

ALSCConnect

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Officially Speaking

Foster Children Need Libraries

According to Casey Family Programs—the nation's largest foundation dedicated to providing, improving and, ultimately, preventing the need for foster care, about 518,000 young people are in the foster care system on any given day. Seventy percent come into care due to neglect or as the result of poverty, substance abuse, or other issues faced by their birth parents, while 30 percent have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. They are truly the community's children because we as a society have committed by federal and state law to provide for their safety, permanency, and well-being.

The average age of young people in care is 10.1 years. Boys outnumber girls by 53 percent. Fifty-three percent of foster children return home to their birth parents or primary caregivers after spending an average of thirty months in care. While 61 percent of young people in foster care are children of color, children of color represent only 39 percent of children in the general population. Studies indicate that child abuse and neglect occur at about the same rate among all racial and ethnic groups, yet children of color are more likely to be removed from their homes and to stay in foster care longer. Approximately twenty thousand youth emancipate or “age out” of the system annually at age eighteen. These youth often leave without a permanent adult connection and are still in need of supports and services. Several studies show that without a lifelong connection to a caring adult, these older youth are vulnerable to a host of adverse situations, including unemployment, lack of health insurance, increased teen pregnancy rates, and homelessness.

On average, youth in foster care will move at least three times among foster-family placements, often changing schools—a huge educational impact. Beyond adjusting to new curricula, new teachers, new friends, and new expectations, young people often experience disruptions in education services, counseling, enrichment programs, and the opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. Foster care youth can lose days or weeks of school due to delays in enrollment or transfer of records. Youth in foster care are more likely to fail a grade and are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school than youth in the general population.

How Librarians Can Help (www.fostercaremonth.org) highlights a variety of ways that libraries are already involved in the lives of children in foster care, providing a safe learning environment, the ability to connect with a positive adult who can assist them with their educational aspirations through reading, and Internet access. Libraries are the ideal place to display a variety of books about foster care, including those by foster care alumni who are great guides to those youth currently in foster care. The site guides library staff in promoting National Foster Care Month (observed annually in May) and in creating awareness by providing librarians with tool kits, posting the campaign poster, offering opportunities for foster care alumni or foster parents to speak at library events, and giving away pins and ribbons to adults who come to the library. A little creative thinking can help libraries involve foster care families. Multnomah County (Ore.) Library's summer reading program planning team actively searches for underserved audiences. After a staff member, who is a foster parent, shared how easy it would be to connect with foster parents in the county, the planning team photocopied a simple postcard detailing the importance of continued summer reading and the program's highlights onto colorful cardstock. The library added the postcard to a packet of materials that the county foster care coordinator planned to mail to foster parents. (Tip: the coordinators are often willing to pass on information about educational and social opportunities that appeal to foster families.) This proved to be an easy and economical way to target a new audience.

Children and teens in foster care need the same things that all young people need to grow healthy and resilient: a permanent home, a family and community to help them prepare for adulthood, and a strong connection to their cultural roots and values. ALSC's new strategic plan envisions a future where ALSC leads “the way in forging excellent library service for all children.” Specifically, in our advocacy goal area, we prioritize developing “best

practices in library services to the underserved and/or diverse populations.” National Foster Care Month is an especially important time to remember the vulnerable children who live in each of our communities. Think about how your library can make a vital contribution to their success and make your library one of the positive assets in a foster child's life.

Other Notes

The Belpré tenth anniversary task force has been fundraising for the best-ever award ceremony in New Orleans in June. Please open your checkbooks one more time and send contributions (payable to “National REFORMA”) to Adalin Torres-Zayas, Inglewood Public Library, 101 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood, CA 90301.

Excitement is building for the new Kids! @ your library® advocacy campaign. Bill Harley will be at Annual Conference to sing the original song he wrote and recorded just for ALSC! I'll be in Williamsburg, Virginia, on April 28, where Russell Freedman will deliver the 2006 Arbutnot Lecture. I hope to see many of you there. Please make time to say hello! —*Ellen Fader, ALSC President*

Council News

Council examined many issues, listened to many reports, and efficiently worked to conduct business on time. Council documents and actions are available online at www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governance/council/councilactions/council...

Dues Increase

One of the issues that elicited the widest discussion was the proposed dues increase that will appear on the spring ballot. While reports from BARC and the ALA treasurer reminded us that the ALA budget has been flat for the last five years, the ALA staff has done an admirable job in managing the association in this lean environment. With the passage of the new strategic plan and membership-driven initiatives, additional revenue will be necessary to implement these programs. The Membership Committee examined a dues structure tied to salary, but did not make the recommendation for the association to use that formula. However, the committee was asked to continue examining that type of dues structure and to report those findings. The proposed dues increase would gradually take place over three years. Regular membership would increase ten dollars per year and other levels would increase accordingly. The “other” category would increase the salary level from those librarians making \$20,000 to \$25,000 per annum. For the first time, dues may be paid in two installments beginning in August 2006.

Round Table Representation on Council

Another bylaw amendment to appear on the spring ballot will address an increase in round table representation on Council. The number of councilors elected will be determined by a membership formula.

BARC Membership

Council voted to approve the addition of two members to BARC to be appointed by the Council Committee on Committees, chaired by the ALA president-elect. The original proposal was to add division membership to BARC, but this item was amended to delete mention of divisional representation.

Funding Formula and the Definition of School Librarians

A unanimous resolution in support of the vital importance of including instructional staff support services with instruction expenditures. A new funding-formula proposal has come from the nonprofit group First Class Education that calls for all fifty states to require school districts to spend at least 65 percent of their budgets on direct classroom instruction by 2008. School librarians are classified as “outside-the-classroom” overhead. The resolution requests that ALA request that NCES issue an interpretation that recognizes the teaching role of school librarians and includes salaries and library resources as essential additional components to instruction expenditures.

Topics of Other Council Actions and Resolutions

Other Council actions and resolutions at Midwinter included amendment of Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act; changes to the IRS Tax Forms Outlet program; equity of access through universal services, e-rate, and advanced broadband services; right of librarians to travel; structure change to the ALA-Association of American Publishers Joint Committee; support of academic freedom; opposition to the confirmation of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. A complete list and full-text of all resolutions and documents adopted are on the Council Web site.

Executive Board

Three members were elected to the ALA Executive Board: Mario M. Gonzalez, library director, Greenwich (Conn.) Library; Terri G. Kirk, school librarian, Reidland High School, Paducah, Ky.; and Roberta A. Stevens, outreach projects and partnerships officer, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

On January 25, 2006, Council had a group call-in to Congress asking for support of revisions in the USA PATRIOT Act. We also were pleased that a tape of the *Today* television show, featuring Ellen Fader and the Newbery and Caldecott award winners, was presented to Council. It is gratifying to see youth representation on Council this year and to see collaboration and cooperation among the three youth divisions as we support projects that impact all of us. —*Kathy Toon, ALSC Division Councilor*

Legislative News

What do you think of when you think of the ALSC Legislation Committee?

You probably think of bills, government, access issues, and then figure that it is not something that interests you—you would prefer to spend your time on a committee that deals with such tangible things as books, programming ideas, and the like. Well, if that is your choice, so be it, but please realize that working in the legislative arena gives you an opportunity to learn about political issues that can have a direct impact on the work that you do with and on behalf of children, families, and caregivers.

Last year the ALSC Legislation Committee worked closely with the ALA Washington Office during deliberations on Head Start Reauthorization. A method was established allowing ALSC members, state librarians, and other advocates for children's services to share Head Start stories from their states with Washington Office staff, who in turn used these stories in their discussions with congressional representatives. The reauthorization discussion continues in this congressional session. Although there is wording about collaboration with and outreach to libraries, libraries are not listed as entities eligible for funding. The Washington Office is working to modify the wording of the bill so that libraries will be full-fledged players in the Head Start partnership. If additional stories about the collaborative efforts between libraries and Head Start are needed, an alert will be posted on the ALSC-L electronic discussion list.

In San Antonio, the committee discussed a variety of topics, including the newly formed Federal Library Legislative and Advocacy Network (FLANN), a rapid response grassroots outreach network for federal issues. If you want to make a difference, learn more about federal issues, tell Congress about the services that you provide for children, families, and caregivers at your library and what your library needs to better serve your constituents, and get involved. Contact Erin Haggerty, government relations specialist, ALA Washington Office, ehaggerty@alawash.org.

Plans are in the works for a program at the 2007 ALA Annual Conference in Washington D.C. "Libraries + Lobbying = Success" will be co-sponsored by AASL and YALSA.

The ALSC board recently approved recommendations from the Legislation Committee and the Organization and Bylaws Committee to: (a) formalize the relationship between the Legislation Committee and the ALA Washington Office by having a staff member from the latter serve as an ex officio member of the committee; and (b) expand the term of Legislation Committee members to three years on a staggered basis so there is continuity on the committee.

As children's services specialists, we know that working with and on behalf of children, families, and caregivers is the foundation upon which public library service is built. If you want to make a difference in children's services and broaden your role in the political arena, consider volunteering to serve on the Legislation Committee. It's fun—you'll really like it!—*Bessie Condos, ALSC Legislation Committee Chair*

Bright Ideas

Welcome to Babygarten

The Norfolk (Va.) Public Library began offering Babygarten in 2005. It is a packaged program started in 1999 by Kristen Nilson-Noonan and Shannan Carrell, two librarians who were concerned that young children (birth to age two) might not be receiving the exposure to language needed to become competent readers. Nilson-Noonan and Carrell created Babygarten in order to help parents lay a foundation of language skills upon which later learning could build. The beauty of Babygarten is that it shows parents that providing their children with brain-building opportunities is simple and a lot of fun.

Babygarten is based on five elements: nursery rhymes and songs, books, free play, parenting information, and homemade toys. During the structured portion of the program, a library staff member uses a baby doll to model singing songs and reciting rhymes and demonstrates how to read aloud. Each parent follows along by sharing a copy of that week's book with his or her child. This portion of the program is followed by free playtime, which gives babies a chance to develop and practice social skills and mothers a chance to share stories and seek advice. Sessions also give staff an opportunity to inform parents about available library resources and provide handouts. For the final program activity, participants make an inexpensive toy to take home.

When entering a Babygarten program, the first thing one notices is the relaxed and happy atmosphere. Babies and adults alike have big smiles on their faces. Some babies are toddling around, others are sitting and earnestly following the fingerplays, and others are just enjoying a nice cuddle with their mother or father. This is a program where everyone feels nurtured and welcome.— *Terri Raymond and Vicky Hagemeister, Norfolk (Va.) Public Library*

Webtime Stories

As an ongoing member of the Medina (Ohio) Library Web site committee, I was asked, "If there were no limitations with what you could do with the library Web site, what would you do?" My answer was a virtual storytime. I remembered how my children loved Dial-A-Story, using our rotary phone to dial the library in order to hear a short story each day. With that in mind, I thought how fun it might be to have a Click-a-Story on our library's children's Web page.

Several months later I received approval to start the process. The first step was to get our children's librarians thinking of original stories or stories, rhymes, and fairytales derived from the oral tradition. By rewriting traditional tales and writing our own stories, we did not have to track down copyrights and clearances from current publishers and popular authors.

Our community relations department videotaped us, edited the tape, and pieced it together into short segments. Our technology department loaded the segments to our Web site. The entire process took about six months.

We wrote fairy tales with a twist, produced flannel stories with flair, sang songs that were authorless, and made up silly stories. Children can click on our Web page to see and hear their favorite "library lady" entertain them with stories. Even if a child cannot make it to one of our storytimes, he or she can still enjoy the experience on a home computer.

We created and gathered enough stories to do about ten five-minute storytimes, which are changed on a monthly basis. Check it out at www.medina.lib.oh.us/. —*Marilyn Sobotincic, Medina County (Ohio) District Library*

ALSC Voices

ALSC Profile

Rita Haring, Youth Services Librarian
Wyoming Branch, Kent District Library
Wyoming, Michigan

Also serves as President on the Board of Trustees at the Grant (Mich.) Area District Library
ALSC membership: two years

Where did you attend library school?

I am a graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

What attracted you to library service to children?

I was going to go back to school to get my master's degree in education, when I suddenly realized that what I really wanted to do was work with children in libraries. I am not really sure why or how I decided that. It was an epiphany, I guess. I currently work in a very beautiful, child-friendly library. It would be hard not to love my job. I love to see all the smiling faces of children when they come into the library.

Why did you join ALSC?

I joined ALSC because I wanted the ability to collaborate with other professionals who specialize in youth services to children. I wanted to take advantage of serving on ALSC committees as well as meet with other members at conference and learn from their expertise. I have come to learn the importance of becoming an advocate in our field and hope I can pass that along to others.

On which ALA or ALSC committees have you served?

As a new member, I am serving as an intern on the ALA/Children's Book Council (CBC) Joint Committee. Unlike other committees, the CBC Joint Committee meets in New York two times per year at the Children's Book Council office instead of at conference. Serving as an intern is giving me the opportunity to see the full picture of how ALA committees form and work. I am also learning from other professionals who work in many various fields, not just libraries. If you have never served on a committee, I would highly recommend it.

What are you currently working on at your library?

This week, I have started writing letters to publishers in order to retain copyright permission so that we can have some of our programs recorded on video. The library would like to play videotapes in the children's area for those children unable to come to the library during our regular scheduled programming times. We just finished launching our first One Book, One County for Kids program. This year, the committee chose *Donuthead* by Sue Stauffacher.

What is your favorite children's book and why?

May I have two? This is a really hard question for me because I am one of those fickle people and change my mind about what book is my favorite. With that said, one of my favorite books is *Ida B.* by Katherine Hannigan. I also love *Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson. My new favorite book is *Harry Sue* by Sue Stauffacher.

What three words best describe you?

Enthusiastic, creative, spontaneous

What are your hobbies?

I love to run! I ran my first half marathon in Detroit last year, and I hope to run my first marathon this year. When I am not running, I am raising my two handsome boys, who are now 8 and 11. In my free time, I am working on my golf game.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

So Much @ your library®

ALSC recently announced its Kids! @ your library® campaign, which builds on the Campaign for America's Libraries, ALA's multiyear, public awareness and advocacy campaign. ALSC's initiative will provide promotion tips, sample press materials, downloadable art, and other tools to help local libraries reach out to kids, their parents, and caregivers. A campaign fact sheet is included with this issue of *ALSCconnect*.

The campaign's planning task force has listened to suggestions from school-aged children and librarians from across the nation in developing just the right tools. Flashy graphics, a sing-able song—composed especially for the campaign by Grammy-nominated singer and storyteller Bill Harley—and a catchy key message are just a few things librarians will be able to use to promote the library to children and their parents.

Plan now to attend the Kids! @ your library® program, featuring Bill Harley, in New Orleans on Sunday, June 25, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. (Please note the new time, which was updated since the fact sheet was printed.)

For downloadable art, an events calendar, and more, visit www.ala.org/kids.

Suggestions Welcome

The Notable Children's Books Committee welcomes suggestions for inclusion on its list of the year's best books for children. ALSC members are invited to nominate books published in 2006 for consideration. Notable children's books are books of especially commendable quality that exhibit venturesome creativity, including books of fiction, information, poetry, and pictures for all age levels (birth to age fourteen) that reflect and encourage children's interests in exemplary ways. The evaluation criteria used are literary quality, originality of text and illustration, clarity and style of language, excellence of illustration, excellence of design and format, subject matter of interest and value to children, and the likelihood of acceptance by children.

Nominations should be submitted on the form at www.ala.org/alsc, click on “Board & Committee Work” and “ALSC Forms.”

Please send nominations to Rita Auerbach, Notable Children's Books Committee chair, 140 West End Ave. #12J, New York, NY 10023; rita.auerbach@alum.barnard.edu.

Member Notes

Awards

Congratulations to Sylvia Anderle, children's librarian, Fairview Branch, Santa Monica (Calif.) Public Library, and Bina Williams, children's librarian, Bridgeport (Conn.) Public Library. They were two of twenty-seven recipients from around the country of the 2005 New York Times Librarian Award. Now in its fifth year, the program honors librarians who have provided outstanding public service and have had a strong and positive impact on their nominators. At a reception in their honor last November, winners each received \$2,500 and a plaque. For more information about the Librarian Awards, please visit www.nytimes-community.com.

Bylines

Saroj Ghoting and Pamela Martin-Diaz have coauthored *Early Literacy Storytimes @ your library®: Partnering with Caregivers for Success* (ALA Editions, 2005). The authors combine cutting-edge early literacy research, the heart of the Every Child Ready to Read program, with practical implementation tips for busy children's librarians. Scripts and plans help librarians explain what adults can do to enhance children's print motivation, phonological awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, print awareness, and letter knowledge.

Sylvia Vardell's book *Poetry Aloud Here! Sharing Poetry with Children in the Library* is also available from ALA Editions. Poetry expert Vardell shows how librarians, teachers, and others can introduce children, ages five to twelve, to the world of poetry in a way that is meaningful, participatory, and fun.

Career Notes

Barbara Barstow, youth services manager, Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library (CCPL), retired at the end of 2005 after thirty-four years of service to children. She began her career at CCPL in 1972 as a librarian in the children's department at the Mayfield Regional Branch. Over the years, she was promoted to greater leadership responsibilities, including children's services manager (1996) and youth services manager (2005), the position she held until her retirement. During her career, she served as chair on various committees, such as the Newbery and Caldecott selection committees and the Hans Christian Andersen Nominating Committee. She served as ALSC president and as president of the United States Board on Books for Young People.

Youth services manager Jeanette Larson retired from Austin (Texas) Public Library in January. She plans to spend more time on freelance writing (books and articles), consulting, and presenting workshops, among other projects. She will continue her involvement in library services, ALA, and other professional activities. Larson has served on numerous ALSC committees, including the Newbery and Distinguished Service Award committees. She served as editor of the ALSC Newsletter from 1999 to 2002.

Homework Help

New York City school children from kindergarten to twelfth grade can get round-the-clock help with their studies through homeworkNYC.org, a new Web site created by the New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, and Queens Library. Whether at home or after school in a community library, students can use this site to access resources previously available only in a physical library. The new site was developed in conjunction with the Department of Education and with the support of the Wallace Foundation as part of the Learning in Libraries initiative.

Grant News

The Washington State Library was selected to receive a quarter-million dollars during a two-year period from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation to promote early childhood literacy. This project will provide statewide training for library staff using the PLA and ALSC program Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library® (ECRR). The funding will allow the state library to offer regional training to libraries across Washington with limited personnel and resources.

Trained library staff will directly instruct and model prereading skills that children developmentally must learn. The project will also provide parent brochures, early learning library collections, and training kits.

ECRR incorporates the latest research into a series of parent and caregiver workshops to provide public libraries with vital tools to help prepare parents for their critical role as their child's first teacher. ECRR introduces concepts of language, vocabulary, and phonological awareness.

To learn more about the grant, visit The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Web site at www.pgafoundations.com.

3 Apples Award

New York Library Association's Youth Services Section (YSS) and School Library Media Section (SLMS) joined together to create The 3 Apples Book Award, a New York State Children's Choice Award for children in grades 3–6, ages 8–12. The award was developed to encourage the joy of reading for pleasure and to give the children of New York State the opportunity to participate in honoring their favorite books.

This is truly a children's choice award, as the children of the state will nominate books, and a ballot of the fifteen most popular titles will be created. Programs and reading opportunities will be offered in both public and school libraries, and when the winner is selected, celebrations will be held in participating libraries throughout the state.

YSS and SLMS are excited about the joint venture and plan to expand the award to other age groups in the future. To learn more, visit www.3applesbookaward.org.

Fall Institute

ALSC's National Institute, September 14–16, at the Hilton Pittsburgh, is titled "Children's Services Today and Tomorrow." An optional, free preconference on Thursday will focus on legal issues in children's services. Friday's workshops follow three tracks: children's authors and illustrators; ALSC national initiatives: Kids! @ your library® and El día de los niños/El día de los libros/Children's Day/Book Day; and emerging and advancing technological formats. Morning workshops and a closing general session will be held on Saturday. See the flyer enclosed with this issue for more information. Registration begins in April.

Join the List

To stay informed about ALSC activities and issues, subscribe to the ALSC electronic discussion list. Send the following message to listproc@ala.org: subscribe ALSC-L [firstname] [lastname]. Leave the subject area blank.

Change of address? Be sure to subscribe under your new e-mail address and unsubscribe from your old address. To unsubscribe, send the following message to listproc@ala.org: unsubscribe ALSC-L. Leave the subject area blank.

Other ALSC special interest discussion lists focus on public library and school partnerships, children's collection management, preschool services, storytelling, technology issues, and managing children's services. To learn more about all of ALSC's electronic discussion lists, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on the discussion lists graphic near the bottom of the home page.

2006 Arbuthnot Lecture

The 2006 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture, featuring renowned children's nonfiction author Russell Freedman, will be held Friday, April 28, 7 p.m., in the historic Kimball Theatre located in Merchant's Square, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. To request tickets, please call 1-800-HISTORY. Tickets can be picked up at the Kimball Theatre box office.

Certain that children underappreciate history due to uninspiring texts, Freedman set out to breathe life into what he believed was fascinating subject matter. He began his career as a news reporter and editor and moved into children's books with the publication of his first book, "Teenagers Who Made History," in 1961. Freedman has brought such diverse figures as Marian Anderson, Martha Graham, Confucius, and Crazy Horse alive through extensive research, archival photographs, and his ability to tell a good story.

For more information about the lecture, visit the Williamsburg Regional Library Web site at www.wrl.org/kids/arbuthnot.html.

2007 Arbuthnot Lecture

Kevin Henkes, Caldecott Medalist and renowned creator of picture books and novels for children, will deliver the 2007 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture. He began his career in children's literature in 1981 at the age of nineteen with the publication of *All Alone*, his first picture book. He has published seven novels and more than twenty picture books, as well as a number of board books for young children. He was awarded the 2005 Caldecott Medal for *Kitten's First Full Moon* and received a Newbery Honor for the novel *Olive's Ocean* in 2004 and a Caldecott Honor for *Owen* in 1994.

Applications to host the lecture are available at www.ala.org/alsc. Look for a link to the form under "Breaking News." Or, contact alsc@ala.org. The application deadline is May 1.

And the Winners Are . . .

Information about the 2006 award-winning books, recordings, videos, computer software, libraries, and librarians is available on the ALSC Web site at www.ala.org/alsc, click on "Awards and Scholarships."

Go for the Gold

ALSC's 2006 preconference is June 22–23 in New Orleans. "Spinning Straw into Gold: Leadership Potential to Management Results" will encourage librarians to examine their leadership styles and strengthen their management skills. Participants will assess their personal leadership style and learn management techniques to maximize strengths, overcome weaknesses, and interface with colleagues. Speakers include: Marilyn Manning, certified management consultant; Virginia Walter, Department of Information Studies, UCLA; Ginnie Cooper, Brooklyn Public Library; Ellen Riordan, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore; and Andrea Davis Pinkney, author and editor.

Registration is required. ALSC member: \$185; ALA member: \$230; non-member: \$265; student/retired member: \$135. Limited onsite registration will be available at \$275. ALA advance registration closes May 19. For more information, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Events & Conferences."

2007 Nominations

The ALSC Nominating Committee is seeking members to fill positions on the 2007 ballot. If you are interested in serving in a leadership role or would like to recommend another qualified member, fill out the ALSC Nominee Suggestion Form (available from the ALSC office or at www.ala.org/alsc, click on "ALSC Forms,") or e-mail your suggestions to Cynthia K. Richey, chair of the Nominating Committee, at richeyc@einetwork.net.

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