

Everyday Advocacy Matters

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From the Editor

“Don’t whine. Advocate.”

If you’ve met me, you probably know I’m not one to dally about the house or sit back and let someone else take the reins when it comes to things I’m passionate about. Yes, I’m your classic Type-A doer, which makes me an ideal fit for *Everyday Advocacy*.

I’m also not one to talk around a topic, quietly hoping my audience will get what I’m saying. I’m pretty frank and direct in general, with a healthy dose of tact thrown in for good measure. (Because bold? Yes. Rude? Nope!)

So when I attended Dr. Janice Del Negro’s 2015 Follett Lecture—“A ‘Belligerent Profession:’ Telling the Library Story”—earlier this month at Dominican University, I was nothing short of a library moth to the advocacy flame. I tweeted like a madwoman as I heard my soul sister in *Everyday Advocacy* confidently echo what’s been on my mind and in my heart for the 15 years I’ve been in the profession:

- “Facts do not necessarily have the power to change people’s minds.”
- “Never underestimate the power of a story.”
- “When we let other people tell our [library] stories, they get it wrong.”
- “Sometimes the way a story goes depends on who gets to tell it.”
- “A common story creates a community of listeners.”
- “Human beings are hard wired for story and respond to it on a visceral level.”
- “The ability to tell a library’s story effectively moves a community from apathy to advocacy.”
- “What story do you need to tell, and to whom do you need to tell it?”
- “Don’t whine. Advocate.”

Of all these pearls that command attention and invite action, I’ll bet I don’t have to tell you which one resonated with me the most. Janice says, “No whining!” when it comes to advocacy, and I heartily agree.

In these weeks leading up to National Library Legislative Day, don’t whine about what’s keeping you from serving children and families to the best of your ability. Get out and advocate for who you are, what you need, and why it’s important!

We all have the power to shape our library stories into meaningful advocacy messages that illustrate how we make a difference for children through libraries. We change lives, and *Everyday Advocates* like us take action to prove it.

Let this issue of *Everyday Advocacy Matters* inspire you to tell your library’s story. As Janice says, “Sometimes the way a story goes depends on who gets to tell it.” Why shouldn’t it be you?

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Everyday Advocacy Spotlight

Library Services to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers: A Toolkit for Librarians and Library Workers

Looking for new and inspired ways to reach children with special needs and their families? Look no further than Library Services to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers: A Toolkit for Librarians and Library Workers. The introduction to this top-notch advocacy resource appears below:

This toolkit is designed to help you develop or enhance library services to special populations of children and families. It is the culmination of a yearlong project by the ALSC committee, Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers. As part of the Child Advocacy Priority Group, the committee is charged, in part, with offering leadership in discovering, developing, and disseminating information about library materials, programs, and facilities for special population children and their caregivers. The committee set out to create a resource for librarians and library staff who may not regularly serve particular special populations.

The toolkit covers a variety of special populations including home school families and Spanish-speaking families. For each special population, you will find a brief introduction; subject headings and keywords for catalog and online searching; resources for further study including organizations, online and print resources; subject matter experts within the library community; and examples of existing partnerships between libraries and community organizations.

One toolkit cannot cover the range of special population children and families you may have the pleasure of serving in your library. This toolkit is a beginning, an easy-to-use resource when you or your library staff encounters a family with special needs. We hope you share this resource with your library staff. Through awareness of various special populations, we can work together to help all children and families feel welcome at the library and access materials relevant to their needs.

Led by Africa S. Hands, chairperson, the members of the Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers Committee include Amanda Struckmeyer, Amy Seto Musser, Jordan Boaz, Lesley Mason, Rebecca Anne Scotka, Renee Marie Grassi, Sara E. Hathaway, and Sylvia Cecilia M. Aguinaga.

Ask an Everyday Advocate

Thanks to ALSC Member Aaron Stefanich of Grand Forks (ND) Public Library, we have the first question for our brand-new Ask an Everyday Advocate feature:

“What online resources would you recommend to help librarians become better advocates for their library?”

There’s so much out there, right? It’s hard to know where and how to start navigating all the resources available through ALA and its divisions!

Here’s a summary of just a few top-notch online resources to help ALSC members and their library colleagues become better advocates for their libraries:

Everyday Advocacy. We’d be remiss if we didn’t mention this one, right? This ALSC online resource is your one-stop shop for learning how to be informed, engage with your community, speak out, get inspired, and share your advocacy story. Take part in our weekly Take Action Tuesday challenges to stay on track and on top of your advocacy efforts for libraries and library services to children!

Turning the Page Online. Here's the description of this dynamic training taken directly from the PLA website:

Turning the Page Online is a FREE library advocacy training course developed and presented by the Public Library Association (PLA) with generous support from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This highly interactive training program is designed to give librarians, library staff, trustees, and supporters the skills and confidence they need to advocate successfully on behalf of their libraries.

In this self-paced course, library staff and supporters will learn how to create and tell their library's story, deliver effective presentations, develop a compelling case for support, and build and sustain partnerships along the way. This online training offers participants a rich array of learnings. Participants will have the opportunity to mix and match modules, ultimately resulting in the completion of an Advocacy Work Plan. Participants of Turning the Page Online are encouraged to come with a specific, self-determined advocacy goal for their library.

YALSA Advocacy Toolkit. Revised in 2013, this online toolkit has everything you need to advocate for the importance of libraries and library services to teens. Topics include developing a core advocacy message, building partnerships, and using web tools for advocacy. There are lots of great starting points here just waiting to be adapted for the younger set or for library advocacy in general.

AASL Advocacy Toolkits. Look no further for specialized advocacy toolkits to help school library staff build support and navigate the most challenging circumstances. Check out the School Library Program Health and Wellness Toolkit for "a full range of resources to help school librarians build or update plans for stakeholder support and true advocacy" and the Crisis Toolkit "designed to assist the school librarian who has encountered an immediate threat to their position and/or program."

Advocacy University. This online resource "is a comprehensive clearinghouse of advocacy tools and resources for all types of libraries from the American Library Association."

Be sure to check out the varied online learning options, which include archived webinars from ALA's advocacy leaders and frontline professionals.

What Does Everyday Advocacy Mean to You?

Still a little fuzzy on what Everyday Advocacy is all about? Looking for a way to explain the initiative to colleagues and families? Here's what it means to three ALSC members who've sent us their feedback by submitting the Get Your Advocacy Button! webform:

Leigh Fox, Brooklyn (NY) Public Library

"Promoting and providing library services to the community so that they will speak out for us."

Bina Williams, Bridgeport (CT) Public Library

"It means walking the walk and talking the talk. Or should I say booktalking the booktalk!"

Ellie Carey, Baltimore County (MD) Public Library

"Everyday Advocacy means that I don't have to do something insurmountable and grand but I can tackle the topic of advocacy every single day when I'm at work, at home, at the grocery store..."

From the ALSC Advocacy Committees

Check out these recent [ALSC blog](#) posts for the latest from Priority Group I:

Advocacy and Legislation
Robyn Lupa, Chairperson
Still Building!

Intellectual Freedom
Heather Acerro, Chairperson
Leveling and Labeling: An Interview with Pat Scales

Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers
Africa Hands, Chairperson
Quick and Easy Storytime Adaptations

Public Awareness
Amy Koester, Chairperson
How are libraries celebrating Día?

News You Can Use

Vote in the 2015 ALA Election

Want to know how you can make a big Everyday Advocacy splash this spring? Vote in the 2015 ALA election if you haven't already!

Your voice and vote matter, so join your ALSC colleagues in deciding who'll lead both our division and ALA into the next year of awesome for children, families, and libraries.

Check out the 2015 ALSC slate of candidates as well as the need-to-know information about the ALA election as a whole. Polls close on Friday, May 1, at 11:59 p.m. CDT, so don't wait. Cast your votes today!

Win a Banquet Ticket through Advocacy!

As part of the ALSC advocacy button campaign, ALSC members now have the opportunity to enter into a raffle to win one of four tickets to the 2015 Newbery-Caldecott-Wilder Banquet in San Francisco! To enter, ALSC members can submit content for Everyday Advocacy Matters e-newsletter by **Friday, May 1, 2015**.

You can inspire librarians and libraries across the country! By submitting your question, elevator speech or news item, you'll also receive an advocacy button and tip sheet in the mail. Ticket winners will be notified by the ALSC office by Friday, May 15, 2015.

Virtual Library Legislative Day 2015

National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) takes place this year on May 4-5. This is a great time to get involved in advocacy both within your community and beyond it!

Even if you can't physically travel to Washington, D.C., you can still participate from your own library community. And how, exactly, can you do that? Through Virtual Library Legislative Day (VLLD) activities during the week of May 4-8!

Here's how the Advocacy and Legislation Committee plans to ensure your successful participation in VLLD 15—even if you've never done it before:

- Draft a letter template for you to personalize and send to your U.S. representatives and senators;
- Create talking points you can use when calling your U.S. representatives and senators;
- Craft ready-to-post social media messages (e.g. sample tweets, Facebook posts, etc.)
- Collect and organize contact information for U.S. representatives and senators, including e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and social media handles; and
- Make it all accessible and easy to use!

Watch ALSC-L, the ALSC blog, and social media outlets as the Advocacy and Legislation Committee makes these great VLLD materials available for your efforts.

Remember, the Everyday Advocacy website is filled with tips, tools, and techniques to support your advocacy efforts every step of the way. Use these wonderful resources to become a stronger advocate on NLLD, VLLD, and beyond!

Youth Library Service Value Survey

How do you define “value” in terms of youth library service? The ALSC Valuation & Assessment Task Force and the 2015 ALSC Emerging Leaders Team are asking for your participation in a survey to help examine how youth librarians are measuring outcomes and outputs in their libraries.

Your responses to this ten-question survey will help with the creation of new tools and resources for the Everyday Advocacy website. Awesome, right? And you can be a part of it. Let your voice be heard!

Get Inspired

Savvy Success Story: 1000 Books before Kindergarten

Michelle Coford
Stanislaus County (CA) Library

I started the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program at my library system here in Stanislaus County (CA). In my branch, I've decorated a large bulletin board in my children's room with my 1000 Books display, I'm promoting it on program flyers for parents, and I even wear an “Ask me about 1000 Books” button on my lanyard. I'm basically a walking /talking billboard for this program.

One day as I was conducting a crafting program, a young mom holding a little baby asked me, “What's this 1000 Book program?”

Of course, I was giddy with excitement as I explained how easy it is to read books to her child and track 1000 books. I told her about the benefits of sharing books with her baby, the bonding that happens while she reads with her child, and how she would be giving her baby a head start on reading before baby begins school.

All of a sudden the mom said to me, “Oh, no. I was asking for my 4-year-old.”

“Why don't you sign up both your children?” I said.

As the mom stared at me blankly, I quickly grabbed a few board books and demonstrated how to read to her baby. I held up *Black on White* by Tana Hoban, pointing out the pictures for her child.

“Look! A bib! Do you have a bib?” I asked the baby. She squealed and smiled at me.

“I’ll take that one!” the mother said.

I then grabbed *Baby Signs for Mealttime* by Linda Acredolo and Susan Goodwyn and modeled “eat” and “more.”

“I’ll take that one, too!” the mother said.

By the time I finished, I had read three board books to her baby, the mom had another five board books in her bag, and she had a very happy little baby on her lap. I signed up both her children for our program, and they left very happy with a full book bag slung over her shoulder.

Success!

Awesome Elevator Speeches

With National Library Legislative Day and Virtual Library Legislative Day right around the corner, now’s the time to perfect your elevator speech and give it a whirl! Here are three examples from ALSC members who’ve sent us their speeches by submitting the Get Your Advocacy Button! webform:

Sabine Rutkin, Killingly Intermediate School

“It is important to fund all school libraries, but VERY important to fund those in poorer school districts where students might not have the opportunity to purchase their own books. It’s obvious, but not always thought of.”

Lynda Salem-Poling, Long Beach (CA) Public Library

“I provide community-based education and education support by supplying books, expertise, and online resources to students, their families, and the curious.”

Tess Prendergast, Inclusive Early Literacy

“Did you know that unlike teachers, therapists, doctors, and other specialists, children’s librarians are the only professionals who are positioned to help all families support their children’s learning and development? No appointment, registration fees, or referrals are ever needed to talk to (and receive helpful resources from) a children’s librarian about any topic that parents and caregivers are interested in learning or need to know more about.”

April Is School Library Month

April is School Library Month, the perfect opportunity to advocate for the critical role of school librarians in preparing students for success both in school and in life.

This month, take a few moments to make a difference for the school librarians and school libraries in your community:

- Write a note to the alderman or mayor expressing your support of strong school library programs that include state-certified school librarians.
- Call or e-mail a local principal to sing the praises of a school library colleague with whom you’ve built a successful partnership.

- Thank a school librarian for his/her contributions to the academic achievement of local students.

Know of a school that's lost a school librarian or has never had one at all? There's never been a better time to dust off your school library elevator speech and use it.

Showing your support for American Association of School Librarians (AASL) colleagues in your community is Everyday Advocacy in action!

Take Action Tuesday Recap

For almost a year, 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.

Haven't had a chance to get in on these challenges? No problem! Here's a recap of the weekly prompts since January so you can catch up or plan ahead for next year:

- January 6—Save the date for National Library Legislative Day 2015.
- January 13—Read the January 2015 issue of Everyday Advocacy Matters.
- January 20—Talk up the Everyday Advocacy website with a colleague.
- January 27—Get the know the new ALSC advocacy button campaign!
- February 3—Sign the petition asking the U.S. Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- February 10—Claim your Creating a Better Future for Children Through Libraries advocacy button!
- February 17—Register for the online Day of Diversity Forum.
- February 24—Give us an idea. Get an advocacy button!
- March 3—Take action for school libraries and school librarians!
- March 10—Watch the new National Library Legislative Day video from the ALA Washington Office.
- March 17—Call your U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators and ask them to sign on to the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) appropriations letter.
- March 24—Take 15 minutes to chat with your supervisor about your Everyday Advocacy role.
- March 31—Participate in the ALSC advocacy button campaign and win a banquet ticket!

Calendar

April - School Library Month

April - D.E.A.R. Month

April 12-18 - National Library Week

April 14 - National Library Workers Day

April 15 - National Bookmobile Day

April 30 - El día de los niños/El día de los libros

May 4-5 - National Library Legislative Day

May 4-8 - Virtual Library Legislative Day

June - GLBT Book Month

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<http://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy/>