

ALSC Matters

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Officially Speaking

A Refreshing Mindset: The Show Will Go On!

As I write this column, plans for the in-person 2022 ALA Annual Conference are churning away. I can almost feel the excitement of spotting in the distance the familiar faces of colleagues from across the country, the joy of catching up with friends I haven't seen in years, and the simple pleasure of attending a program and giving the presenters my undivided attention, because I can't mute them or turn off my camera and disappear from their sight. While plans for in-person events take momentum and shape, we can't ignore the barriers to access that the shift to virtual format helped break down, so strategies for virtual access will continue to play a key role as we plan for this year's conference and for future events.

Throughout the past two years, since the start of the pandemic, ALSC staff have demonstrated great flexibility and creativity for transitioning events and organizational business to virtual format. The virtual Youth Media Awards announcements, for example, were brilliantly orchestrated to convey the excitement and relevance of the occasion. The mindset has been and continues to be that, in-person or virtually, "the show will go on."

The virtual format of programs and meetings has transformed the organization by making participation more accessible and inclusive. It makes it possible for those who don't have the financial backing of their institutions for traveling to get involved in committee work, to attend programs and trainings, and to network with children's professionals from all over the country.

Now that most ALSC committees conduct their meetings virtually, the financial burden of the cost of travel is one less roadblock to access and participation. As a result, I expect to see an expansion in the number of volunteers and the backgrounds and communities they represent. Greater diversity in the volunteer base is crucial in order to make sure ALSC committees are truly a reflection of the many cultural and ethnic backgrounds our libraries serve.

ALSC is volunteer powered, and volunteers are the face and the soul of ALSC. There are many ways to be engaged, lots of fronts to cover, numerous opportunities to network, to influence, to mentor, or to be a mentee. I encourage all of you to become a change effector by [volunteering to serve](#) on one of ALSC's nearly 60 committees, task forces, and discussion groups.

Here is how it works: The Vice-President/President-Elect begins making process committee appointments in February/March. In August/September, after being seated as President, they will then begin filling fall appointments that are most of the ALSC Awards Committees. It is a long and very involved process that, in my opinion, represents the life-line of the organization, because volunteers are the ones moving the organization forward and making things happen.

One other important way to effect change is to participate in the upcoming ALA elections. Check out the ALSC Ballot, elect your candidates, and vote on the proposed measures including changes to the ALSC Bylaws intended to simplify processes and focus on leadership development.

In person or virtually, I hope to meet and greet everyone this summer at the 2022 Annual Conference of ALA in Washington DC and in the fall at the [2022 ALSC National Institute in Kansas City](#). Whether our conversations are face-to-face or through a screen, I look forward to learning directly from our incredible members, hearing your ideas, and finding new ways to improve library services for children throughout the nation.—*Lucia M. Gonzalez, 2021-22 ALSC President*

Voting Opens March 14

Voting is a vital benefit of ALSC membership. The 2022 election will determine four key leadership positions within ALSC: president, fiscal officer, new-to-ALSC board member, and one general board member. The [full slate is available](#) on the website. For more information on the election in general, please see the [ALSC 2022 election page](#).

The ALSC ballot also will include two proposed bylaws amendments for member consideration. [For complete information regarding the proposed changes, please visit the ALSC elections webpage](#).

Honoring Our Silver Anniversary Members

Congratulations to the following individuals who reached 25 years of ALSC membership in 2021. We appreciate your commitment to the association and profession. A silver anniversary member is recognized in the ALSC Voices section of each issue of *ALSC Matters*.

Zahra M. Baird
Catherine H. Chesher
Peg W. Ciszek
Marian L. Creamer
Veronica De Fazio
Christina H. Dorr
Nancy A. Eames
Stella Garitz
Doris J. Gebel
[Robin L. Gibson](#) - *Meet Robin in the ALSC Voices section!*
Carol R. Goldman
Carol Greene
Susan C. Griffith
Jos N. Holman
Donna J. Hughes
Laura M. Jenkins
Jennifer S. Knisely
Lisa M. LaQuay
Dennis J. LeLoup
Susan Dove Lempke
Kristi Miller
Katherine M. Nafz
Sharyn November
Maren C. Ostergard
Martha V. Parravano

Molly O'Donoghue Schaaf
Stan F. Steiner
Gail Tobin
Maida Wong

Thank You to Our Friends

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Michael Santangelo
Laura Schulte-Cooper
Laura Scott
Amy Sears
Roberta Shupe
Beatriz Wallace
Ashley Waring
Danette Wineberg

ALSC Voices

ALSC Profile

Celebrating colleagues with 25 years or more years of ALSC membership

Robin Gibson
Youth Services Manager
Westerville Public Library
Westerville, Ohio

ALSC Membership: 25 years

Where did you attend library school?

I received an MLIS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1996) and a CAS (Certificate of Advanced Study in Youth Services Librarianship) from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2012). (Yes, I attended library school twice and loved it both times!) Because of the schools I attended, I became familiar with both the Cooperative Children's Book Center (UW-Madison), where I volunteered during library school and had the opportunity to know Ginny Moore Kruse, KT Horning, and Megan Schliesman, and the Center for Children's Books (UIUC), when Deborah Stevenson was director. Both of these were huge influences on my career, and I feel very fortunate!

What was your very first library position?

My very first job in a library was during my senior year at Rhodes College in Memphis. The librarian chose my application from the work-study pile because I had neat handwriting, and I filled out order cards for books that he had chosen to purchase from different review journals. I also reshelved books in the reference section every morning at 8 am! The summer after college, I drove the “bookmobile” (a gigantic 70s station wagon that seemed to take up more than one lane of the road) for my hometown library in Cairo, Georgia. One stop was under a large oak tree in one rural community, another in the parking lot of a general store at a country crossroads. I got to know some of the regular kids and picked out books to fit their reading interests back at the library between visits. And still I had no thought of being a librarian (that came later!)

What do you love most about your current job?

I love finding different ways to connect children and families with library resources, programs, and materials. During the pandemic, we have created new services to reach our community, like personalized subscription bundles and the Story Trail. Finding the right book for the child, connecting with a child in a program, getting to see that spark of wonder, through a child’s eyes, letting them know the library is a place for them – those are things that make my day! As a manager, I love being part of a dynamic, creative, collaborative team, helping guide the direction of the department, and mentoring staff.

What's your favorite book of all time?

Pride and Prejudice. I first read it as a teen and it has survived multiple re-readings. When stressed, just reading a chapter or two is calming. The writing is familiar, structured, beautiful, intricate, classical. And I enjoy the many variations –from the Lizzie Bennett Diaries to Ibi Zoboi’s *Pride* and Tirzah Price’s recent *Pride and Premeditation*.

Who is your most favorite superhero?

I love Squirrel Girl because she is so different! I even appreciate squirrels a little differently after reading Shannon Hale’s *Squirrel Girl* – their lightning quick reflexes, squirrel intelligence, and amazing physical feats of climbing and leaping impossible distances.

What is the best compliment you ever received?

I love science and nature programming – I even have a lab coat and safety goggles that I received as a Christmas gift one year. When the Juno spacecraft arrived near Jupiter in July 2016, I did a “Jump to Jupiter” program that was a scale model of the universe. I wore my lab coat with NASA & Juno mission pins to provide an introduction to the activity, which began in the library meeting room, extending through the youth department, back upstairs to the adult department, and then outside the library and down the main street (Pluto was a few blocks away.) During time for questions, an elementary age girl raised her hand to ask, “Do you work for NASA?” Now, I don’t think working for NASA would necessarily be better than being a librarian – indeed, one of the fun parts of being a children’s librarian is getting to learn about and share on many different topics. I hope to instill a sense of wonder in all programs that I do – and that question let me know that I had succeeded.

Where is your favorite place in the world?

An island – every one I have been to, and so many I want to visit: Prince Edward Island (Canada) South Water Caye (Belize), St. George Island (Florida) and the archipelago off of Gothenberg (Sweden) are some of my favorites. I love water: walking along on the shore, boats and

paddleboarding, the vast skies near the sea, sunrises and sunsets over the ocean, watching birds (love brown pelicans), dolphins near the shore, sea turtles . . . you get the idea!

Bright Ideas

Five Steps to Successful Mindfulness Storytimes

If you're looking to introduce elements of mindfulness into your children's programming, mindfulness storytimes are a great place to start!

Last spring, I offered a six-part virtual mindfulness storytime through the DC Public Library as a project of my mentorship within ALSC. Through this program, we introduced hundreds of students to concepts of mindfulness, great books, and breathing exercises!

Here are five steps to ensuring that you have a successful mindfulness storytime, regardless of your amount of experience with yoga, meditation, or even storytime!

1. Know Your Reason. Why are you bringing mindfulness into the library? Are you trying to connect with a different audience or to introduce an existing audience to new concepts? Do you practice mindfulness?

Knowing the reasoning behind your decision to have a mindfulness storytime can inform the choices you make about structuring your storytime, and will inform the books, songs, rhymes, and movements you use within those storytimes.

For example, I wanted to offer a new concept to familiar audiences, so I incorporated familiar welcome rituals and kept a similar length for my program.

2. Pick Your Audience. Mindfulness can be useful at any age but having a target audience in mind will inform your programming decisions. As we all know, older kids can sit for longer books, while younger kids might be more active during storytime. School-aged kids will also have a more robust vocabulary for talking about mindfulness than toddlers.

Once you have your audience in mind, you'll use that to decide the content of your storytimes, their length, and the time of day you offer them.

Because my mindfulness storytimes were geared towards school-aged students, we held them virtually at 4 p.m.—right after school. This also informed the language I used around my programming—offering it as a respite after a long day of school, a chance to reconnect with the body, et cetera.

3. Select the Right Book. The hardest part of storytime is finding the perfect book: one that is big enough to read, whose illustrations engage the reader, that thematically reaches the target audience, and that serves your goals. Mindfulness storytimes are no different. There are a lot of picture books these days about yoga and meditation, and even mindfulness explicitly, but don't feel pigeonholed by this vocabulary.

Not every book for these storytimes needs to explicitly use the word mindfulness to be a good fit. These books—like *Yoga Bunny* and *Meditate with Me*—are great ways to introduce concepts, but you don't have to only choose those titles. For one of my storytimes, I used *Carmela Full of Wishes*,

and talked about the ways Carmela paid attention to her environment, and how that represented an element of mindfulness. Books about gratitude and nature also lend themselves well to mindfulness storytimes.

4. Incorporate Breath & Movement. The key, for me, to a mindfulness storytime, is incorporating breath and movement. Each of my mindfulness storytimes featured a breathing exercise and a yoga pose that I demonstrated. This took the place of a traditional transition song during storytime. Not every yoga pose or breathing exercise will connect with every person, so providing a different one each week gave everyone a chance to find something they enjoyed.

For kids, [finger breathing](#) and [breath balls](#) are great. On the movement side of things, you can keep things simple with a butterfly pose, or introduce upward dog or reclined pigeon for more advanced audiences.

5. Give Real-Life Examples. A mindfulness storytime is only as good as the lessons it gives its participants. Ending each storytime with a real way to practice mindfulness is a great way to make a lasting impact on everyone.

Some examples I like to use include:

- Tonight, before bed, close your eyes and see what's the furthest thing away that you can hear. Then, what's the closest thing you can hear?
- After you get out of the bath or shower, try doing a body scan. Lay down and imagine sending rays of light into your hands, your feet, your knees, your shoulders, even your nose.
- Tonight, eat dinner in silence and savor every bite of your food. What does it feel like on your tongue? What sounds can you hear? Does it taste different?

I hope you'll bring mindfulness into your libraries--and mindfulness storytimes are a great place to start!—*Aryssa Damron, DC Public Library*

Healing Library Kits – A Valuable Resource in Troubled Times

The Children's Department at the Stratford (CT) Library offers programs for children of all ages and provides valuable services to parents, caregivers, and teachers.

At the 2018 New England Library Association Conference, Children's Librarian Tess Beck learned about The Healing Library project, piloted by librarians at the Chattanooga (TN) Public Library and the Lewiston (ME) Public Library. Recognizing its value, Martha Simpson, head of children's services, secured administration support, community partners, and funding to create kits that would provide resources and comfort to families coping with traumatic situations.

The initial Healing Library kits, *Death of a Loved One*, *Death of a Pet*, and *Alzheimer's Disease & Your Family*, became available for circulation in January 2019. Subsequent kits cover: *Cancer & Your Family*, *Divorce & Step-Families*, and *Economic Hardship*.

Each Healing Library kit includes 8-10 theme-based picture books, plus a binder containing a discussion guide, healing activities, acts of kindness, community resources, discussion questions to go with the books, and a bibliography of other books available at the library. The kits also have consumable craft items and stress-reducing toys that are replaced as needed. The target audience is families with young children, but adults and older children can also benefit from the materials and resources.

When COVID-19 forced the library to adapt to new safety protocols in March 2020, Martha used the Healing Library model to create an online kit specifically to help families cope with the pandemic. She found a site that features a large assortment of books in various languages, curated by Patricia Sarles from the Brooklyn and Staten Island New York City Department of Education. Patricia graciously granted Martha permission to incorporate this resource in the virtual kit.

Coping with the Coronavirus & COVID-19 was posted to the Stratford Library website in April 2020. In June, Martha created an online version of the *Death of a Loved One* kit that has everything from the physical kit except for the craft materials and toys. The virtual kits were promoted throughout Stratford, the Connecticut library system, and on national library discussion lists.

As of December 2021, the *Coping with Coronavirus & COVID-19* kit had been viewed over 800 times and the *Death of a Loved One* kit over 300 times. Several librarians in Connecticut and other states have replicated them for their own communities. It's ironic that a worldwide pandemic enabled far greater recognition and use of these kits than there would have been otherwise.

Per patron requests, Martha created a new kit in November 2021: *Coping with Childhood Anxiety*. All three virtual kits can be accessed on the [Stratford Library website](#).

Stratford Library gratefully acknowledges all the creators of articles, books, videos, and other content that went into developing these kits. We hope that our Healing Library kits help families to manage during this stressful time, and encourage ALSC members to adapt these resources for use in your own communities.—**Martha Simpson, Head of Children's Services, Stratford (CT) Library**

Virtual Field Trips at Orange County Library

Calling all pioneers! To meet the unique needs of students and teachers in the 2020-21 school year, The Orange County Library System (OCLS) created virtual, educational field trips for kindergarten and first-grade students. Both field trips have a pioneer theme and align with Florida State learning standards for English Language Arts, math, and social studies. In the kindergarten experience, students learn how to compare needs versus wants and apply that knowledge in interactive activities where they must decide what items they would take in a covered wagon if they traveled the frontier in the 1800s. First-grade students learn how to compare the lives of pioneer children to their own lives today and experience how children entertained themselves before electricity and the Internet. Each event includes a library talk to help participants learn more about OCLS events and services, a pioneer-themed mini-lesson, a storytime, a fun camp song and a hands-on craft.

In the 2020-21 school year, over 50 virtual field trips were presented, reaching over 4,000 students learning from home and in the classroom. The library tripled the number of students it has served through its Virtual Field Trip program. The virtual format also allowed for increased accessibility and inclusion of students from Title I schools. Many educators expressed their thanks with one kindergarten teacher stating, "Thank you so much for the virtual field trip! We appreciate you keeping your field trip program going during this COVID time. We look forward to seeing you again next year!" OCLS was the proud recipient of the 2021 [Betty Davis Miller Youth Services Award](#) from the Florida Library Association for the Virtual Field Trip program and is delighted to be able to impact so many students in this way.—**Noraliz Orengo, Youth Program Specialist, Orange County (FL) Library System**

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Member News

Congratulations to **Dorothy Stoltz**, who retired from the Carroll County (Maryland) Public Library at the end of 2021. Dorothy has been an active ALSC and ALA member and the lead author on numerous books on topics from inspired thinking and collaboration to the power of play. We wish Dorothy all the best as she begins this exciting new chapter!

Hyunjin Han, children's librarian, Mandel Public Library, West Palm Beach, Florida, has been named ALSC's representative in the 2022 Emerging Leader program. She graduated in 2016 with her Masters of Library and Information Science (MLS) from Emporia State University and has been the recipient of numerous grants, including a 2020 Dollar General Summer Reading Grant and a 2019 Google Library Ready to Code Minigrant. Additionally, she served on ALSC's 2021 Newbery Committee. Congrats, Hyunjin!

Let's Talk about Race in Storytimes (ALA Editions) by **Jessica Anne Bratt**, director of Community Engagement and Outreach, Grand Rapids Public Library, was released this year. The book includes adaptable storytime activities, tools for self-reflection, and discussion starters to help guide children's librarians in putting anti-racism work into their professional practice. Congratulations, Jessica!

Lisa Kropp, director, Lindenhurst Memorial Library, co-authored a chapter, "Walking the Path to Sustainable Library Certification," in *Libraries & Sustainability: Programs and Practices for Community Impact* (ALA Editions, 2021). This title provides an easy-to-digest introduction to what staff at a range of libraries have accomplished in incorporating sustainability into their decision making and professional practices and includes discussion about the role of economics and sustainability to challenge readers to stretch in new ways to positively impact their communities. Kudos, Lisa!

Patricia Sarles, coordinator of Library Services, New York City Department of Education, wrote a chapter, "Heather Has a Donor: 30 Years of International Lesbian-Themed Children's Picture Books about Donor Insemination, 1989– 2019," in the new publication *International LGBTQ+ Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Anthem Press, 2021). Kudos, Patricia!

Raynelda Calderon, general librarian, Queens Borough Public Library, has a children's book coming out on March 1, for Women's History Month. *The Mirabal Sisters: From Caterpillars to Butterflies* (Cayena Press, 2022) is the story of three sisters, living in the Dominican Republic during a time of merciless dictatorship rule, whose deaths in 1960 (at ages 36, 34, and 25) received international coverage. Congratulations, Raynelda!

ALSC Institute Headed to Kansas City

Registration is open for the ALSC National Institute, September 29 through October 1, 2022, in Kansas City, Missouri. This intimate, intensive learning opportunity with a youth services focus features education programming, keynotes, networking opportunities and much more. It is designed for front-line youth library staff, children's literature experts, education and library school faculty members, and other interested adults. ALSC National Institute is one of the only conferences devoted solely to children's librarianship, literature and technology.

ALSC members, be sure to take advantage of the **special Early Bird discount rate** through June 30, 2022. Not a member yet? Visit the [ALSC Membership webpage](#) to learn more about member benefits, like reduced registration rates for Institute, discounts on ALSC eLearning opportunities, and more!

[Visit the National Institute webpage](#) for more details about this premier ALSC event.

New Newbery Publication from ALSC and ALA Editions

Celebrate a century of the Newbery Medal with this handy new guide! *The Newbery Practitioner's Guide: Making the Most of the Award in Your Work* digs in and explores where this distinguished award intersects with library work in a range of areas such as collection policy, advocacy, programming, EDI efforts, and censorship. Recognized experts in the fields of library service to youth, children's literature, and education present strategies, guidance, and tips to support practitioners in making the most of the Newbery in their work. The guide is now available for [preorder in the ALA Store](#). *The Newbery Practitioner's Guide* releases early this summer.

ALSC Accepting Applications for Welcoming Spaces National Forum (Virtual)

ALSC members are invited to apply now to attend a virtual forum to share best practices in library service to children and families who have recently immigrated to or sought refuge in the United States. Hosted by ALSC and the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), the Welcoming Spaces National Forum will take place virtually in June 2022. **The application deadline HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO MARCH 4.** Selected participants will represent 12 children's museums and 12 libraries with experience in serving immigrants and refugees, and up to 24 of their partnering organizations. Participants will be selected on a rolling basis with priority given to applicants planning to attend the forum as part of a collaborative team. For more information, [please visit the project webpage](#). The application form is at <https://airtable.com/shruoOSuWrohl6bKg>.

Día News

ALSC encourages libraries and community organizations to connect children with diverse books and programming opportunities through Día - Children's Day/Book Day. Día is a nationally recognized initiative that emphasizes the importance of literacy for all children from all backgrounds.

National Día Program Registry 2022. Is your library hosting Día programming this year? We invite you to share information about public programs that you are having at your library or community organization. The [Día Program Registry](#) is a national database showcasing all types and sizes of Día programming and searchable on a national Día map and display website. Program coordinators who use the registry also receive a personalized webpage to help promote their Día events. For more information, [visit the Program Registry webpage](#).

Día Products Still Available. Have you checked out the Día bibs, bags, totes, T's and more, featuring designs by Reggie Brown, *New York Times* best selling illustrator? These adorable products are only available through the end of April. Don't miss your chance to spread the Día love.

Youth Media Awards Rewind

Were you unable to attend the Youth Media Awards Announcements in January? You are in luck! A recording of the event is [available for viewing online](#). In addition, you can find the press release with the complete 2022 list of ALA and affiliate youth media award winners at https://ala.unikron.com/?fbclid=IwAR1N756w1y-fs_07iEF96ii50Hwj51Ammivblze5Rs8EmCAxWRElxj2Bm4

Jaffarian Award Applications Open

ALA invites school librarians to apply for the [Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award](#), a \$5,000 award recognizing outstanding humanities programming for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The award is presented annually by the ALA Public Programs Office and is sponsored by ALA's [Cultural Communities Fund](#) in cooperation with the [American Association of School Librarians](#). Applications will be accepted until May 5, 2022. For more details, please [visit the Jaffarian Award website](#).

Bibliography to Benefit Youth Dealing with Trauma

A [Children in Trauma Bibliography](#), created by Dr. Megan McCaffrey, assistant professor in the Division of Education at Governors State University, is available at <https://libguides.govst.edu/childrenintraumabibliography>. The resource is for teachers, librarians, parents, counselors, and others interacting with children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences. Titles are broken into six thematic groups such as domestic/physical abuse, bullying, and sexual abuse; illness, disability, anxiety, and depression; and poverty, homelessness, and hunger; among others. This project was funded by a 2019 ALA Carnegie-Whitney Grant.

CSMCL Chooses Best Multicultural Books of 2021

Each year a committee of the [Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature](#) (CSMCL) identifies the best in multicultural books for preschool through middle school. The [2021 best books list](#) includes 59 diverse titles curated by Lessa Kanani'opua Pelayo-Lozada, Dr. Sujin Huggins, Dr. Naomi Caldwell, and Patricia Miranda. Find the [complete list at the center's website](#).

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