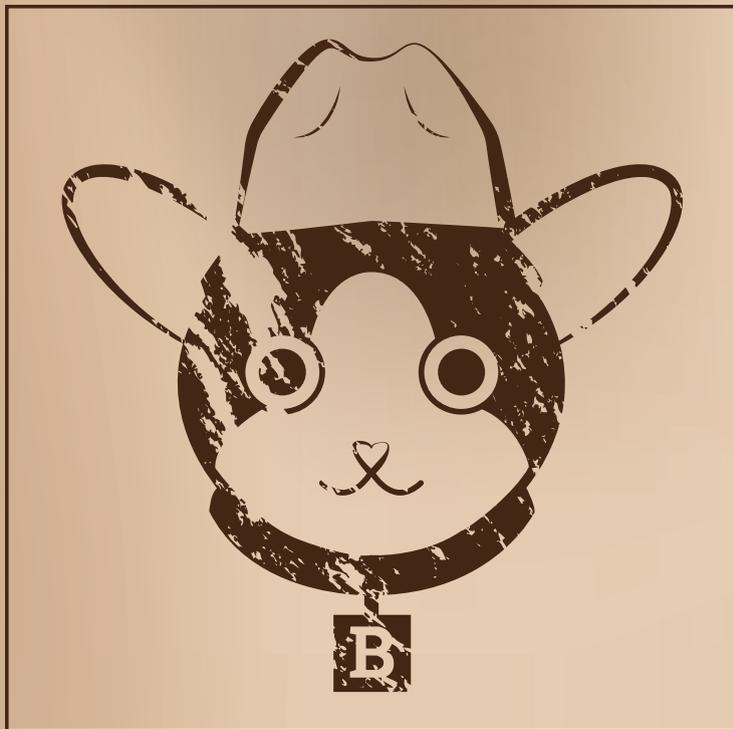
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## Building the Case for #eBooks ForAll

PLA President and director of the San Antonio Public Library, Ramiro Salazar, presented an overview and reasoning for the program, “Building the Case for #eBooks ForAll” Friday morning.

On November 1, 2019, Macmillan began to embargo new ebooks for libraries for 60 days. “Many libraries decided to boycott and no longer purchase new ebook titles from Macmillan,” said Salazar. “We believe in having a united front, so ALA and TLA (Texas Library Association) put together ebook working groups to develop a more comprehensive policy. We want Macmillan to reverse the decision and we want to send a strong message to other vendors who might consider doing this.”

Alan Inouye, ALA senior director of public policy and government relations, said that ALA is utilizing four areas in its effort to reverse Macmillan’s decision: the campaign #eBooksForAll; direct engagement with the industry; federal government intervention; and state government intervention.

Inouye reminded the audience to “keep the big picture in mind” as this may steam roll into other areas such as movies, streaming, and other access points.

On the federal level, Inouye said ALA has been meeting with members of Congress. “We have done a lot of work with the House Judiciary Committee in looking at visual markets. There is also a lot going on at state levels. In New York, Bill S7576 requires publishers to offer licenses for electronic books to libraries under reasonable terms.”

Assistant Director of the Cranston Public Library (Rhode Island) Julie



*Alan Inouye, ALA senior director of public policy and government relations discussed ALA's efforts to reverse a publisher's decision to withhold new ebooks.*

Holden said, “Our congressman is the chair of the House Committee on antitrust.” He was anxious to meet with users and staff from the

Cranston library and they had a round table meeting with him.

Everyone spoke about their issues and he understood that libraries wanted to buy ebooks at the same time as the consumer and at the same price as the consumer.”

Holden said on the state level they are presenting a 14-page memo on the topic to the Rhode Island Attorney General next week. “One of our state senators is also introducing legislation similar to what was introduced in New York.”

Magan Szwarc is the director of reference services at the Schaumburg, Illinois Township District Library. She reminded everyone of the power of data. “You need to tell the story of how we help publishers. All the work we do translates into sales for the publishers.”

Pat Losinski, director of the Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library

System, asked the attendees, “How long will we tolerate diminishing forms of content before we are not

a library any more?” adding, “We’re going to have to ramp this up as a profession in a big, big way. This is just the tip of the iceberg.”

Losinski showed that the average cost per item from Macmillan in 2019 in his library was \$50.25 for an ebook and \$21.63 for a print book. “There are big dollars at stake.” He said that Columbus Metropolitan Library System has a dedicated webpage for updates on #eBooksForAll and that they did directed customer emails to library cardholders and ebook customers. “Every time those emails were sent out, the petition signatures spiked.”

Losinski said there were some states that paid no attention to the national petition. “Make sure you are geared up to fight for it now. Put a plan in place today so that when you need to execute it quickly, you can.”

**“How long will we tolerate diminishing forms of content before we are not a library any more? ... We’re going to have to ramp this up as a profession in a big, big way. This is just the tip of the iceberg.”**

### Big Ideas With Soledad O’Brien

Soledad O’Brien—award-winning journalist, entrepreneur, and television host—joins us this morning for one last big idea to send you home from conference bursting with new knowledge!

As the host of the Sunday morning syndicated political show, Matter of Fact with Soledad O’Brien, O’Brien has established herself as one of the most recognized names in broadcasting by telling the stories behind the most important issues, people, and events of the day. A champion of diversity, she gives voice to the underserved and disenfranchised through her Emmy-winning reporting and acclaimed documentary series, Black in America and Latino in America. A prominent philan-



**Today, 8:15–9:15AM  
Music City Center  
Grand Ballroom**

thropist, O’Brien is the founder of PowHERful, a foundation that mentors and funds college tuition and expenses for young women.

With eloquence and a measured ability to make often-divisive issues such as race relations, social inequality, and mass incarceration accessible to all, she moves audiences to delve deeper into the headlines that shape our lives, outlooks, and daily interactions.

PLA is happy to provide coffee outside the Music City Center Grand Ballroom before each Big Ideas session.

### Girma

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“I couldn’t read the menu so I asked them to put it in Braille, post it online, or email it to me.” The cafeteria manager told Girma he was too busy and didn’t have time to deal with special requests from students with special needs. “It was my choice to accept this or to advocate for justice.” Some told her it was just a small barrier; that there are bigger things to deal with. But those small barriers

add up and are exhausting.

“I went back to the manager and told him about the Americans with Disabilities Act and that I was taking him to court. The next day, the manager apologized and emailed me the menu everyday,” said Girma. “And I helped others that attended that school after me.”

“Harvard Law School told me they had never had a deaf-blind person attend. I told them I’d never been to Harvard Law School,” she quipped. “Don’t be afraid of the unknown. It’s communities that create barriers and

as community members we can do the work to eliminate them.”

She gave an example of curb cuts in a Southern California city done for wheelchair access. “Suddenly everyone was using them for their luggage and strollers. Skateboarders were using them, the whole community benefited.”

“When you improve your libraries to make them more accessible you are helping the whole community,” said Girma. “You’ll reach more people, you’ll make content more discoverable, you’ll drive innovation.”

### Room Changes

The program, “Developing Your Library’s Fiscal Plan,” will be held in room 106 of the Music City Center (Saturday, 10:45 AM).

The program “Leverage Assessment and Advocacy to Demonstrate Community Outreach Impact” will take place in room 201 (Saturday, 10:45 AM).

## Finding Your Niche in Adult Programming

Do you have the programming blues? Looking for something new? Then the ideas at Friday's "Developing Scalable Inclusive, and Engaging Adult Programs" are the perfect solutions. Kaitie Stover, director of reader's services, Kansas City Public Library; Louisa Whitfield-Smith, library consultant, Mississippi Library Commission; Amy Fisher, information and reader services manager, Mid-Continent Public Library (Independence, MO); Morgan Perry, small business specialist, Mid-Continent Public Library; and Dana Wilkosz, health literacy educator, New Orleans Public Library made up the panel of presenters.

Stover led off by talking about the FYI Book Club. "I pick a book of the moment, one that I can discuss out in the community. Something in the news or connected to an agency in town," she said. The [Kansas City] *Star* prints it in the paper and then we meet." For instance, she picked the book *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* and the book club met in a mortuary. "The mortuary workers talked about what they

do and we talked about how that compared to the book. We did the book *Things We Didn't Talk About* at a K.C. Women's Center. We've done programs in radio stations, the train station, the water department, and museums. When I go to a different agency in town, I get people who haven't attended a program before and people get to know more about their city."

Stover said she's had as few as three and as many as 30 at a program. "The people get to hear about different agencies and services in Kansas City. It is a useful partnership."

Fisher told about the program Romance GenreCon. "I picked romance because it is the only genre by women, for women, and about women and the library is the number one place for romance readers to get their material. It is the highest circulating genre in the city."

She said they invite authors and have done writing classes that have evolved into a two-day writers conference. "We have attendees from all over the Midwest," said Fisher. "You



*Morgan Perry explains scalable programming.*

could do this with mystery, fantasy, or science fiction for your community. Find writing groups or authors in your area and utilize them."

Perry said, "We have a food education series with a special emphasis on small food businesses. Typically there are 18 programs per year." Each person they feature becomes a champion of the library and brings

in more people. "We do tours of the food trucks and a six-hour workshop includes free lunch." Perry suggested surveying what people want as programming and then being prepared to do it.

Tables were set up with topics so that those in attendance could meet with like-minded people to develop on the spot ideas for programs.



## The Many Faces of PLA 2020



## PLA 2020: 10 Essential Programs Now Available!

*PLA 2020: 10 Essential Programs* consists of 10 articles highlighting educational programs that took place at the PLA 2020 conference. Filled with instruction, advice, and knowledge from some of the field's most innovative thinkers, the publication covers everything from customer service, to working through transitions, library space, onboarding, civic engagement for teens, digital readers advisory and more. Chapters include:

An Empathetic Approach to Customer Service—Molly Meyers LaBadie

We're Doing WHAT?! Working Through Transitions and Institutional Change—Meg Delaney and Amy Hartman

Library Space Designed by Library Staff—Catherine Berntsen, Matthew Bollerman, Donna Mauceri, Christa Zaros

What Your Onboarding Says About Your Organization —Wyatt

Fertig, Katrina Dombrowsky, Susan Gleissner, and Becky Rech

Socialized Justice—Abby Kiesa, Yvette Garcia, and Tricia George

Mentoring to Diversify Librarianship—Amy Young, Ashley J. Brown, Jené D. Brown, and Isaiah West

Book Matchmaker—Stephanie Anderson, Virginia Grubbs, Elisabeth Gattullo Marrocolla, and Pat Tone

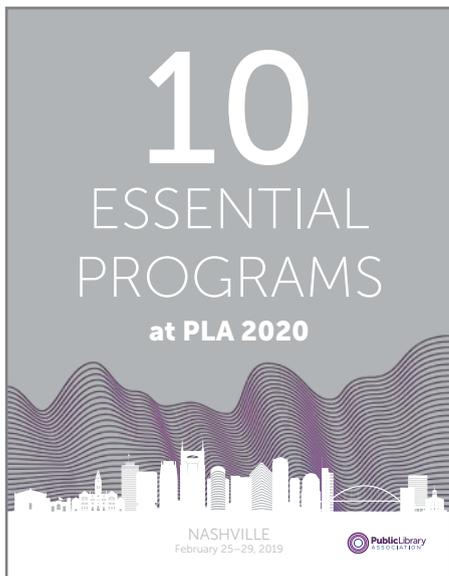
Early Literacy in Unexpected

Places—Carrie Kitchen, Kelly Stinn, and Laurie Vermeulen

Navigating Hot Topics with Media Literacy Skills—Jennifer Dickinson, Julie Shedd, Sarah Talley Souther, and Rebecca Wolff

Pitching and Producing a Library Podcast—Krissa Corbett Cavouras, Virginia Marshall, and Britta Barrett

This Ebook is available via the ALA Store. Order your copy at [bit.ly/3ccl8O2](http://bit.ly/3ccl8O2).



### Closing

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as a “daring, innovative addition to the late-night slate” (*Entertainment Weekly*). She and her late-night show have earned nominations for “Individual Achievement in Comedy” and “Outstanding News and Information” from the Television Critics Association, and three Primetime Emmy nominations.

Bee has starred opposite Tina Fey

and Amy Poehler in the comedy film *Sisters*, and alongside Patricia Clarkson and Ben Kingsley in *Learning to Drive*. In 2017, Bee and her husband Jason Jones also co-created the comedy series, *The Detour*. In 2010, Simon and Schuster published Bee’s collection of personal essays, titled *I Know I Am, But What Are You?*, and she is currently writing a middle-grade novel for Farrar Straus Giroux.

Event moderated by Caroline

Modarressy-Tehrani. Modarressy-Tehrani is an Emmy Award-nominated television correspondent and news producer living in New York City. For the last decade, she has traveled around the world as a journalist covering the gamut of politics to entertainment, and working across a variety of mediums including live television, documentary, and print.

PLA thanks T-Mobile for Government for its exclusive support of this event.

# Yes, and... Library of Things

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PLA Regional Training

## PLA Space Planning

Join your colleagues for a single-day training on reinventing your library space! Learn best practices in planning library space in the 21st century, improve circulation using retail techniques, and gain the tools you need to better assess and maximize your library's current space. Hosted by the Public Library Association and facilitated by David Vinjamuri, president of ThirdWay Brand Trainers and adjunct professor of marketing at New York University.

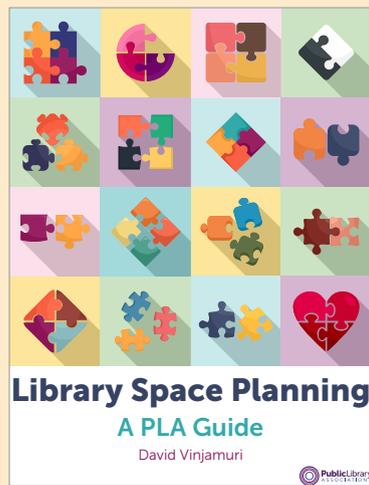
### Coming to a city near you!

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- May 18, Columbia, SC
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- July 9, Bloomfield Township, MI

Cost: \$170 for PLA Members; \$225 for Nonmembers  
[www.ala.org/pla/education/inperson/space](http://www.ala.org/pla/education/inperson/space)

## Library Space-Planning Guide

*Library Space Planning: A PLA Guide* (PLA, 2019) is a new publication for library professionals to successfully analyze, plan, and evaluate library spaces. It was authored by branding expert David Vinjamuri, facilitator of PLA's regional workshop on Space Planning for Libraries. The guide is available in print and e-book formats. Visit <https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/library-space-planning-pla-guide> for more details or to purchase a copy.



**NEW!**

## PLA Family Engagement Series

*Advancing Family Engagement in Public Libraries* is a new professional development series that will enable public library professionals to expand and refine their current family engagement programming and strategies. This subscription plan consists of eight highly interactive virtual classroom sessions. Each one-hour session will be led by experienced facilitators from the PLA Family Engagement Task Force and other experts. Participants will also engage in small-group work and facilitated discussions with their peers. At the conclusion, participants will be able to:

- Describe and explain twelve PLA family engagement framework topics and how they guide libraries in supporting children's learning and development;
- Assess their library's current family engagement programs and develop effective strategies for future endeavors;
- Gain resources and techniques to create new family engagement programs or expand existing programs to foster shared responsibility for children's learning among families, educators, and communities.

Get more information at [bit.ly/316Teh7](http://bit.ly/316Teh7).

## PRODUCT SHOWCASE

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### AWE Learning

[AWE Learning's](#) mission is to inspire an enthusiasm for learning by supporting school readiness and literacy in the community. Our [NEW Early Literacy Station™ Platinum](#) (ELS Platinum), for ages 2 – 8, provides new [award-winning](#) learning content for your young patrons.

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ELS Platinum recently received a Platinum award in the 2020 Modern Library Awards.

Ask about our Add-On Bundles to offer even more content on your workstation!



**NEW**

**Product News** — Product News items are paid listings and supplied to *PLA Daily News* from its advertisers. CustomNEWS, Inc. and PLA are not liable for the accuracy of their content.

## Baker & Taylor Introduces Sustainable Shelves

Responsibly removing books from your collection can be a burdensome task for you and your staff. Finding the time and resources to sell the books, donate the books, or properly recycle the books can seem overwhelming.

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It's simple:

1. You select the books to weed and send the list to Baker & Taylor.
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4. Baker & Taylor picks the books up for FREE.

5. Your library is credited within 30 days of receipt – no waiting for payment.

Any books that are not suited for resale are responsibly recycled, reducing your library's environmental impact and keeping those books out of landfills. Sustainability has become a core value of librarianship according to the ALA, and Sustainable Shelves serves as an example to your community of how important that value is to your library.

Remove weeded or unwanted books from your collection and reinvest in your library, impacting outreach and literacy in your community. What could you do with the revenue earned? It pays to be green!

We can't wait to show you what else we've been working on!

## STAND UP TO CENSORSHIP

&

## SUPPORT TENNESSEE LIBRARIES



Tennessee HB 2721, known as the "Parental Control of Public Libraries Act," is a censorship bill that creates an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy, undermines the authority of local library boards, threatens library workers with fines and jail time and "non-compliant" libraries with the possible loss of state funding.

**This bill contradicts the Library Bill of Rights and ALA's core values.**

**Let officials know that you support our Tennessee colleagues and you oppose HB2721.**

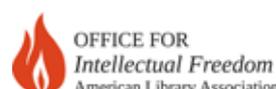
### TENNESSEE RESIDENTS

<https://bit.ly/32mjfoz>



### OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENTS

<https://bit.ly/2PnGXJQ>



# Conversation with a Colleague Down Under

No attendee traveled farther than Hanlie Erasmus, about 9,910 miles from Adelaide, South Australia. As luck would have it, she broke her ankle the day before her flight to Nashville. But that didn't stop her from coming to PLA 2020. *PLA Daily News* caught up with Erasmus, the associate director at Public Library Services in South Australia, before her return flight home.



**Q. What inspired you to come all this way?**

**A.** G'day – I am responsible for leading the State's Public Library Network to ensure the relevant objectives of the Libraries Act are achieved. The PLA 2020 conference aligns closely to goals and actions in the SA Public Library Strategic Plan – Tomorrow's Libraries, in particular with a focus on school-community library services; shaping culturally intelligent libraries; decreasing barriers to library use; and perspectives on outreach to tribal libraries.

**Q. Have you ever attended a Public Library Association conference before?**

**A.** No, this is delightfully my first time, hopefully not my last!

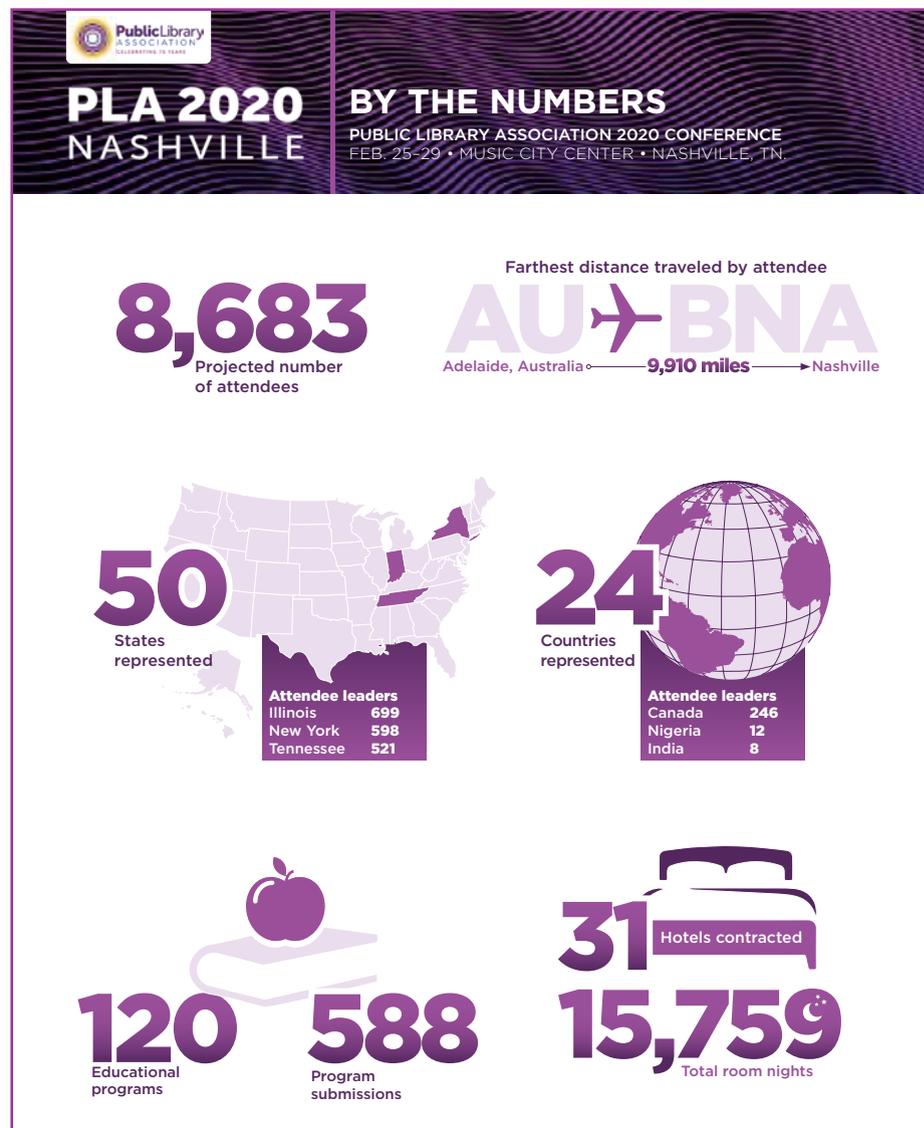
**Q. Did you have a favorite session, or do you have any takeaways from your time here that will help you in your return to your own library system?**

**A.** I found the "Fostering Dynamic School-Public Library Relationship" pre-conference session really topical, and also the "Data Visualization on a Dime" session hosted by Linda Hofschire. But the one session that was absolutely gold was the "Perspectives on Outreach to Tribal Libraries," as my business unit was approached by a small Indigenous community located in the heart of South Australia's outback to assist them setting up a library in their community.

The opportunities for networking at the conference are fantastic, and I made contact with Cynthia Hohl, president-elect, American Indian Library Association, who is willing to provide advice, ideas, and a wealth of information regarding how to set up a tribal library – thanks, Cynthia! I think this is the true value of attending a conference – the opportunity to meet with specialists, experts, and others that are in the same position that we can learn from and share knowledge with.

**Q. Can you speak to any major differences between the South Australia library system and the U.S. systems, or are they substantially the same?**

**A.** Pretty much on par – heaps of similarities. Governance structures are different, but in essence



applications of general library values are the same. Looking from the outside in, U.S. library staff seem to be more political than their Aussie counterparts; but we are starting to fluff our political feathers and becoming a bit more politically savvy

when it comes to key issues.  
**Q. Any parting words before heading home?**

Sorry I have to bail [Friday], this was an excellent conference and I enjoyed every minute of it. Cheers from Down Under.

## Lose something?



Head to Room 214 to see if it is in the lost and found.



Ohio librarians Holly Camino and Andrew Harant dropped off nearly 1,200 postcards opposing the Parental Oversight of Public Libraries Act at the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. You can still support Tennessee libraries at: <https://bit.ly/2PnGXjQ>.

## Serving Adults on the Autism Spectrum

By Celeste Malone

Sight, Taste, Smell, Sound, Touch. All senses many of us might take for granted. However, experiencing these sensations can be especially challenging for autistic patrons. With libraries being a focal point in communities for education, exposure, and growth, the importance of creating a space for these patrons is key to creating an environment for everyone. Librarians often ask “how can we best serve our patrons?” Working with adults on the spectrum can present opportunities for libraries to rethink processes and critically analyze how to interact. At the Friday program, “Serving Adults on the Autism Spectrum,” Virginia Johnson, director of the John Curtis Free Library in Massachusetts, provided three main points for how to think about working with patrons

on the spectrum: awareness, respect, and patience.

### Awareness

After recognizing a patron may fall on the spectrum, being aware of the way you communicate is a key factor in helping them get the most out of their visit. Making sure to utilize concrete language and avoiding any nuances will help them better process information. Keep your instructions simple and concise while also utilizing visual supports. Consistency and predictability are vital while interacting with adults on the spectrum; but most importantly, having respect for them can make all the difference.

### Respect

The “Golden Rule” remains an important way to interact with anyone, but even more so when dealing with those on the spectrum.

Remember to treat adults as adults, regardless of their functioning level. Through this, you are able to establish a relationship with the individual and not the caretaker. Depending on how the patron communicates, try to meet them where they are through spoken, written, sign language, computer-assisted, picture exchange communication systems (PECS), etc. Also, remember to offer assistance, but do not assume it is needed.

### Patience

Johnson reiterated being patient numerous times throughout the session, telling attendees to “breathe.” And do not take behaviors or comments personally. Through being patient, you are able to listen more thoroughly to the needs and are able to wait for the patron to communicate with you. Allow the individual time to process instruction and repeat your

needs as often as necessary.

“If you’ve met one person with autism, you’ve met one person with autism,” Johnson said. Not every case is this same, and not every individual communicates in one way. For public library professionals, the needs will vary day in and day out, but being able to make a difference in one person’s day may mean the world to someone in the long term.

## 2020 Election

The PLA Nominating Committee has unveiled candidates for the association’s 2020 election. Seven nominees will stand for four positions on the PLA Board of Directors: 2021-22 president, ALA division councilor, and two directors-at-large. The candidate elected in each race will serve a three-year term from July 2020 through June 2023. The candidate elected to the office of the president will serve one year as president-elect (2020-21), one year as president (2021-22), and one year as immediate past-president (2022-2023). Because there are two available seats for directors-at-large, voting PLA members will select two of the four available candidates. The candidates are:

**President:** Melanie Huggins, Richland Library (SC); Kent Oliver, Nashville (TN) Public Library

**ALA Division Councilor:** Stephanie Chase (Hillsboro (OR) Public Library (unopposed))

**Director-at-Large:** Kevin King, Kalamazoo (MI) Public Library; Brandy A. McNeil, New York Public Library; Steven V. Potter, Mid-Continent Public Library (Independence, MO); Dara Hanke Schmidt, Cedar Rapids (IA) Public Library

Members in good standing as of January 31, 2020 are eligible to vote. Online voting will be available March 9-April 1. Each eligible PLA member will receive an email with voting instructions and their unique ballot URL. Paper ballots will be made available upon request; the deadline to mail a paper ballot is March 23. Info at [www.ala.org/pla/about/people/election](http://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/election).

**Thank You for Attending!**  
**Please Save the Date for Next Time...**

# PLA 2022

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