

Orlando

COGNOTES CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION JUNE 23-28, 2016

JUNE 23-28, 2016

HIGHLIGHTS
Edition

ORLANDO, FL

#ALAAC16

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



Jazz Touches the Soul

By Michelle Kowalsky, Rowan University, NJ

Librarians shared their appreciation of transgender teen Jazz Jennings on June 27 as they asked her questions about her experiences, read letters sent from others at home, and described their emotional reactions to her story.

"It's hard to find good friends who will love you for who you are, and who you can be comfortable with and open up to," said reality TV star Jennings, who is the recent author of *Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen* (Random House, June 2016). "It's sometimes strange when people I meet know more about me than I know about them," she said.

Jennings received audience applause when describing her strategies for helping people realize that transgender people are essentially just like everyone else and deserve to be treat-

ed equally. "Some people are still ignorant, so we must continue advocacy work so that people will learn more," Jennings explained.

Jennings recommended that the best thing librarians and educators can do is to help others to not feel alone. By offering support and respect freely to those you meet, you can help to remove fears that no one will love and accept them. Librarians can also share books with diverse characters, help to avoid repeating stereotypes, and maybe even write some new stories themselves.

When asked about her future, Jennings was encouraged by several members of the audience to continue on to college. "Reading books and watching shows on my computer immerses me in a world where nothing else matters and I can relax," said Jennings. "I will just have to keep sharing my story until we come to that point where we are accepted."

Holly Robinson Peete, RJ Peete, and Ryan Peete Share Family Life with Autism

By Sara Zettervall, Hennepin County Library

Actor Holly Robinson Peete thought she was blessed with a perfect "instant family" when she gave birth to a twin boy and girl in 1997. But she and her husband, former Detroit Lions quarterback Rodney Peete, soon faced the unexpected challenge of an autism diagnosis for their son, RJ. "We call it 'Never Day,'" she said, referring to the day of diagnosis, when she was told her son would never speak, play sports, or have meaningful relationships. Peete decided to do everything she could to help her son. On June 27, Peete, RJ, and RJ's twin sister, Ryan, took the stage as part of the ALA Auditorium Speaker Series to share some of their struggles and triumphs as a family united in autism advocacy.

One of the first steps Peete took as an advocate was cowriting a children's picture book, *My Brother Charlie*. Ryan, an elementary school student at the time, sparked the idea for the book by saying she wished other kids her age could understand more about RJ, but she hadn't been able to find a book to share in the library. Peete also found inspiration

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Reciprocal Fandom for Libraries from Hollywood

By Michelle Kowalsky, Rowan University

Movie star and children's author Jamie Lee Curtis spoke to hundreds of librarians on June 27 during the Closing Session as if they were her longtime personal friends, recounting poignant library stories and amusing reactions to events in her life. She closed the conference with a lively and candid talk about the impact of libraries in her life outside of her career in the "showoff business."

Curtis spoke effortlessly about the value of libraries from her own experience as a learner and as a parent. She explained that she creates her own personal curriculum of library materials when she becomes interested in a topic, reading nonfiction, fiction,

biographies, and primary sources, as well as viewing movies and documentaries. Her current research is on Native Americans and the American immigrant experience.

"One of my favorite errands was going to the library with my children and their wagon to pick up the maximum number of books we could check out," Curtis said. "For all of you who have ever sat with a child on your laps, sharing a storybook together, you know that the connection between you and the child as you turn the pages is one of the most beautiful aspects of being a parent," she explained.

Incoming ALA President Julie Todaro described Curtis as one of the most outspoken and consistent advocates for libraries,

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2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS





Looking Forward to Seeing You at the 2017 Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta



By Julie B. Todaro, ALA President

I hope you came away from the Annual Conference in Orlando feeling as enriched as I did – enriched by the many brilliant ideas and innovations that are transforming libraries, and by the personal connections made and deepened as we worked together on the future of libraries. Connection and community were especially important at this conference as we shared grief, pain, and anger over the tragic Pulse nightclub shootings two weeks earlier, and expressed support in a variety of heartfelt ways. So much of what took place at the 2016 Annual Conference reminded me once again why the library field and those who work in it are so inspiring. Thank you all for your hard work, creativity, and caring.

I was honored to be inaugurated as the 2016-17 ALA President at the brunch event on Tuesday, and welcomed the opportunity to share what I hope we'll accomplish together during my presidential year. I introduced my special focus for the second year of the Libraries Transform campaign – “The Expert in the Library” – and am optimistic about how we'll find new ways to communicate and emphasize the invaluable role of those who work in libraries, while also developing training tools and resources to help meet continuously changing needs and demands. We'll be building on Libraries Transform's excellent foundation since launching one year ago, with more than 3,000 libraries of all types already signed up to participate.

It's your continued engagement that makes ALA effective, and we look forward to that energy again at the 2017 Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta. I'm excited about the new Symposium on the Future of Libraries presented in conjunction with Midwinter that will be included in registration and the usual timeframe, offering three days' (Saturday, Sunday, Monday) exploration of the many futures for academic, public, school and special libraries. Sponsored by ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries, the symposium will consider the near-term trends already inspiring innovation in libraries, and the longer-term trends that will help us adapt to the needs of our communities. I'm looking forward to the discussions with experts and innovative thinkers from allied professions and disciplines sharing their visions for the future as they help us think beyond our current work. In addition to building on library professionals' expanding expertise, the Symposium will also integrate and expand on current content that highlights innovations and advances in libraries, such as the ALA Masters Series, News You Can Use updates, and Ignite Sessions. You can learn more about the Symposium on page 9.

And of course there are the familiar highlights to look forward to at Midwinter – exciting speakers, authors, and thought leaders, hundreds of discussions on top-of-mind topics, pre-Midwinter Institutes, “deep dive” workshops, exciting book award announcements, and the Exhibit Hall, with dozens of events and authors and more than 400 exhibitors showcasing the latest technologies, titles, services, and products.

Please join us January 19-24 for the 2017 Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Atlanta, and then June 23-28 for the Annual Conference & Exhibition in our association's home city of Chicago. Book early to get discounted earlybird registration rates – Midwinter registration and housing open September 7, and Annual opens in January, 2017. I look forward to seeing you at both events, and in the meantime, here's to our ongoing collaboration on helping libraries transform.

Learn more about the 2017 Midwinter Meeting on page 9.



Guerrero Encourages People to Use Their Voices for Change

By Talea Anderson, Washington State University

Noted actor Diane Guerrero appeared as the featured speaker at the ALA President's Program on June 26 at the ALA Annual Conference, discussing her recently published memoir, *In a Country We*

Love: My Family Divided.

Guerrero spoke about her experience as the daughter of undocumented immigrants who were later deported to Colombia. She described the book as a kind of coming out – an opportunity to share an experience that, for her, has been deeply scarring.

Guerrero contrasted her recent successes in “Orange Is the New Black” and “Jane the Virgin” to her feeling of helplessness as a child. “I still have nightmares,” she admitted. “I wake up screaming.” Guerrero recalled that libraries were a safe haven for her when she was young – “like a church or a hospital.” Her parents often spoke worriedly about “documents” or “papeles” and when she begged her father for “papeles” of her own, he took her to the public library to get a library card. “I wanted to be legit,” she said, and her father always assured her that she would be safe at the library. Guerrero stayed behind in the United States when her family was deported to Colombia – and she ultimately found success – but she noted that few immigrant children are as fortunate as she was. When left behind, some

Guerrero described the book as a kind of coming out – an opportunity to share an experience that, for her, has been deeply scarring.

take to the streets and some go into the penal system. She described her book as an effort to advocate on behalf of these children. “I want people to realize that they have a voice and to use it,” she said.

Guerrero encouraged the audience to act for political change or to support advocacy groups like the IRC and Women Step Forward. Speaking about the Orlando shootings, she said, “My heart goes out to the victims and the victims' families, but this is a chance to stand up and make change.” In addition to Guerrero's talk, the ALA President's Program included presentations of awards to libraries and librarians for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the profession. For more about ALA awards, see <http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants>.



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Dyson Delivers Electrifying Opening on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

By Sara Zettervall, Hennepin County Library

I am who I am because you made me who I am.” These were the final words that led to a standing ovation for Michael Eric Dyson, keynote speaker at this year’s Opening General Session on June 25. Over the course of his speech, he presented a vision of libraries that break the bounds of traditional education to liberate our society from hatred.

Dyson, a professor of sociology at Georgetown University, was named one of the 50 most inspiring African Americans in the U.S. by *Essence Magazine* and is the author of 17 books, including the 2007 American Book Award Winner, *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster*. He is known for interweaving references to traditional literature and modern pop culture, and covered ground from Alfred, Lord Tennyson to Snoop Dogg and from George Clinton to *The Bible*. But he always came back to his central theme: “Literacy is critical to sustaining an intelligent citizenry.”

Growing up in a Detroit ghetto, Dyson had the classic experience of accessing new worlds through library books. He spoke of his enduring love of physical texts and also

joked that he probably still owes some fines to the Detroit Public Library. He also shared more difficult memories, like travelling through the Deep South with his mother in 1958, where he heard “n---r” for the first time and had to pee in a mason jar in the car because they couldn’t use public bathrooms. His resulting struggle to understand the overall behavior of society led him to study philosophy, religion, and sociology. Continuing to hold popular African American music and culture in high regard, he found “a deep and intense wisdom mediated through text.”

Speaking more broadly, Dyson called out a “tyranny of unintelligence” among some politicians. He acknowledged that “a lot of smart people are evil, too,” but drew a distinction between education within



Michael Eric Dyson

the accepted social matrix and the genuine literacy that comes from a “lifelong desire to be enlightened. Nobody can pass a bill that will deny you access to insight.” He proclaimed that we need diversity to live, and we depend on it for the success of society.

Dyson closed with references to the arm bands that were passed out to attendees as they entered the theater, reading “Equity,” “Diversity,” and “Inclusion.” He held up libraries as places that can foster all three and cheered for librarians who go beyond books to be counselors and therapists to patrons.

ASCLA President’s Program Shows How to Do the Right Thing

By Sara Zettervall, Hennepin County Library

Many librarians don’t know that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires their libraries to perform self-evaluations and take steps on their own to come into compliance. ASCLA leaders discovered this when they hosted a preconference last year to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ADA. As a result, they decided to reach out this year with tips for all libraries at the ASCLA President’s Program, “Don’t Get Sued! What Librarians Are Doing to Address the Physical, Programmatic, and Web-based Accessibility Barriers for People with Disabilities.” A panel of five librarians from public, academic, and special libraries shared practical examples from personal experience.

In her overview of ADA requirements,

Marti Goddard from San Francisco Public Library said libraries should comply because “it’s the law, and it’s the right thing to do.” That emphasis on doing the right thing resonated throughout the presentations, which turned what could be an intimidating topic into a positive brainstorm on serving all patrons. In one example, Goddard explained that both service animals and comfort animals are allowed in libraries. Service animals are limited by law to being dogs or small horses (with a surprising photo of a service horse riding on a subway train), but comfort animals can be just about anything. Examples from SFPL include boa constrictors, ferrets, parrots, and iguanas, just to name a few. Staff are only allowed to ask if the animal is a service animal and what service it provides, but if the animal becomes disruptive, the owner can be asked to take it

outside the building. Goddard emphasized that posting both the ADA guidelines and library procedures for grievance can be helpful.

There are many reasonable modifications that can be made in library programming, and Sandy Cohen from Nashville Public Library shared a few for vision- or hearing-impaired patrons. One example that harkens back to this year’s Opening General Session is CART, or Communication Access Realtime Translation; conference attendees may remember the CART text scrolling next to the podium. CART also gives the audience an opportunity to catch up if they miss something, making it a good illustration of how ADA improvements can give everyone a better experience, and not just people with disabilities.

One item of note about the ADA is that it covers both public institutions and private institutions that are open to the public. The ASCLA panel covered both of these realms by including academic librarians from public and private colleges. Deborah Tenofsky represented the University of Cincinnati, a large public school that recently underwent a routine review by the Department of Education for ADA compliance. As a result, the University has renewed efforts to be inclusive in person and online. Tenofsky recommends seeking buy-in at the highest levels and encouraging administrative leaders to weave compliance into institutional goals.

In one example, Goddard explained that both service animals and comfort animals are allowed in libraries. Service animals are limited by law to being dogs or small horses, but comfort animals can be just about anything. Examples from SFPL include boa constrictors, ferrets, parrots, and iguanas, just to name a few.

Building on Tenofsky’s encouragement to be proactive, Lily Sacharow from Berkeley College in New York presented examples of how she has encouraged staff buy-in. She has provided her own captioning for commonly viewed videos, provided accessibility checklists for colleagues, and sought the questions and concerns of faculty members in order to address them. She pointed out that most libraries already have resources on hand, like Lynda.com that can provide staff training on accessibility.

The session wrapped up with a brief presentation from Chris Corrigan of the Library of Congress on web accessibility. He admitted he could only share “the tip of the iceberg” in such a short amount of time but included an extensive list of resources at the conclusion of his presentation, which can be accessed by all conference participants through the conference scheduler. The previous presentations also included much more information and links that would be valuable to anyone who is interested in learning more about this topic. While the language of the law is extensive, the steps that library staff can take are doable and understandable.

THE EXHIBITS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE





Changing the World through Creativity

By Talea Anderson, Washington State University

Teen entrepreneur and activist Maya Penn spoke as part of the Auditorium Speaker Series on June 25, about her new book, *You Got This! Unleash Your Awesomeness, Find Your Path, and Change Your World*. Penn is passionate about “changing the world through creativity.” At 16, she has shown prodigious talent as a young creative and entrepreneur. Among other things, she manages her own eco-friendly fashion line, is the CEO of Maya’s Ideas, a company she started in 2008 when she was eight years old, has developed animated films, and has delivered three TED Talks, with one of these having received more than 1.3 million views online.

Penn noted that she intends *You Got This!*



to encourage others to use their creative gifts to improve the world. She reiterated the importance of giving back in her own

work – using her companies and products to advocate for girls’ rights, promote environmental protection, and empower women

and youth to be more active in computer science and STEM fields. Penn indicates that 10 – 20 percent of her own profits go to local and international charities and environmental organizations. By pursuing her creative interests and passion for activism, she has found points of synergy. For instance: her animated short films about the importance of pollinators and her line of eco-friendly sanitary pads developed for use by girls internationally.

Penn noted the impact of libraries on her life and career. She indicated that books – too many to name – have guided her in evolving her interests. Addressing the audience, she said, “You guys are like the keepers of portals to other worlds. I think that’s a super power you need to keep.” She remarked, finally, that it is an honor to participate in ongoing conversations through books – to inspire as she has been inspired by others.

Atwood Delivers Shakespeare With a Modern Twist

By Michelle Kowalsky, Rowan University, NJ

Librarians received a graduate-level crash course on interpreting Shakespeare from author Margaret Atwood during the first Auditorium Speaker session June 25. Atwood is one of several best-selling authors commissioned by the Hogarth Shakespeare Project to retell the Bard’s works in novel form, while using their own unique style and flair.

The prize-winning Atwood authored *Hag-Seed* (October 2016), a retelling of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, which is one of her favorite works. The title of her book is also a Shakespearean insult, which foreshadows some of the plot’s excitement. Atwood regaled the audience with short scenes from the book, commentary on American and Canadian politics, and humorous critique of required school curricula.

Atwood’s naturally melodic writing evolved into iambic pentameter at times during her talk, which provided another testament to her expertise and mastery of language. In response to Shakespeare purists’ natural critique of anyone trying to adapt these classic works, Atwood explained, “All interpretations of Shakespeare are slippery, just like most of his characters. ... As one of the main contributors to development of the English language, Shakespeare’s words are infinitely interpretable.”

Attendees received a galley copy of the work along with Atwood’s admonition, “No spoilers on the Internet, or else you’ll be imprisoned in the cloven pine!” This and many other literary references received a hearty chuckle from the clearly cultured audience, especially when Atwood amused them with humorous tales she witnessed as a fan of amateur and professional Shakespearean theater.

Wedding Heard ‘Round the World

by Michelle Kowalsky, Rowan University

For some couples, the same-sex marriage fight is still not over, even after getting married legally. Michael McConnell and Jack Baker, the first legally married couple in the United States, spoke about their experiences and their new memoir June 25.

McConnell grew up in Oklahoma, had lots of strong role models, and even went to a family psychologist. His decision to come out as a gay man was obvious to him and his friends, and he credits his family for giving him the courage to live honestly and be himself. McConnell’s mother said to him, “We know you are strong-willed and will do what you want,

but please do what is right.” These words would never be truer than when McConnell met his future husband, Jack Baker, at a barn party. Theirs is a love story renewed repeatedly against a lifetime of litigation.

Baker was the first openly gay college student body president in the country, who took on the military for overt discrimination and won, and who ran for city council and the Supreme Court in Minnesota. Baker and McConnell wanted to get married legally, so Baker went to law school to figure out how to do this. He discovered that Minnesota law at that time did not specify gender, so the two applied for a marriage license in 1970 and, after addressing multiple loopholes in the existing laws, were married in 1971.

This made them instant celebrities

whose lives were covered by multiple news outlets at the time of their legal union. They would become newsworthy again in 2015, when gay marriage laws were revised at the federal level. After nearly 40 years, their union was declared no longer valid, creating additional legal loopholes in which the couple became stuck. Blue Earth County, Minnesota, had improperly recorded their initial marriage license so they are still unable to either correct this problem, remarry each other, transfer assets to their spouse upon death, or claim Social Security survivor benefits. “I learned in law school that under the rule

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Thanks to the thousands of attendees who helped build the mosaic, which was donated to the Orange County Library System in Orlando, FL

GALE
CENGAGE Learning



The Library of Congress Booth stands out on the Exhibits floor.



At the Gale booth, exhibitors hosted a photo contest and encouraged ALA attendees to take a picture and contribute to a digital mosaic. No one knew what the final image would be, but everyone's smaller shots were grouped together into one bigger image. The words "Orlando Strong" with a rainbow overlay were added. The completed artwork is being donated to the Orange County (Florida) Library System.



ALA attendees pack the floor during the Exhibits Opening Reception.

Seen in the Exhibits



The Exhibits contained more than just booths with book publishing as their forte. Furnishings, financial information, the newest tech gadgets, games, computers, and software exhibitors could also be found.



Giveaways continue to be popular in the Exhibits at many booths. Attendees found preview copies, discounted books, and popular titles, posters, postcards, highlighters, and a host of other essential supplies to take or mail home.



The Maker Pavilion was a popular spot to visit. Attendees found ways to incorporate Makerspaces into their libraries without spending a lot of money by investing in people rather than equipment, building good relationships with community members who can present programs, and by creating a culture of problem-solving.

Celebrating the 2016 Winners of the Andrew Carnegie Medals



RUSA Executive Director Susan Hornung, left, presents Sally Mann's editor, Michael Sand, the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction.



Libraries are both safe and dangerous places. They let loose the imagination, but also store the most terrible secrets of what we have done," said Viet Thanh Nguyen as he accepted the 2016 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction for his novel *The Sympathizer* on June 25. "My library is both the heaviest and the lightest thing I own."

Enthusiastic book lovers, including authors, editors, publishers, ALA leaders, and conference attendees, filled a ballroom at the Orlando Hilton for the fifth Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction celebratory program and reception. The program included presentations of the 2016 medals and accompanying \$5,000 checks. The winning titles – Nguyen's *The Sympathizer* and Sally Mann's memoir *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs*, which won for nonfiction – had been announced at the Midwinter Meeting in January.

ALA President Sari Feldman introduced the event, reminding the audience that reading is critical for fighting intolerance, and thanking her fellow librarians and book lovers for "all you do to generate enthusiasm around good literature, to encourage us to be a nation of readers, and for helping people find books that entertain, inform, and transform."

The program kicked off with what featured speaker and 2001-2003 U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins described as "some poems interspersed with a keynote." Introduced by

Booklist Adult Books Editor Donna Seaman, he commented that she might be the only person who ever read his books from start to finish. "Poetry is a bird, prose is a potato," he said, adding, "Poetry is the displacement of silence. Prose is the continuation of noise." Between the poems to which he treated the audience, including one exemplifying his non-rhyming poetry and humor called "The Rain in Portugal," he talked about being a friend of the book and about writing (how do fiction writers manage to fill entire pages with words?), showing how he earned the title "most popular poet in America" from the *New York Times*.

Sally Mann's longtime editor Michael Sand accepted the medal and offered moving remarks on her behalf. Mann had been thrilled and grateful to win and had eagerly looked forward to attending, but the sudden death of her son forced her to withdraw. She was forthright about her grief in the poignant letter she wrote for Sand to read at the event: "My heart is in your hearts right now, and I want you to know that." She would have liked to have attended to spread some "Appalachian love" and commented on her disappointment that Sand would not be able to deliver her words with the right accent. Her hope had also been to talk about her mother's triumph in getting not just a library but charming a bookmobile out of their small community's reading-averse authorities in the 1950s. Sand spoke about their relationship as editor and writer, communicating often in acronyms, and ended his remarks with "TYVMFTA." Thank you very much for this award.

"An award magnet" was how Seaman described *The Sympathizer*, which also won (among others) the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, reminding the audience that the Carnegie Medal had come first. Nguyen expressed deep appreciation for libraries and the award. His decision to master English as a young refugee was both a way of belonging to America and his first step to becoming a writer. The second step was making a home in the San José Public Library, where he came to understand that books offered both magic and menace, and that people like him were absent both as authors and within the pages of books. He discovered that there was a history of exclusion and that he was not alone, and hoped that, "if I could find a place on that shelf, I could find a place for my parents too." For him, writing needed to be an act of jus-

stice, a journey into his own interior to engage with his own monsters, with no leaning on the "crutches of sentimentality." He thanked librarians for all their labors in safeguarding a place for the imagination.

After the program, attendees had a chance to mingle over dessert and drinks and to chat with Collins and Nguyen for another hour.

NoveList was welcomed as generous lead sponsor of the 2016 event. Duncan Smith, founder and general manager of NoveList, spoke of how reading supports individuals "from conception to resurrection," and, like Feldman, alluded to the importance of reading in helping make us a more open-

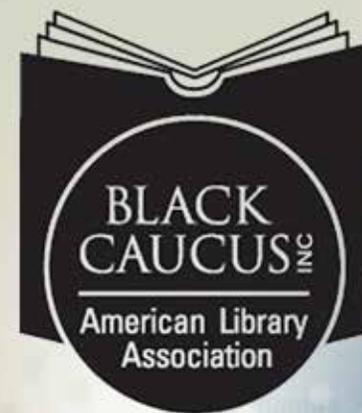
"My heart is in your hearts right now, and I want you to know that."

minded society.

The Andrew Carnegie Medals were established in 2012 by ALA and Carnegie Corporation of New York, and are cosponsored and administered by *Booklist* and RUSA. They have rapidly gained widespread recognition in both library and mainstream media; last year, the ALA Public Awareness Office captured more than 451,000 web pickups in addition to other media related to the awards.

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For further information
www.bcala.org



The ALA Council gathers for a 140th Anniversary group photo in Orlando.



Another happy reader is spotted: An Annual Conference attendee walks back to the Hyatt Regency Orlando with an onsite issue of Cognotes.



Alan Bernstein, Valdosta State University Odum Library (Georgia), donates blood at the ALA Annual Conference. The blood draw was done in support of the Pulse shooting victims.



Attendees enjoy the 2016 Pura Belpré Award Celebración sponsored by ALSC and REFORMA. The 20th Anniversary Pura Belpré Award Celebración honored the winning authors and illustrators in an unforgettable event: una fiesta maravillosa.

LIBRARIES TRANSFORM TRAINING



Spectrum Scholars Alejandra De Santiago (from left), Asa Heyward, and Heather Hummons hold up their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion armbands at the Spectrum Institute Opening Reception.

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► **Discussions with experts and innovative thinkers** from allied professions and disciplines sharing their visions for the future, helping us think beyond our current work.

► **Emerging products and services** for libraries in the exhibit hall and installations throughout the conference.

► The Symposium **integrates and builds on the Midwinter Meeting's** popular ALA Masters Series, News You Can Use updates, and Ignite Sessions, which highlight innovations and advances in libraries.

Registration for the 2017 Midwinter Meeting opens September 7th at noon (Central)
ALAMIDWINTER.ORG



ALA ATLANTA MIDWINTER MEETING & EXHIBITS
The conversation starts here...
JANUARY 20-24, 2017
ALA American Library Association



Memorial for Pulse Shooting Victims



Lucia M. Gonzalez and Mario Ascencio, past presidents, REFORMA

Gonzalez

"I hope that we awaken, and the ones that have the power to make decisions, they awaken too, and they realize that there is no place for weapons of mass destruction, that belong in the war field, to be in our civil societies."

Ascencio

"I am thankful for being here in Orlando with my REFORMA familia and my ALA GLBT family, who bring peace and comfort, not only to my mind, but to those who have been affected by this tragedy."



Peter Coyl and Deb Sira, chair and chair-elect, GLBT Round Table.

Coyl

"The best we can do to honor those who have died is to remember and live out loud. Remember those who have passed. Remember the lives they led. Remember the futures they would have held."

Sira

"Like Stonewall and with time, Pulse will have its place in history as a powerful symbol of equity, diversity, and inclusion."



ALA President Sari Feldman (right), leads attendees in a moment of silence as the names of the victims are displayed.

"As one ALA, we stand together with the City of Orlando. We stand with the LGBTQ and Latino communities, and we stand on the side of hope in the face of tragedy."

[Click here to view the entire Memorial for Pulse Shooting Victims](#)



ALA President-Elect Julie Todaro and U.S. Congressman John Lewis

Todaro

"In times of sorrow and grief, we turn to words, often as beautiful as the words we heard this morning, words of kindness, words of remembrance, and words of reflection. In the wake of the Pulse tragedy, though, I believe we also need words of action. We hold the power to transform lives through compassion, understanding, and commitment to social justice."

Rep. Lewis

"As a people who believe in the way of peace, in the way of love, in the way of nonviolence, who believe that, for a sense of hope, of moving our lips, our feet, our hands, we can change things."



“A Good Side Order of Stubbornness” – Brad Meltzer

by Caroline Gardner, Simmons College SLIS

What is your legacy? What will you be remembered for, and by whom? These questions were the crux of award-winning author Brad Meltzer’s talk as part of the Auditorium Speaker Series at the ALA Annual Conference on June 26. Meltzer spoke at length about the importance of legacy, and how we can implement positivity and change into the world through the power of individual legacy.

The main thing, Meltzer said, is to consider what you do for yourself versus what you do for other people. It is what you do for others that is most special, most impactful. The world can be changed just by ideas, by getting a community to believe in the power of ideas, and making things happen from those small ideas. With “a good side order of stubbornness” and determination, Meltzer thinks that nothing is out of reach for us to create positive forces in our communities.

He has four areas of legacy to be considered:

- Family;
- Friends/colleagues/teachers;
- Communities; and
- Strangers.

Leveraging these four types, Meltzer outlined many personal anecdotes of the ways these legacies can be made. The librarian who, in one brief afternoon, changed his

life at a Brooklyn Public Library branch but whose name he never got, and who in fact may not remember the young boy she helped, is an example of the power of a stranger’s legacy (he is trying to track her down, if any librarians have ideas on finding her!) Meltzer firmly believes that ordinary people can change the world and that you can impact someone’s life just by being kind to them for even one moment. These small moments, added together, become the legacy you leave behind for people to remember you as the kind of person who made a positive impact and tried to make the world a better place.

Meltzer continued, “We all know what it’s like to feel boring and ordinary and want to do something amazing,” and the moments in which you lead with good examples, find everyday heroes to champion, and set goals that are both reachable and celebrate-able for the people we interact with can be the most important and most lasting. For every one of us here, no one can ever capture the very best parts of who



we are – but you can live your best life and thank those people who’ve helped you, and they will remember your legacy.

An impassioned and inspiring speaker, Meltzer really wanted to impress upon us, the librarians and professionals of the audience, how important saying “thank you” can be to those who have left their legacy on us, as well. The teacher from ninth grade who may have no idea they helped a budding award-winning author on his way, or the information desk assistant who made you smile when you were at the end of your

tether at the end of a long day – these people leave their marks on us, large or small, and should be thanked for their kindnesses and thoughtfulness in shaping our lives.

He closed by talking about his idea that writers and librarians have a lot in common: “We’re weird and subversive,” and we need to stay that way and use it to our advantage. Staying weird and subversive, by Meltzer’s philosophies, is the perfect way to enact changes in our communities – personally, professionally, familialy, educationally, and more.

Material “Born Digital” Does Not Equal “Born Accessible”

By Sara Zettervall, Hennepin County Library

Dr. Lisa Wadors Verne, in her presentation “Accessible Books for All” on June 27, reminded ALA attendees “If you can’t see the text, understand the meaning, or hold the book, you are not reading.” Benetech, a non-profit organization that promotes global literacy, created Bookshare in response to the increasing need for digital content that is accessible for people who cannot read standard print. Patrons who have visual disabilities or physical handicaps that don’t allow them to turn the page can use Bookshare.

Picture books can be hard to understand if one has a visual impairment. For instance, imagine a child with visual problems trying to read *Pete the Cat – I Love my White Shoes* by Eric Litwin. Pete, who is wearing brand new white shoes, is standing on a pile of strawberries and the text asks the reader the color of Pete’s shoes. Vital information is lost because the child cannot see the picture. Bookshare edits the sentence to read “Pete is standing on a pile of strawberries, what color are his shoes now?” and the child is able to understand and participate in the reading experience.

Bookshare is not just for children. It is the world’s largest accessible online library of ebooks to leverage the collections of individuals who scan books. It is open to all students, schools, and libraries free of charge for qualified patrons with print learning disabilities. Bookshare currently has over 400,000 titles available including the last three years of the *New York Times* best-sellers, top 100 picture books, Pulitzer Award winners, and Newbery Medal winners. Textbooks, common core material, college prep, and career titles are also available. They are searchable

by author, subject, language, and grade level. Users have the ability to customize the readings with different voices, reading speeds, font size, and many more options. It is important to note that libraries, schools, and patrons do not have to invest in expensive software or hardware to access titles as all Bookshare titles are accessible on web browsers, tablets, or smartphones.

Benetech offers the following advice on how to purchase ebooks that are accessible:

- Main text should be distinguished from supplemental information.
- Content should not be presented as

an image.

- The table of contents should be linked to the text to make it easy to navigate through the book.
- Tables should have headers and captions.
- Images should have descriptions.
- Page numbers should be included.
- Math should be presented in MathML format.
- Video and audio content should be accessible.
- Interactive content should be made accessible.

BECAUSE THERE IS NO SINGLE SOURCE FOR INFORMATION. (SORRY, WIKIPEDIA.)

JILL BICKFORD ON ALSC





Don't Stop with Google – Go to the Library and Learn the Real Answer

By Deborah Hathaway, Texas Woman's University, MLS

Is Google contributing to the marginalization and misrepresentation of minorities? Dr. Safiya Noble's research clearly shows that it is. Noble, who spoke during the LITA President's Program, "Toward an Ethic of Social Justice in Information," asked the audience to question the logic behind search engine algorithms. She suggested that librarians have become more trusting of search engine results over their own inventions; trusting and treating information as more valuable than their own judgment.

"What makes us think that artificial intelligence is better than what humans have to offer?" Noble said. "When you search for the word 'beauty' what shows up? Not a lovely ocean view, but hegemonic images of white beauty. If you search for three black teenagers, you get mug shots, but if you change the terms to three white teenagers, it returns images of white girls with soccer balls. It is results like these that continue to perpetuate old narratives instead of allowing equal opportunities for cultural representation."

Noble offered the example of Dylan Roof's manifesto in which he stated that the Trayvon Martin case was the beginning of his awakening. He used two different websites to search for the meaning of black on white crime. His search results led him to a white supremacy website and then to more inflammatory and inaccurate sites. "Libraries and librarians are crucial in developing the skills to teach and understand the context of important concepts. Using the internet for understanding complicated concepts only leads to a dangerous ideal," she said. "Not everything can be answered in a three-second search."

Noble asked attendees to imagine what the outcome might have been if Dylan Roof had used the body of literature offered by libraries and librarians to gain an understanding of why the country was divided over the Trayvon Martin case. "It's the context that leads to understanding."

For further reading on the important issue of social justice in an online environment, Noble suggested *The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class, and Culture Online*, written with coauthor Brendesha M. Tynes.



Author Avi Talks About Being a Reader First

By Caroline Gardner, Simmons College SLIS

There are three main obligations that librarians and writers share when thinking about children, said award-winning author and playwright Avi as he addressed the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) President's Program attendees. "To be honest, to write as well as we can, and to create a vision of life that is both a challenge and an achievement."

Avi was impassioned as he spoke about his life growing up in the 1940s and '50s in New York, at a time when children's books were not as common and writing was little more than penmanship exercises in school. Crediting much of his creative interest in his voracious appetite for reading and radio, he was told over and over that he was a terrible writer. Failing high school, his parents hired a tutor, Ella Ratner. She told Avi, "You are

an interesting person – if you wrote better, people would know that." Her statement was one of the top reasons he was inspired to keep trying and keep writing.

By sharing his life's difficulties with writing and access to children's books, he emphasized the importance of the school library and reading on children of all ages. Before becoming a successful children's writer, Avi was a librarian and has remained a library advocate. "Making sure there is support and belief in child readers and writers is important, even if someone thinks there isn't any potential in their work," he said. "The word 'read' is enormously powerful – just look at a single dictionary definition of it!"

Avi reminded us that books are more influential than we may think, saying, "I'm not a reader because I am a writer, but rather I am a writer because I am a reader."

COGNOTES

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YVONNE CAGLE ON LIBRARIES, DISCOVERY



Got a Book Challenge? Call ALA for Help!

By Michelle Kowalsky, Rowan University, NJ

You have a right to have questions, and retrieve information to help you formulate answers," explained Jamie LaRue, director of the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) and the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) of the American Library Association. On June 24, the "Intellectual Freedom 101" session taught librarians a variety of ways that they could help protect this core value of the profession and of society.

The office provides support for librarians who are experiencing book challenges, policy attacks, or public relations issues which threaten intellectual freedom in their communities. Librarians can call the office to explain their problems and con-

cerns, and receive guidance from the OIF staff on their next steps.

LaRue encouraged librarians to report challenges so that ALA can track them over time, and partner with political and legal teams to prevent, minimize, or neutralize threats to these freedoms. The Freedom to Read Foundation collects donations toward this purpose, and several other activities support the needs of librarians who may have been negatively affected by these challenges.

Since intellectual freedom asserts everyone's right to read, view, think, or express their views on any topic, librarians must be vigilant in helping to educate others of its importance at every opportunity. Some of these opportunities include continuing displays for Banned Books Week or Choose Privacy Week, which can begin important dialogues in your community.

For assistance with actual and possible challenges to library materials, services, and programs, contact the Office for Intellectual Freedom, (800) 545-2433, ext. 4223 or at oif@ala.org. Practical strategies, resources, checklists, and news about recent challenges are available at the OIF website, www.oif.ala.org/oif/.

America Will Get it Right

By Talea Anderson, Washington State University

As part of 50th anniversary celebrations for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Congressman John Lewis spoke on Saturday about his graphic novel trilogy *March*, a series that retells the events of the civil rights movement including the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Lewis appeared with his *March* collaborators, co-author Andrew Aydin and artist Nate Powell.

Lewis famously led the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at the height of the civil rights movement. Now, as the last surviving member of the “Big Six” civil rights organizations active in the 1960s and a former Freedom Rider, he uses *March* to recount his memories of the time period.

Lewis spoke about the crucial role libraries fill in encouraging upcoming generations to pursue social change. He noted how, by reading, he was inspired to challenge the

racist status quo. “You as librarians have been encouraging people to get into trouble – good trouble – and you must continue to do just that,” he said. “Through information – through books – we must find a way to set down the burden of hate.”

William Adams, chairman of the NEH, concurred in introducing Lewis that libraries are essential for supporting healthy egalitarian societies. “There is no democracy without the act of memory,” he said, likewise encouraging libraries to continue in their work of preserving and sharing the history of events like the civil rights movement. It is for this reason that the NEH has awarded some 3,400 grants to libraries in the past 50 years, totaling \$515 million.

Lewis concluded his remarks by calling on librarians to remain hopeful, despite events like the recent Orlando shootings. He recalled how, in 1956 at 16 years of age, he was turned away from Pike County Public Library because library cards were for “whites only.” In 1998 he returned to



Congressman John Lewis

this library for the first time to sign copies of his memoir, *Walking with the Wind*. At that time, 40 years later, he was welcomed into the library by an audience of white and black readers, and the staff gladly presented him with a library card. “When people say

the world doesn’t change,” Lewis said, “I want to tell them to walk in my shoes.... I truly believe we will get it right in America.” Lewis left the stage amid modified words from the civil rights movement, “We will overcome.”

Peete

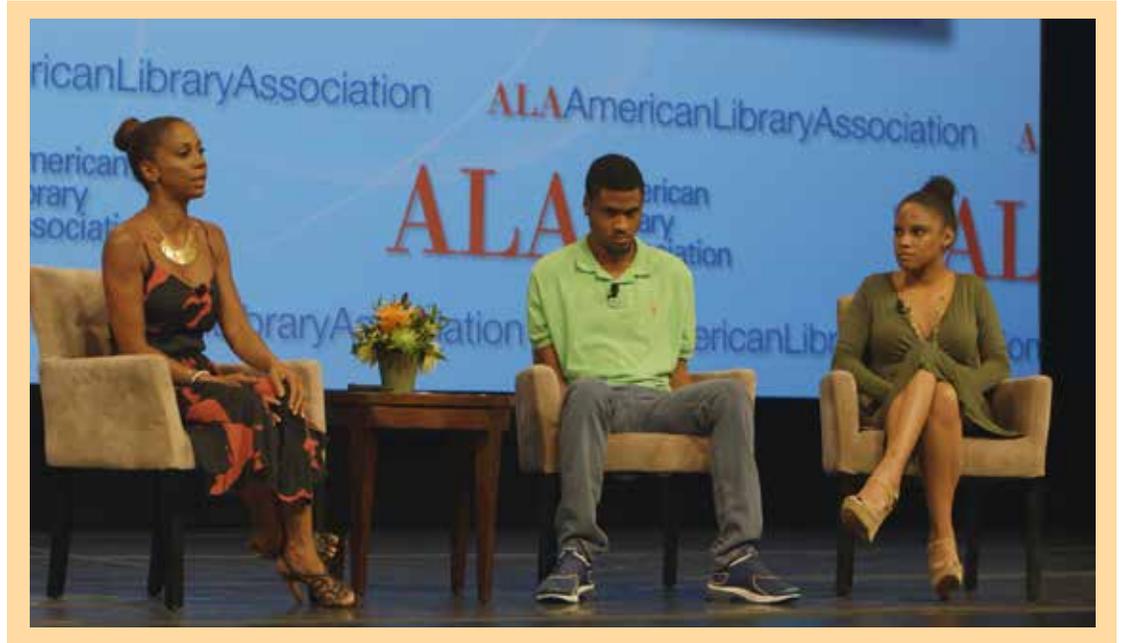
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in the memory of her father, Matt Robinson, who was the first actor to play “Gordon” on Sesame Street and an accomplished storyteller. *My Brother Charlie* went on to win a number of awards, including the 2011 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature. Peete, RJ, and Ryan continued the family tradition by coauthoring their latest book. *Same but Different* is a novel based in the reality of being a teen with autism who is learning to negotiate an adult world and also shares the ups and downs of the loving family around them.

Peete highlighted the importance of sibling support and inclusion throughout the presentation. Ryan has always been her brother’s biggest advocate and says she used to speak for him before he found his own voice at age six. “Ryan likes to remind me she has known RJ for nine months longer than I have,” Peete joked. The twins’ relationship provided a special model for “RJ’s Place,” spaces that have been installed in various children’s hospitals and autism centers throughout the United States. Each RJ’s

Place is both a technology center and a sibling hang-out, creating a supportive and educational environment for the whole family. The spaces are funded by the HollyRod Foundation, which the Peetes established to provide compassionate care for people living with autism and Parkinson’s disease.

The whole Peete family has been involved in sharing their story through a new reality program on OWN – The Oprah Winfrey Network. “For Peete’s Sake” follows Holly and Rodney Peete, RJ, Ryan, and the family’s two other sons as they negotiate life together. Although reality television can be invasive, Peete said that her family “wanted people to walk up to us and say, ‘thanks for sharing your story.’” She also wanted to



present a vision of a real family that is positive and functional. She shared a few clips with the audience, illustrating RJ’s first job search and Ryan’s decisions about where to go to college. Both twins are making successful transitions to adult life: RJ is working for the Los Angeles Dodgers, and Ryan will be attending NYU in the fall.

Peete’s efforts to reach out have been successful, if the response from the ALA audience is any indication. As people stepped up to the microphone to ask questions, each spoke with gratitude and praise for a family so willing to share their own experiences. Many reminisced about Peete’s roles on “21 Jump Street” and “Hanging with Mr. Cooper,” and one said that Peete truly embodies how acting can be a noble calling. The

Although reality television can be invasive, Peete said that her family “wanted people to walk up to us and say thanks for sharing your story.”

question-and-answer period also provided opportunities for RJ and Ryan to speak for themselves. Both said it was difficult to get through middle school, and Ryan gave the advice that families of children on the autism spectrum should “just keep going” and push through those hard times that will eventually come to an end.

The legacy Peete hopes to leave goes beyond understanding to create a network of support for people on the spectrum. She recommended that librarians create sensory rooms or safe rooms where children with autism can separate themselves when they get overwhelmed in the library. She has never lost sight of the importance of books and libraries. “Books have been such a great anchor for us,” she said, leaving with the hope that her books can also be anchors to others in their time of need.

PALESTINIAN LIBRARY CHALLENGES





Dutch Caribbean Librarians Come to Orlando

The Sustainability Task Force hosted a delegation of librarians from the Caribbean June 26 who presented “The National Library of Aruba: Promoting, Enhancing, and Embracing Green Education.” The panel included representatives from the National Library of Aruba (NLA) and the Philipsburg Jubilee Library (PJL, St. Maarten).

During the last four years (2012 - 2015) 6,000 students and teachers in secondary schools and higher education of Aruba attended symposiums on sustainable energy, food supply, and soil practices. For this initiative, NLA collaborated with a range of Aruban stakeholders including FEFTAS; W.E.B. Aruba N.V.; Government Department IBI SA, N.V.; Elmar, Green’s Cool, SETAR N.V.; Utilities Aruba N.V.; Americas Sustainable Development Foundation; and Government Department of Agriculture, Husbandry, and Fishery, all of which sponsored and organized the four symposiums.

Invited guest speakers from the United States, the Netherlands, and Aruba gave their presentations during those four years. Panelists at ALA Annual Conference included Astrid Britten, director of the National Library of Aruba; Ronny R. Alders, coordinator of Green Education Symposiums/Green Education Project of the National Library of Aruba and coordinator of Academic Lectures of Lifelong Learning of the National Library of Aruba, and Monique Alberts - Luijdjens, director of the Philipsburg Jubilee Library (PJL) of St. Maarten. The moderator of the panel presentation was Frederick W. Stoss, associate librarian from the University at Buffalo in New York.

Wedding

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of law, what is not forbidden is permitted,” said Baker.

If the turmoil of their legal problems was not enough to handle, the couple was inundated with letters from the many people who were touched by their story. Even before their story was published,



Audience members line up for autographs as they celebrate the winners and honor recipients of the 2016 Stonewall Book Awards. The Stonewall Book Awards are the oldest awards honoring the best in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender writing.

Student Press Advocate, Librarians Share 2016 FTRF Roll of Honor Award

Librarians Helen Adams and Nancy Kranich and attorney and First Amendment advocate Frank LoMonte have been named the recipients of the 2016 Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) Roll of Honor Award.

Helen Adams, a school librarian and educator who has taught intellectual freedom and ethics to graduate library science students for over a decade, is a past trustee of the Freedom to Read Foundation and has also served on ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee and its Privacy Subcommittee.

Nancy Kranich, past president of the American Library Association and a former trustee of the Freedom to Read Foundation,

teaches intellectual freedom, information policy, and community engagement at the Rutgers University School of Communication and Information and serves as Rutgers’ special projects librarian.

Frank LoMonte is executive director of Student Press Law Center where, for almost two decades, he has led the Student Press Law Center’s vigorous defense of the first amendment rights of student journalists

The Roll of Honor was established in 1987 to recognize and honor those individuals who have contributed substantially to FTRF through adherence to its principles and/or substantial monetary support.

and more so since then, strangers sent the couple letters about their hopes, fears, and dreams for marriage equality and many other issues they were experiencing, such as the struggle for transgender rights. Reading these letters often brought them to tears for different reasons, as strangers expressed their direct support or their overt criticism of their union.

Yet the two are hopeful that a resolution

to their issues is imminent. “Times can change, based on the courage and work of all those willing to stand up for what they believe,” said McConnell. The two continue to speak and work toward marriage equality.

The Wedding Heard ‘Round the World: America’s First Gay Marriage (2016), by Michael McConnell with Jack Baker, as told to Gail Langer Karwoski, is available from the University of Minnesota Press.

Afternoon Tea with Authors, a Gala Event

By Deborah Hathaway, Texas Woman’s University, MLS

United for Libraries’ signature bi-annual event, the Gala Author Tea, featured six very different authors who all share a passion for writing and an admiration for librarians. The gala tea, held at both the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, is an eagerly anticipated event, where attendees have the opportunity to meet authors and receive copies of their books. A mix of first-time and established authors, each is passionate about writing and grateful for the opportunity to say thank you and share their passion with librarians.

While enjoying finger sandwiches, attendees heard from each author on how they began writing, what their books are about, and how much the library meant to them as children. Imbolo Mbue was a homesick

young woman from Cameroon who came to the United States and found acceptance and a sense of belonging at the public library. Her novel, *Behold the Dreamers*, is the story of two very different families and the power of the American dream. It tells of the sacrifices the families are compelled to make so their dreams can come true.

This year’s featured guests were:

Lisa Fenn, *Carry On: A Story of Resilience, Redemption, and an Unlikely Family* (August 2016);

Jayne Entwistle (narrator) of Alan Bradley’s *As Chimney Sweepers Come to Dust*;

Susan Mallery, *Daughters of the Bride*;

Thomas Mullen, *Darktown: A Novel*;

Shari Lapeña, *The Couple Next Door* (August 2016); and

Imbolo Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers: A Novel*.

**BECAUSE TXT R
FINE, BUT, SRSLY,
PPL ALSO NEED
2 C REAL
SENTENCES.**

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Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Launches Recommendations

By Sara Zettervall, Hennepin County Library

The ALA Executive Board accepted the recommendations made by the Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion during the first business meeting of this conference. This is an important step forward in rethinking and refreshing ALA’s total approach to fostering a more inclusive organization and profession.

Two years ago, the task force was charged to “develop a plan and strategic actions to build more equity, diversity, and inclusion among our members.” Representatives from divisions across ALA and its affiliates worked together to produce the 58 recommendations that the board accepted. Their charge also states that “the most important task force outcome is the public and honest conversation that will be generated by its plan and recommended actions.” This was accomplished when they shared the recommendations at the ALA Membership Meeting on June 25 and will continue as the recommendations are brought to Council and beyond.

The next phase will be taken by the ALA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group, which launches for two years at the end of this year’s conference. The task force, several of whose members are continuing on the work group, has already demonstrated a commitment to action. With Librarians Build Communities, they planned this year’s volunteer efforts to collect school supplies for local children and help staff Summer BreakSpot at Orlando Public Library. They also recommended Michael Eric Dyson as this year’s Opening General Session speaker.

ALA’s commitment to equity in the organization and profession has never been stronger. The blood drive, ribbons, and armbands in support of Orlando’s Pulse victims and their families and friends are outward signs of an inward change.

Mark Your Calendar

**Midwinter Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia
January 20-24, 2017**

**Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois
June 22-27, 2017**

Librarians Need to Expect More for Bigger Impact

By Talea Anderson, Washington State University

On June 27, David Lankes, together with the Expect More Collaboratory, EveryLibrary, and Tech Logic, presented “Expect More: Workshop on Communicating the Value of Librarians,” designed to start librarians thinking about how to better advocate for themselves and for libraries. Lankes is a professor at the Syracuse University iSchool, winner of the ALA’s 2016 Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship, and author of *The Atlas of New Librarianship and Expect More: Demanding Better Libraries for Today’s Complex World*.

Lankes began by problematizing the word “advocacy” as it relates to librarianship. “What you’re doing is not shouting at someone for 30 seconds,” he said, “This is about relationship building.” Lankes criticized the media outlets and advocacy organizations that aggressively insist that every closed library is a failure for society. He noted that this discourse often reduces libraries to a kind of “porn of materiality” in which the library is depicted as a beautiful structure and collection of books. Ignored in these



David Lankes leads a group activity during the “Expect More” session.

depictions is the library staff who keep libraries running with their particular dedication and expertise. Lankes challenged workshop

participants to consider how they could turn the conversation toward the people rather than the buildings and the books.

Lankes challenged workshop participants to consider how they could turn the conversation toward the people rather than the buildings and the books.

Lankes further remarked on problems in branding and marketing of libraries. Rather than targeting outreach to library users, he said, libraries should consider the many taxpayers who never visit a library, but still sustain it with their votes. Specifically, he and copresenter Rebecca Miller decried library marketing that is defensive rather than pointing to the positive impact of libraries in communities.

Through breakout sessions, the leaders of the “Expect More” workshop demonstrated strategies for evolving a positive library brand, identifying community partners, and developing relationships with these people. For more about the Expect More Collaboratory and similar workshops, see <http://davidlankes.org/?p=8090>.

ALA Black Caucus Unveils “Reading is Grand!”

During the ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition, Kevin Watson, president of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), announced that three libraries will receive the 2016 Reading Is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families Telling Our Stories @ Your Library grant. Reading Is Grand! is a celebration of the important role African American grandparents and older adults play in the lives of children.

Sparta Public Library, Sparta, Illinois; Queens Public Library/Langston Hughes Community and Cultural Center, Corona, New York; and Zion-Benton Public Library, Zion, Illinois, were selected winners based on the level of creativity and originality of program criteria, action plans, level of involvement of grandparents in the activities, and impact of the program on the community.

Sparta Public Library

The program will embrace the past while encouraging the future in order to leave a

legacy for children and grandchildren by inviting the community to attend “Let’s Celebrate a Glimpse of Me: The African American Legacy.” This educational initiative will be led by African American grandparents who will share the goal of improving the quality of life among African American families and other nationalities. This event will be a hands-on and visual exercise focused on helping grandparents and their grandchildren share knowledge and experiences by telling their stories.

Queens Library/Langston Hughes Community and Cultural Center

The program’s theme, “Storytelling and Poetry in the African and African American Tradition,” will explore the role of poetry and storytelling in the African American tradition. Workshop sessions will give seniors and children the opportunity to write their own poetry and/or stories. The special guest will be poet and storyteller Barbara Bethea. The program will consist of Bethea telling Afri-

can or African American folktales, followed by poetry or storytelling workshops in the library’s courtyard.

Zion-Benton Public Library

The purpose of Zion-Benton Public Library’s program is to connect generations, primarily grandparents, with their grandchildren through verbal and written stories, utilizing books, and music. The program, titled “The Grandparent Connection: Tell Me a Story!” will be set up in a “fair” format and will be arranged in different stations around the library. The décor and music will focus on African American artists and artworks from the Harlem Renaissance and music from jazz to funk to hip hop.

Each grant-winning library receives \$500 used to supplement their Reading Is Grand! program. The 2016 *Reading is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families @ Your Library* selection committee includes Chair Dr. Claudette S. McLinn, Kevin Watson, Carolyn Garnes, and Dr. Sujin Huggins.

Curtis

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and one who is especially accessible despite her celebrity. Curtis was pleased that her attire was similar to the newly elected ALA leaders who had graced the stage before her.

“I should be thanking you for this invitation,” Curtis explained. “I am grateful you are allowing me to engage with you, and thank you for your staunch support of libraries. Thank you for keeping the keys to the kingdom of education, ideas, words, and most importantly books.”

Curtis referenced a passage from E. L. Doctorow, her favorite author, who noted when topics go unexamined for a long time they become mythological, and tend to create conformity. Libraries helped her examine ideas, break up the calcification of entrenched ideas, and help her make her own decisions on things.

Curtis has written a series of rhyming children’s books which address core childhood issues in a friendly and accessible way. Reading her latest book, *This Is Me: A Story of Who We Are and Where We Came From*, to the audience, she explained how it uses an activity with a suitcase to teach children about the difficulties of immigration and identity.

In the book, early elementary students are directed to fill a small suitcase with whatever they would like to take to their new life, as if they were permanently moving away and leaving everything else behind. While the standard version of the book comes with a pop-up suitcase for this purpose, Curtis assured librarians that the library version of the book would not include it.

Curtis’ *This Is Me: A Story of Who We Are and Where We Came From* (Workman, 2016) is illustrated by Laura Cornell.



Disney Imagineer Marty Sklar delivers the keynote address at the Charlamae Rollins President’s program.

The Only Place You Find Success Before Work is in the Dictionary

By Caroline Gardner, Simmons College SLIS

The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) President’s Program featured a talk from the former president of the Walt Disney Imagineering division, Marty Sklar, who spoke June 27 about his latest book, *One Little Spark*, as well as lessons he learned throughout his many decades at Disney.

Sklar spoke fondly of his time with the Imagineers, reflecting about his team’s creativity and innovation and the importance of library programming for children. He told stories about going to the public library and used book stores in Long Beach, California, as a child, and how discoverability and brows-

ability were crucial to developing his creative eye and learning things he may never have sought out on his own.

“If you don’t fail from time to time, you’re not doing anything new,” Sklar told the audience, encouraging librarians to attempt new things. He placed emphasis on those in the profession who work with children.

Following Sklar’s talk was a panel featuring Erica Fortescue of the Center for Childhood Creativity; Brian Lee of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Architecture; Tony Tallent of Richmond Library; George Schaefer of Clemson University; and moderated by Phil Morehart of *American Libraries* and the Dewey Decibel podcast.