

# ALSC Matters

February 2023, Vol. 21, no. 1

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## Officially Speaking

### Early Signs of Spring

While I know that February is still firmly in the winter season, I hope you'll allow me to look ahead a bit toward what's coming up—I'm noticing signs of spring, you see, and many exciting things that will start to bloom over the next few months!

**Process Committee Volunteering.** One of the most-asked questions of ALSC leaders is: "If I want to be on a committee, when should I submit my volunteer form?" And while there's never a bad time to submit your updated volunteer application, spring is the season in which the ALSC appointing officer begins to make process committee appointments. This year, our appointing officer is Vice President/President-Elect Jonda McNair, who will be continuing the recently-codified practice of working with an appointments advisory team to make committee appointments. She's starting her work on process committee appointments now, which means February and March are ideal months to [submit your volunteer form](#) if you're interested in serving on a process committee (terms begin July 1).

**Talk Strategic Planning at the March ALSC Community Forum.** It's tradition to hold a Community Forum for ALSC members each spring. This spring's forum will be held on March 15 at 2 p.m. (CT). For Zoom registration information, [visit this page](#). The Community Forum topic will be the ALSC strategic plan—specifically, the forum will be an opportunity to update ALSC members on the planning process and progress thus far, and to get member feedback on the direction we're headed. This strategic planning process started back in the autumn with conversations with and input from members and other library workers serving youth; the ALSC Board used all of that community context to begin to explore possible priority areas for our next plan, and we need your feedback to ensure we're headed where we need to go. I invite you all to join us for the forum, and then for the Membership Meeting at ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, where we'll share a near-complete draft for final member input.

**Speaking of ALA Annual Conference in Chicago...Make sure to keep the Monday afternoon President's Program on your calendar!** I'm a big believer in the potential of youth-serving library workers to act as leaders no matter their role, position, or tenure in the profession. That idea is at the heart of my Charlemae Hill Rollins President's Program, which will take place on the afternoon of Monday, June 26, 2023, at the ALA Annual Conference. The program is titled "Leading with Your Hands and Your Heart: A Conversation about Leading from Wherever You Are," and will feature an excellent panel of presenters who have leadership chops aplenty. I'm so excited to be able to learn from a conversation among Linda Sue Park, a Newbery Award-winning author; Ellen Oh, an author as well as co-founder and CEO of We Need Diverse Books; and Dr. Ling Hwey Jeng, professor and director of the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman's University.

This program won't just be a panel conversation, however. In addition to hearing from this prestigious line-up of leaders in our field, the event will include opportunities for connection, networking, and reflection—all vital elements in our ongoing development as leaders. And there will be snacks, too—another thing that I think is often integral to all sorts of leadership!

I want to offer my deepest thanks to members Paula Holmes and Amy Seto Forrester who have been chairing my program, working hard at putting together an engaging learning opportunity that aims to appreciate and activate the leaders in all of us. I can't wait to see you all at this program in Chicago—make sure you don't book your flight to leave before this program has concluded!

The ALSC Charlemae Hill Rollins President's Program is sponsored by the Charlemae Hill Rollins Endowment, which supports quality programming for ALSC's annual President's Program. This program takes place every year at ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition. You can [see past Presidents' Programs here](#).

## Election Opens March 13

Voting is a vital benefit of ALSC membership. The 2023 election will determine five key leadership positions within ALSC: president, ALSC division councilor, and three board members. The [full slate is available on the website](#). For more information on the election in general, please see the [ALSC 2023 election page](#).

The ALSC ballot also will include 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 have celebrated 25 years of ALSC membership this past year. We appreciate your commitment to the association and profession. Members with 25 years or more with ALSC are recognized in the ALSC Voices section of each issue of *ALSC Matters*.

Janice Del Negro  
Joan P. Gagan  
Dora T. Ho  
Kay M. Taylor

## Thank You to Our Friends!

Many thanks to the following generous contributors to Friends of ALSC. To learn how you can support ALSC, visit our website.

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Deidre Winterhalter  
Gretchen Wronka  
Susan Zeigler

**ALSC Voices**

**ALSC Profile**

*Celebrating colleagues with 25 years or more years of ALSC membership*

**Kristi Miller**  
**Manager of Youth & Teen Services**  
**Westmont Public Library**  
**Westmont, Illinois**

**ALSC Membership: 25 years**

**Where did you attend library school?**

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey

**What was your very first library position?**

I was a library assistant in the Children's Department of Fanwood Memorial Library in Fanwood, New Jersey right out of college. After working there full-time for a year, I decided to pursue librarianship as my career. I went to Rutgers to earn my MLS while I worked full-time at the library. And, I'm still great friends with that very first supervisor - Glynis Brookens - who now works at my hometown library in Metuchen, New Jersey!

**What do you love most about your current job?**

I love being in a small-medium sized library where I can still be a front-line Librarian in addition to managing a department. Serving children from birth - grade 12 is awesome! Westmont is a wonderful community, and we have passionate staff and a supportive administration and board. The work culture is so positive, it inspires us all to keep learning and trying new things.

**What do you remember about your favorite teacher?**

My 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Bertrand, read aloud to us from a chapter book every day!

**What's your favorite book of all time?**

Can a librarian choose just one book? I'm a big Harry Potter fan, and *Elephant & Piggie* are fabulous, but *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner* are my all-time favorites. They resonate with me as an adult as much as they did when I was a child.

**What is your favorite family tradition?**

The Miller family reunion every 4th of July at my family's lake home in Green Pond, New Jersey. My daughter and her cousins are the 4th generation to enjoy this long tradition. Lazy days at the lake or the shore are the best!

**Do you have any pets?**

We currently have two cats - Freya & Loki - and a few fish. We have also fostered a couple dogs, but the cats didn't enjoy that as much as the people did!

**Who is your favorite superhero?**

My husband is pretty awesome, but my favorite superhero is my daughter. She is an honors student and a talented gymnast whose strength, passion, and discipline amaze me, but it's her kindness that makes me proud.

## Bright Ideas

### Hosting "Iron Chef" @ your library

Combine four teams of amateur chefs with three volunteer judges, fold in a variety of random ingredients, top it all off with a creative presentation and you have the recipe for an epic Iron Chef competition. Over the years, the City of Santa Maria Public Library has hosted numerous successful Iron Chef competitions, and it is always a creative, messy, and unforgettable experience for both participants and staff.

The first step when planning an Iron Chef competition is to determine what type of entree the chefs will create. To provide a safe event for participants, the City of Santa Maria Public Library requires no cooking during the Iron Chef cooking competition. Instead, dishes such as sandwiches or ramen are selected for the main dish, and the dessert is made with a packaged pound cake or brownies. Numerous ingredient options are provided during the competition; these are chosen by searching the internet for recipe ideas. Food is purchased from a local discount grocery store.

On the day of the program, staff prepares the base for the entrée by slicing bread or cooking ramen in a crock pot. Optional ingredients are removed from packaging and separated into portions for each team. Competitors arrive as a team or come alone and wait for their team to be assigned. Many participants dress for the occasion, donning aprons and chef hats. Before the cooking begins, each group decides on a team name and creates a poster to display at their workstation. The most creative team gets an extra two minutes to finish their entrée.

Teams have 20 minutes to create a unique entree using their base, the provided foods, and a mystery ingredient which all teams are required to include in their dish. Provided ingredients include canned and fresh veggies (e.g., peas, carrots), various sauces and seasonings (e.g., soy sauce, ginger, sesame seeds), proteins (e.g., chickpeas, imitation crab, egg), and, of course, the mystery ingredient. One year the mystery ingredient was corn, another year was bacon. Judges walk around and make comments while teams assemble their food. With ramen, some teams stick with traditional soup, while others choose to forego the liquid and make a noodle dish. Finished entrees are then presented to the judges by each team. The team describes their creation and process, as well as what ingredients were used and for what purpose. After the presentation, the judges try the dish. This is the most entertaining part! The volunteer judges rank the team on presentation, taste, and creativity of their creation. Teams do not learn the judges' feedback until the end of the competition.

After cleaning up their workstations, teams are ready for the second phase of the competition. They must create a delectable dessert using the same base, a mystery ingredient, and the provided ingredients. Ingredients include candy, fruit, syrups, jams, chocolate chips, and whipped topping. Mystery ingredients have previously included cereal and mandarin oranges. Each team of chefs again presents their dish to the judges, and are ranked on presentation, taste, and creativity. Teams and judges alike then enjoy cupcakes while a library staff member tallies the scores. The members of the winning team receive bragging rights and a copy of a cookbook for teens.

The Iron Chef competition is an incredibly popular event that helps budding chefs hone their creative impulses and learn new skills; and it's also a fun time for everyone involved.—*Jenn Harmer, youth services librarian, Santa Maria Public Library, California*

## Jaffarian Award-winning Program Promotes Creativity and Compassion

Saint Marys Area Middle School in Pennsylvania was the recipient of ALA's 2022 Jaffarian School Library Program Award for Exemplary Humanities Programming for their program, Empathizing with Teens in Trauma: Terezín/Theresienstadt Museum Project.

The Terezín/Theresienstadt Museum Project, ongoing at Saint Marys for over six years, involves students in researching the artwork, poetry, and music created by teenagers in the Theresienstadt/Terezín Nazi concentration camp during World War II. Each student selects a piece and researches the history of the camp and the story of the teenager who created the work. A final presentation is created by the students to share their personal responses to the trauma that the teenagers in the camp faced.

This past year, research and presentations were complemented with a lesson from the school social worker on how art and music can help people cope with stress and highly emotional situations. Students also watched the film, *The Defiant Requiem*, a documentary highlighting the courage of a young Czech conductor imprisoned in Terezín who taught fellow prisoners Verdi's Requiem. Students were then joined by the creator of the film, Murry Sidlin, via Zoom for a discussion and Q&A.

"Through the process of engaging in this humanities programming, we are able to allow our students to not only engage with the content, but connect with their mental health," said librarian Ellen Stolarski. "By bringing in our social worker to the program, it has been reported that students who didn't normally come to her office would come to her requesting more techniques."

"The Award Committee was immediately drawn to the emphasis Saint Marys Area Middle School put on creating a multi-dimensional learning experience that promotes empathy, creativity, and compassion amongst students," said Ericka Brunson-Rochette, Jaffarian Award committee member. "By intersecting Holocaust curriculum with trauma-response, this program uniquely ties together history, art, and mental health education in a powerful and impactful way."

Applications for the 2023 award are now open. Complete information is available at: [www.ala.org/jaffarian](http://www.ala.org/jaffarian).

## Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

### Member News

**Dr. Claudette McLinn**, founder and executive director of the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature (CSMCL) and retired district supervising librarian for the Los Angeles Unified School District, received the 2023 Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement. The award recognizes a practitioner for substantial contributions through active engagement with youth using award-winning African American literature for children and/or young adults, via implementation of reading and reading related activities/programs. Congratulations, Claudette!

ALSC member **Saroj Ghoting**, an early childhood literacy consultant, retired at the end of 2022. She was a national trainer on early literacy and very active in ALSC/PLA's Every Child Ready to Read @ your library® early literacy initiative. Best wishes, Saroj!

**Meredith Steiner's** picture book, *Just. Like. You.*, illustrated by Avneet Sandhu, was released in early December 2022. Published by POW! Kids Books, *Just. Like. You.* is a rhyming story that celebrates diversity, introducing readers to all the members of a classroom and what makes each of them unique. Yay, Meredith!

## Spring eCourse Begins April 3

Back, by popular demand: [Reading the Art in Picture Books!](#) In this four-week, online course, beginning April 3, Heidi Hammond and Gail Nordstrom help students learn the language of and better evaluate the art in children's literature.

Focused on the development of visual literacy skills and the examination and evaluation of picture books for both text and illustration, this course can be good preparation for reviewing picture books or serving on a book award committee, as well as for sharing picture books with children in a more expansive way. For further details and registration, [visit the ecourse webpage](#).

## Creating Welcoming Spaces

Join ALSC as we continue the conversation on ways to create and cultivate Welcoming Spaces. We are hosting a [We Are ALSC Chat](#) on Tuesday, February 28, at 1:00pm CT (2pm ET/ 11am PT), focused on creating Welcoming Spaces for new American, immigrant, and refugee members in our communities. This is a continuation of the conversation from last summer's IMLS-funded "Welcoming Spaces National Forum," which welcomed staff from libraries and children's museums to discuss struggles, successes, and best practices in reaching immigrant and refugee populations in their communities.

If you're doing something amazing in your library, come share! If you're having an issue or want to know what others are doing, come ask! This Zoom chat is open to all; feel free to share this information with interested colleagues. For more information and to sign up, [visit the Zoom registration page](#).

## Celebrate Día with Updated, Free Resources!

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 2023.** Is your library hosting Día programming this year? We invite you to share information about public programs you are hosting in your community. The Día Program Registry is a national database showcasing all types and sizes of Día programming that is searchable by state. 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](#).

**Free resources for download!** Check out the 2023 Día reading lists and social media graphics on our website. These colorful resources make it easy to promote your Día programs and celebrate #bookjoy!

**Día Grant Available.** The [Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature](#) (CSMCL), an organization advocating for multicultural children's literature is offering a [\\$500 grant](#) in selected multicultural children's books to a library serving children and families that is hosting a 2023 Día library program with an African American focus. Grant applications are open and available on the CSMCL website. The submission deadline is March 8, 2023. The award recipient will be announced on or about March 13, 2023. For more details, visit the [CSMCL grant webpage](#).

## Submit Suggestions for the 2024 Children's Literature Legacy Award

ALSC personal members are encouraged to suggest names for the 2024 Children's Literature Legacy Award, which recognizes an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have over a period of years made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children through books that demonstrate integrity and respect for all children's lives and experiences.

Please send your suggestions directly to [Caroline Ward](#), the 2024 committee chair. The deadline for suggestions is April 15, 2023. The Legacy Committee looks forward to having a robust list of names to consider. For more information about the Legacy Award, [visit the webpage](#).

## 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 administered by ALA's Public Programs Office in cooperation with the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). The application deadline is May 5, 2023. For more details, please [visit the Jaffarian Award website](#).

## Youth Media Awards Recording Available

Were you unable to attend ALA's Youth Media Awards Press Conference 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 list of 2023 ALA and affiliate youth media award winners at <https://www.ala.unikron.com/>.

## Meg Medina Named New National Ambassador for Young People's Literature

The Library of Congress and Every Child a Reader recently announced the appointment of Meg Medina as the eighth [National Ambassador for Young People's Literature](#) for 2023-24.

Medina, a Cuban-American, is the first Latina to serve as National Ambassador in the program's history. She succeeds Jason Reynolds, who served as the National Ambassador from 2020 through 2022.

Medina's books examine how culture and identity intersect through the eyes of young people. Her middle-grade novel, "Merci Suárez Changes Gears," received the 2019 Newbery Medal and was named a notable children's book of the year by the New York Times Book Review.

For her two-year term as Ambassador, Medina will engage readers across the country through her new platform Cuéntame!: Let's talk books. Inspired by the Spanish phrase that friends and families



use when catching up with one another, ¡Cuéntame! encourages connection among families, classrooms, libraries, and communities by talking about books.

The National Ambassador for Young People's Literature is selected for their contributions to young people's literature, the ability to relate to children and teens, and dedication to fostering children's literacy in all forms.

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