

Everyday Advocacy Matters

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"Lovely advocacy we're having, isn't it?"



Ah, Vegas. The legend. The librarians. The heat.

If you attended the 2014 ALA Annual Conference last month, I'll bet you a dozen poker chips your number-one topic of conversation with colleagues was the scorching temperature. (Of course, I'm sure you talked about library things, too, but the heat was an obvious choice.)

Weren't melting in Vegas with the rest of us? Here's a sample of my own exchanges on the daily trek between my hotel and the convention center:

Me: "How's your conference so far?"

Fellow attendee: "Hot!"

Me: "Man, this heat, right?"

Fellow attendee: "No kidding! I'm from _____, where it's only _____ degrees right now."

Fellow attendee: "Sure, it's hot, but at least it's dry heat."

Me: "Nope. I don't buy the 'dry heat' argument. It's still super hot!"

Since the high temperatures created a common experience for conference goers, they fostered natural introductions that quickly led to shared tales of library awesomeness. I'm sure you'll agree that those fun, easygoing chats framed by the heat are sure to stick with us for many months to come.

What if talking about advocacy were as easy as talking about the weather? It can be, you know. Just as we all know the many moods of Mother Nature, we're all familiar with the highs and lows of library life within our own communities. Libraries are no strangers to dark and stormy times, but when the sun finally shines through our advocacy efforts? It's glorious indeed.

The next time you see an ALSC colleague, imagine yourself saying, "Lovely advocacy we're having, isn't it?"

Let Everyday Advocacy help you champion the role of children's librarians and library services to youth and families through simple, effective strategies for success. Read on to find out how!

Jenna Nemec-Loise, Member Content Editor
ALSC Everyday Advocacy Website & Electronic Newsletter
@ALAJenna

Everyday Advocacy Spotlight

Awesome Advocate Profile: Helen Bloch



**Helen Bloch, Member, ALSC Advocacy and Legislation Committee
Children's Room Manager, Oakland Public Library, Main Library**

What does Everyday Advocacy mean to you?

If and when a crisis does hit, it's a lot easier to mobilize the community and advocate to your funding officials if you've done your legwork.

I think many librarians assume people know what the library is and the value and services the library provides. **Never assume anything.** There are lots of people who haven't been inside a library in a long time and think of it as a building filled with printed books, lots of shushing, and not much more.

It's our everyday job to take pride in our work, to do it as best we can, AND let everybody know what we're doing and why we're doing it. This extends from our patrons to other library staff and administrators, our partners (e.g. teachers, authors, museum staff, professional organizations, and others interested in children's issues), and finally the local politicians who hold our purse strings. It also means talking to neighbors, friends, relatives, and anybody else with whom you come in contact. Modesty is not a virtue in this situation.

What's been your proudest advocacy moment?

Over the last three plus years, I've been one of the leaders of Save Oakland Library. Unfortunately, the library system has been facing ongoing budget woes during this entire time period. Three years ago, Oakland Public Library (OPL) was faced with a possible shutdown of 14 branches and three-day-a-week service at our four remaining locations. During that campaign, I presented the City Council, our funder, with more than 18,000 signatures collected throughout the city demanding that library locations not be closed.

In the end, through the efforts of many and the voices of many more, they weren't. However, having stable funding for the library was not achieved and the library is once again in dire financial straits. As of July 1, 2015, OPL is looking at the closure of 6-8 branches. Most recently, I helped convince City Council to set aside \$500,000 from this year's budget surplus to help alleviate the budget emergency we will be facing in 2015.

So while I've helped win some battles in the past, I hope I can eventually report that my proudest advocacy moment is when we are finally able to secure the stable and adequate source of library funding that our residents deserve.

What advice or wisdom can you share with other Everyday Advocates?

No matter how well you prepare and advocate, a financial crisis can occur. If a crisis does hit, don't be afraid to publicly speak out, and if you do, make sure your speaking time is memorable. Limit your comments to two or three points, and use statistics and personal stories when talking to your funding agency.

When I presented our City Council with all those petition signatures, we created drama and memory by having multiple people bring up binders filled with signatories' names. I explained that if all of those 18,000 people had spoken for their allowed minute of speaking time, Council members would be listening to library supporters for 12.5 days. You can bet that that made an impression! More recently, I spoke of my personal journey from public defender to children's librarian and library advocate. That's the sort of personal story that gets remembered.

To get publicity during a crisis, plan fun and creative events. Use social media and local blogs and newsletters to gain media coverage, especially if you are in a major metropolitan area. Being in the Bay Area, it was hard getting news coverage three years ago, but once the local blogs began reporting about some of our events such as our Zombie March and 14-Hour Read-a-thon, coverage improved.

Finally, don't be afraid to ask for help. **You cannot do it alone.** Having a list of specific tasks with which you need help makes it more likely that people will volunteer. Almost everybody loves their library and will be happy to help in some way.

Be open to suggestions from other library lovers. Many of our most successful efforts sprang out of ideas campaign volunteers had and then ran with.

And don't forget there are lots of resources out there that can help you, such as the ALSC Everyday Advocacy website!

From the ALSC Advocacy Committees

Check out these recent ALSC blog posts and committee chair updates for the latest from Priority Group I:

Advocacy and Legislation Committee

Robyn Lupa, Chairperson
Building Relationships and Creating Partnerships

Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee

Matt McLain, Chairperson

The ALSC Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee had an excellent conversation at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference in Las Vegas. We are currently working on an idea to design posters that can be hung near changing tables

advocating for parents to be constantly building their child's literacy skills. These posters would introduce finger plays and early literacy best practices (talk, sing, read, write, play) as well as connect parents to other resources via a web address or QR code.

We also talked about ways we can work in the community to partner with other childhood advocates, including Head Start and other early intervention organizations. We brainstormed other ways we can work within ALSC to further the organization goals and have a greater effect by working together rather than in our own silos.

We also discussed finding ways to help librarians working with young children to obtain an early childhood/early literacy certification. Many states have a registry through their state Department of Education or an organization that provides licensing and certification to preschool and daycare providers. We think librarians can be great advocates by working with these entities to build up their programs and share our knowledge as well.

Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee

Dorothy Stoltz, Chairperson

The PLA/ALSC Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee will feature a webinar on the Every Child Ready to Read @ your library Toolkit for Spanish-Speaking Communities at the end of 2014. Future webinar topics are in the planning stages:

- Music and early literacy
- Using ECRR with teen parents
- Project Views2, the University of Washington public library research on the effectiveness of storytimes
- Using appropriate apps in storytimes

We're in the early stages of two exciting projects: (1) an IMLS research grant to examine how early literacy programming offered by public libraries affects parent behavior; and (2) designing an ECRR module with a special focus on caregivers.

Four ECRR-sponsored programs are being submitted for consideration for ALA 2015:

- Outreach and partnerships using ECRR
- Librarians and designers discuss the fusion of play—and all five ECRR2 practices—into library environments
- Music and early literacy
- Using ECRR with teen parents

Finally, be sure to check out ECRR at the 2014 ALSC National Institute:

- Every Child Ready to Read® en Español: A How-to Workshop
- Sing, Talk, Write, and Play with Math and Science; and
- Inspired Collaboration: Early Childhood Partnerships

Intellectual Freedom Committee

It's Private. It's Personal!

Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers

Braille and Talking Book Libraries

Public Awareness Committee

Amy Koester, Chairperson

One of the guiding statements for ALSC's Public Awareness Committee includes the charge: "To plan, execute, coordinate, and disseminate public awareness campaigns about the importance of library service for youth." While we in the library profession are well aware of the excellent services being offered for young children within our institutions, much of the general public may not be aware of what they can find at their local library.

The Public Awareness Committee will work toward making library services better known—and thus more widely used—by the general public. We intend to collaborate with other ALSC committees, creating additional avenues for the excellent work they are doing in early literacy, diversity, and school-age initiatives. We're also planning to develop relationships and campaigns with national partners, like early childhood educators and pediatricians, who may be able to help families become more aware of the library as a community resource and partner in their children's development.

School-Age Programs and Services Committee

Passive DIY Programming for Tweens

News You Can Use

Libraries Now: A Day in the Life Documentary

Co.Create contributor Christine Champagne writes, “When filmmakers Julie Dressner and Jesse Hicks saw hundreds of people waiting for the main branch of the Brooklyn Public Library to open at 1 p.m. on a Sunday, they wondered why the library wasn’t open earlier and were inspired to do some research.”

The product of Dressner’s and Hicks’ research is the 10-minute documentary, *Libraries Now: A Day in the Life*, filmed over a six-month period at branches across New York City’s three library systems: New York Public Library, Queens Public Library, and Brooklyn Public Library.

Check out Champagne’s complete article, *Beyond Books: A New Film Shows the Vital Role Public Libraries Play in New York Communities*, to get background on the documentary and to watch this powerful film. (No spoilers here—you’ll see right away how useful it can be in your Everyday Advocacy efforts.)

ALA’s New Legislative Action Center

Oo-la-la! ALA’s Legislative Action Center got a makeover! Visit this shiny new ALA Washington Office site for the latest in these key advocacy areas:

- Issues—Links to current issues on which you can take action for libraries.
- Resources—Links to tools to help with your advocacy efforts.
- Chapters—Links to Take Action Centers in so you can get involved in local advocacy efforts involving libraries.

You’ll also find contact information for ALA Washington Office staff and links to other ALA resources. Help and support for your Everyday Advocacy efforts is just a click or a call away!

“Partner with Your Local Public Library to Support Early Literacy” Handout

Thanks to the ALSC Liaison to National Organizations Committee, we’ve got a new Everyday Advocacy resource to help us connect early childhood educators with their local public libraries.

The Partner with Your Local Public Library to Support Early Literacy handout offers practical insights on the role of public libraries in early learning and the advantages of collaboration to improve outcomes for young children and families. Why not e-mail the document or share hard copies with educators on your next outreach visit?

Find this handout under Resources from ALA in the Be Informed section of the Everyday Advocacy website.

Make the Most of District Days!

Did you know summer break isn’t just for kids? Even Congress gets some time away from Washington, D.C., during the heart of the summer months.

It’s no day at the beach for our U.S. Representatives, though! Many are back in their home districts to hear from constituents about the issues that matter most to them.

Taking place this year from August 4 to September 5, District Days coincides nicely with the end of our Summer Reading Programs and the beginning of the busy back-to-school season. Consider inviting your legislators to a library program or visiting their offices to share all the ways your library makes a difference for children and families in your community.

Need help finding your elected officials? Check out the shiny new Legislative Action Center.

Have a District Days success story to share? Submit the Share Your Advocacy Story web form or send the details to everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com.

Get Inspired

Pew Research Quiz: What Kind of Library User Are You?

Looking for a fun way to find out how your patrons are using—or aren't using—the library? The Pew Research Internet Project has you covered! Get your whole community involved in What Kind of Library User Are You?

After taking this online quiz yourself (you know you want to), create a customized version to share with your community. Use the results you collect to create targeted advocacy messages and rally support for your library.

Read the full report of Pew's findings when they surveyed adults 16 years and older in September 2013. How does your library compare?

Nominations Open for 2014 I Love My Librarian Award

We bet you know more than a few librarians who make an Everyday Advocacy difference for children and families in their communities. Why not nominate a public or school library colleague for the Carnegie Corporation of New York/New York Times I Love My Librarian Award?

Review the selection criteria before completing the online nominations form for a public librarian or a school librarian, but act fast! Nominations close September 12, 2014.

Herrera Wins 2014 Sullivan Award



When you think of awesome Everyday Advocates, you'll definitely want to remember Luis Herrera, winner of the 2014 Peggy Sullivan Award for Public Library Administrators Supporting Services to Children.

As stated in ALA's March press release, "The Sullivan Award is presented annually to an individual in a library administrator role who has shown exceptional understanding and support of public library service to children."

Read the complete release for details on the 2014 Sullivan Award Committee's unanimous selection of Herrera, who was presented with the honor during the ALA President's Program at the Annual Conference in Las Vegas.

Are You Taking Part in Take Action Tuesday?



Since February 25, we've challenged you to be a part of Take Action Tuesday, a weekly day of engagement to help you learn, share, and make a difference for libraries and library services to children in your community.

So here's what we really want to know: Are you in?

We're getting some great feedback, but we'd love to hear more about how you're integrating these weekly challenges into your Everyday Advocacy efforts. Fill out the Share Your Advocacy Story web form or send an e-mail with all the details.

Take Action Tuesday just not happening for you? We want to hear about that, too! Let us know why so we can make it better for you and our other ALSC colleagues.

Haven't had a chance to get in on these challenges? No problem! Here's a recap of the weekly prompts since late May so you can catch up:

- **May 20**—Find out about key legislative issues and how to take action for libraries in your state.
- **May 27**—Use the ALA Annual Conference online scheduler to find advocacy programs and discussion groups in Las Vegas.
- **June 3**—Submit content for the July 2014 issue of Everyday Advocacy Matters.
- **June 10**—Start a database of stories and impact statements to use in your Everyday Advocacy efforts.

- **June 17**—Mark your calendar for the ALA Membership Meeting in Las Vegas.
- **June 24**—Empower your volunteers to become ambassadors for your library's Summer Reading Program.
- **July 1**—No challenge.
- **July 8**—Let us know how you've been participating in our Take Action Tuesday challenges!

Calendar

- August - District Days
- September - Library Card Sign-up Month
- September 18-20 - 2014 ALSC National Institute
- September 21-27 - Banned Books Week
- September 24 - Banned Websites Awareness Day

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