

ALSCConnect

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Officially Speaking

A Great Start

As I write this, it's a hot day in early July and I have just returned from Annual Conference in New Orleans. It was a bittersweet experience. Although there are parts of the city that seem to have recovered from Hurricane Katrina, if you look behind the walls recently erected along the freeway between the airport and the downtown area to hide the devastation, you will see that there is still a long way to go. I shared elevators with families who were living at the Hilton, still unable to return to their homes after nearly a year; and I shared lobbies with Dillard University students temporarily housed at the Hilton, who had turned the hotel's corridors and public spaces into a makeshift campus. I spoke to waiters and shop employees who were employed just for the week of the conference. Afterward, they would either be out of work again or leaving for other cities where they had found work.

Yet everywhere I went, it seemed that we had made a difference by coming to New Orleans. I was continually welcomed and thanked by the residents and workers I came into contact with, and all of the librarians I spoke with shared similar stories of an outpouring of gratitude. Nearly nine hundred ALA members participated in one of the two volunteer days to assist in the Libraries Build Communities project, including rebuilding the interior of the Children's Resource Center, a branch of the New Orleans Public Library.

Even if you didn't attend Annual Conference yourself, I'm sure you've enjoyed Local Arrangements Committee Chair Pabby Arnold's spirited and humorous posts to ALSC-L, before and after the conference, giving us all travel tips and updates, keeping us in the loop. For much of the year, Pabby has been a committee of one, working under the most challenging of conditions. Many ALSC members happily stepped forward to help out at the conference with the sorts of tasks that Local Arrangements Committee members typically do. We're very grateful to them and to Pabby for their hard work and grace under pressure.

The New Orleans conference got us off to a great start, and we have much to look forward to in the coming year. We have a great staff in the ALSC office, working under the capable leadership of our new Executive Director, Diane Foote. We have just begun to implement our strategic plan, and our first order of business is to take a good hard look at our existing committees to see what restructuring needs to be done in order to streamline them a bit. We are striving, for example, to make it possible for more of our existing committees to function online, so that ALSC members who can't attend conferences can participate in the work of our division.

One of the three major goal areas in our strategic plan is collaboration. I am pleased to announce some exciting new ventures in this area. First, we are in the process of working with the two other youth divisions, American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), to turn the Joint Task Force on School-Public Library Partnerships into a standing committee. Second, ALSC and YALSA are launching a new award together for outstanding audiobooks for birth through age eighteen called the Odyssey Award. Each year, half of the committee members will be appointed by ALSC and half by YALSA. And, third, we are planning a joint preconference for Annual 2007 with the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) on serving those with special needs. This is a topic that was suggested to me at a conference two years ago by ALSC member Carrie Banks, and Carrie has generously agreed to serve as co-chair of the 2007 Preconference Planning Committee, along with Rhonda Puntney.

This is a time of great change and opportunity in our division, and I value your advice and suggestions. Keep those great ideas coming so we can better serve you, and help you better serve the children in your communities.—

Kathleen T. Horning, ALSC President

Council News

Thanks to ALA President Michael Gorman's efficiency and good humor, the council sessions went smoothly and quickly this conference. We were able to hear reports and act on the issues put before us effectively and in a collegial spirit.

Financial Information

The ALA dues increase approved by ALA membership this spring is projected to result in an overall increase in revenue of \$1.2 million over a four-year period beginning in fiscal year 2007. These funds will be used to support programs and initiatives related to the ALA strategic plan. The ALA Executive Board has approved setting aside \$176,000 in net assets to support 2010 initiatives in 2006. The development of a plan outlining how the dues increase monies will be used to support programs and services described in the strategic plan will be presented to the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) and Board this fall.

A feasibility study for a graduated dues structure is in the planning stages as directed by Council at Midwinter Meeting. A task force of the Membership Committee and BARC members is proposed. The study is to be presented to the Board and Council by the 2007 Midwinter Meeting.

Council approved the budgetary ceiling for fiscal year 2007 at \$54,653,986.

Resolutions and Memorials

ALA Council adopted many resolutions and memorials, which will be posted at www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governance/council/councilactions/councilactions.htm.

Committees

Elections were held for representation on the Planning and Budget Assembly (PBA) and the Council Committee on Committees (COC). Elected to PBA were Bonnie Kunzel, Kathy Lehman, Theresa Tobin, Sandra Barstow, and Thomas Cherry. Elected to COC were Steve Matthews, Barbara Genco, Robert Newlen, and Bernadine Abbott-Hoduski. Youth services are represented in both of these groups.

ALA-APA

The Certified Public Library Administrator Program has eleven courses available. The 2006 salary survey of librarians will soon be available for purchase both in print and online.

Final Notes

Council members received reports from various ALA committees and organizational bodies. The School Libraries Task Force provided a thorough look at the status of school libraries in their final report to the ALA Executive Board. I encourage you to view this report in its entirety on the ALA Web site when the documents from Annual Conference are posted.

Council is a great place to meet people throughout ALA and hear from all areas of our organization. I encourage you to submit your name for a future ballot and keep youth interests at the forefront of ALA. It has been my pleasure to represent the interests of ALSC on Council for the last three years. I wish Linda Perkins well as she begins her term as our Division Councilor.— *Kathy Toon, ALSC Division Councilor*

Bright Ideas

Handmade Mondays

The scenario might be somewhat familiar: Our downtown children's services department at the Allen County (Ind.) Public Library (ACPL) in Fort Wayne had a number of children who came daily after school and didn't have anyone to pick them up until late in the evening. Once their Internet time was used up, it was a relatively quick jump to becoming bored and restless.

Children's Librarian Jen McKinney had been reading about the Waldorf educational philosophy, and was fascinated that knitting was incorporated into the curriculum from a very young age because it subtly encourages math skills, manual dexterity, and spatial recognition, among other benefits. We thought that teaching children to knit would offer something positive to occupy their time as well as a beneficial life skill. Jen described the idea to the manager at our local knitting shop, Cass Street Yarn Depot, who donated a large amount of yarn and wooden knitting needles to the cause. Our ACPL volunteer services coordinator found a number of women who loved to knit and felt comfortable sharing their skills with children an hour a week for six weeks. Thus, "Handmade Mondays" was born.

When we gathered in the evening, we read a story about knitting, yarn, or wool. There was a sharing time when anyone could show work they owned or had made themselves. Children learned about the caps our volunteers made for cancer patients and blankets made for premature infants, as well as numerous gifts. When they didn't showcase their own work, kids enthusiastically brought blankets and items they'd been given as handmade gifts. For the remainder of the evening we split into small groups around the department and knitted.

Children left their work at the library. There was concern that once needles went home, they'd be lost and we might not have enough supplies to continue to replenish the program. Also, if any child wished to practice knitting while at the library between programs, their work was readily available. Once knitting caught on, we got a handful of extra needles we could checkout by hand at our children's desk. We heard stories of kids using common materials from home such as pencils and string to continue knitting at home. We also worked on a new skill each week, partly to perk interest and also to give those who would become frustrated a break. We made pompoms, tassels, twisted cord, and did finger knitting. These simple program fillers were especially helpful for the youngest children in attendance.

Word of mouth, in-house signage, and our usual library poster and newsletter promotions garnered about twenty little knitters initially, ranging in age from four to thirteen. Both boys and girls attended Handmade Mondays regularly. We successfully reached families who brought their children especially for the program, and were pleasantly surprised how many of our regular after-school patrons went on to become avid knitting devotees.

We had hoped to let kids make a practice square, and then move on to making squares that could be joined to make baby blankets for Project Linus (www.projectlinus.org) if children wished to participate. As it turned out, few of the squares would've been even enough for such a project, but it just didn't matter. We had not anticipated the major impact that bringing children and adults—in many cases seniors—together would have on the group. It was also interesting that, in such a comfortable atmosphere, some children shared personal problems while they were knitting. It was a truly wonderful experience for all involved.

Our volunteers were finished once the six weeks were over, with the promise that we'd gather again after winter weather had faded. We were stunned to discover that children wanted Handmade Mondays to continue as a knitting circle between sessions. Children's Librarian Karol Caparaso, an experienced knitter, assumed responsibility for the program. Under her guidance, the children have learned about a wide variety of knitting-related topics such as how sheep are sheared and knitting with the settlers, including the drop spindle, the nobby, and the spinning wheel. Children have shown Karol finished articles and continue to knit at home and at the library. While Handmade Mondays is currently on hiatus, the kids aren't letting us forget about it, and neither are the volunteers. We know we will offer this successful program again in the future!

For more information, contact Karol Caparaso (kcaparaso@acpl.info), Jen McKinney (jmckinney@acpl.info), or Mary Voors (mvoors@acpl.info). — *Karol Caparaso, Jen McKinney, and Mary Voors, Allen County (Ind.) Public Library*

Beyond Prizes

In the summer of 1995, the Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch of the San Diego Public Library put a new twist on the traditional summer reading program. Instead of enticing children to read with an ever-expanding array of prizes, youth were inspired to read in order to help local wildlife.

How do you help animals by reading, you ask? Well, we began by partnering with Project Wildlife, a local nonprofit organization involved in wildlife conservation and rehabilitation. We then found a sponsor who was willing to contribute \$1 to Project Wildlife for every five books or five hours that each program participant read. By the end of the summer, the young people of the Pacific Beach community had raised more than \$900 for Project Wildlife. This money went to rescuing injured and orphaned wild animals throughout San Diego County, and the youth who participated in the program were ecstatic about their achievement. Never before had our summer reading program been so successful. Participation increased by 25 percent from the preceding year, and attendance at our weekly shows rose by 60 percent. Youth from ages two to seventeen seemed genuinely excited by the new program format, as did their parents and teachers.

So what prompted this change? A number of factors, most important of which was a growing concern that kids who read for prizes might be less inclined to discover the intrinsic rewards of reading. Another challenge we faced with our summer reading program was drawing the interest of upper-elementary-aged students and teenagers. It seemed that the prizes we had to offer just weren't cool enough to motivate that crowd. Nevertheless, finding funding for prizes remained a constant struggle. Although our branch is fortunate to have a supportive Friends group, the pressure to provide bigger and better prizes each year had reached such a degree that I began to feel uncomfortable. Kids who wanted to read more than thirty books, the point at which our prize system maxed out, seemed disappointed to receive no further incentives. And too many youth who had hopes of winning a grand prize seemed inclined to use less-than-scrupulous means to earn additional raffle tickets. I began to wonder what sort of monster I was creating in carrying out a summer reading program. In my attempt to encourage reading while school was out, was I actually doing more harm than good?

I exaggerate for effect, of course. Summer reading programs help children to maintain—and even improve—their reading skills during the summer, a fact that is wholly supported by a growing amount of research. However, drawbacks to reading programs do exist; the question is how to minimize the cons while maximizing the pros. I feel that the beginnings of an answer can be found in motivating youth to read by drawing their attention to charities. By giving children the opportunity to make the world a better place through reading, we not only promote a love of reading but we also instill humanitarian values and foster goodwill.— *Erin Moore, Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch, San Diego Public Library*

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Art-felt Gifts

The ALSC membership booth in New Orleans buzzed with activity as conference attendees stopped by to place bids during our fund-raising silent auction. Two pieces of original artwork created and donated by Lynne Rae Perkins, the 2006 Newbery Medalist, and Chris Raschka, the 2006 Caldecott Medalist, were on auction. One hundred percent of the auction proceeds will benefit the ALA Hurricane Katrina Library Relief Fund.

Thom Barthelmess, Austin Public Library, is the lucky winner of Perkins's art piece, which features Lenny, a character from *Criss Cross*. This piece, featured in the book, is a favorite of Perkins. **Joy Haack, Bend-La Pine Schools, Bend, Oregon**, was high bidder on Raschka's artwork, a sketch for the jacket image of *The Hello, Goodbye Window*. The auction raised a total of \$2,050 for the relief fund.

"ALSC is truly grateful to Lynne Rae and Chris for their generous donations," said outgoing President Ellen G. Fader. "These very special sketches, sure to become collector's items, not only will delight our winning bidders, but also will help raise much needed funds to aid libraries in the Gulf Coast region—a twofold gift!"

For more information about the ALA Hurricane Katrina Library Relief Fund, visit www.ala.org/katrina.

Celebrating Día

Interested in increasing culturally relevant programming for children in your library? Looking for a new way to promote family literacy? Host a Día celebration!

Fall is a good time to begin planning a Children's Day/Book Day celebration. Also known as *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* (Día), the event is celebrated annually on April 30. Now in its tenth year, Día emphasizes the importance of advocating literacy for children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds. To find out more, consult www.ala.org/dia. As the national home for Día, ALSC has compiled a wealth of resources for those hosting their first Día celebration, as well as those looking for new ideas for their next Día event.

The "Education Programs" section of the site lists numerous instructional programs ALSC is offering throughout 2006 and 2007.

The "Resources" section links to an in-depth, resource-rich tool kit for librarians and teachers presented by the Texas Library Association. It also includes a press kit featuring downloadable materials, including public service announcements by children's book author and Día founder Pat Mora; brochures for parents and children in English and Spanish; book lists that include bilingual titles for children; tips for parents; and more.

The "Día Celebrations" page lists more than forty Día Web sites hosted by libraries of varying sizes from California to New York. We're always looking for more reports of Día celebrations, so please let us know what you're doing in your community.

ALSC is regularly updating the site, so let us know what you'd like to see. Do you have any questions? Please contact us at atdia@ala.org or 800-545-2433, x1398.

Member News

Last April, **Carole D. Fiore** retired from the State Library & Archives of Florida, where she has worked since 1990. Over her long library career, she has served as an instructor at the University of Tampa and Florida State University; as director of children's services at the Dunedin (Fla.) Public Library; as a senior youth services librarian in the Tampa Hillsborough County (Fla.) Public Library System; and as a school library media specialist in Philadelphia. She is also an accomplished author and speaker. Among her many ALA activities, Fiore was ALSC president (2001–2002) and has served on many committees including ALSC's Geisel Award Selection, Caldecott Award Selection, Research and Development, Nominating, and Planning & Budget; the *Booklist* Editorial Advisory Board; and YALSA's Margaret A. Edwards Award Selection Committee.

While she has retired from the state library, Fiore says she has not "retired from life or library work." She has established an independent consulting business, Training and Library Consulting, and is pursuing interests in writing and publishing with Neal-Schuman.

Eliza T. Dresang and **Melissa Gross**, Florida State University, College of Information, and **Leslie Edmonds Holt**, consultant and past president of ALSC, have authored *Dynamic Youth Services through Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation* (ALA Editions, 2006). Based on the authors' extensive research, this guide offers findings and proven strategies on how to: generate governmental and grant-based funding; get buy-in and participation from young library users; improve communications between staff and patrons, and among staff members; and garner maximum user benefits with minimal effort.

Scholarship Winners

ALSC is pleased to announce its 2006 scholarship recipients.

Frederic G. Melcher Scholarship: Tami Edwards, Ocala, Fla., attending University of South Florida; and Sharon Kieffer, North Haledon, N.J., attending Drexel University.

Bound to Stay Bound Books Scholarship: Kate McGowen, Portland, Maine, attending University of South Carolina; Karen Nickell, Odessa, Tex., attending Texas Woman's University; Kristy Pac, Chicago, attending University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Cynthia Young, Stroudsburg, Pa., attending Clarion University.

Congratulations to all!

Core Competencies

Outstanding Library Service to Children: Putting the Core Competencies to Work (ALA Editions, 2006) was released in June. Written by ALSC members **Rosanne Cerny**, Queens (N.Y.) Library, **Penny Markey**, County of Los Angeles Public Library, and **Amanda Williams**, Austin Public Library, this guide expands on ALSC's seven core competencies—the skills that are the building blocks of professional development for children's librarians. This primer helps readers develop and sharpen proficiencies in areas such as administration/management, communication, advocacy, and programming, and provides many resources on improving professionalism and expertise.

For ordering information, visit www.alastore.ala.org and click on "Children's, Young Adult, and School Services" under the blue "Browse Catalog" menu.

2007 Arbuthnot Site

The 2007 Arbuthnot Committee chose **Lexington, Kentucky**, as the host site for the 2007 Arbuthnot lecture, featuring children's illustrator and author Kevin Henkes. The lecture, scheduled for Sunday, March 4, will be hosted by The McConnell Center for the Study of Children's Literature at the University of Kentucky, School of Library and Information Science. The lecture will be held in conjunction with the annual McConnell Children's Literature Conference; announcement of the exact lecture date is forthcoming. Other cooperating agencies include the Lexington Public Library, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, and the Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc.

More information about the lecture will be posted, as it becomes available, at www.ala.org/alsc, click on "Awards & Scholarships" and "Literary and Related Awards."

Highest Honors

Do you know someone who has made significant contributions to, and has had an impact on, library services to children or Consider nominating that person for the Distinguished Service Award (DSA). The DSA Committee is collecting nominations now and will announce the recipient at Midwinter Meeting in Seattle. More information and the application form can be found at www.ala.org/alsc, click on "Awards & Scholarships" and "Professional Awards." **The deadline for nominations is December 1, 2006.**

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/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.

Nominate Now

ALSC is seeking nominations and applications for its professional grants and awards:

- **Bechtel Fellowship**
- **ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Grant**
- **Distinguished Service Award**
- **Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Visit Award**
- **Penguin Young Readers Group Award**
- **ALSC/Sagebrush Education Resources Literature Program Grant**

For more information about each award and to download award applications, visit the ALSC Web site at www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Awards & Scholarships" and "Professional Awards." To request a form by mail, send a postcard to ALSC, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; or e-mail: alsc@ala.org. Deadline for all professional award applications is December 1, 2006.

Belpré Art Winners

Many thanks to Carmen Lomas Garza, Yuyi Morales, and Lulu Delacre, all Belpré Award-winning illustrators who donated art pieces to be raffled in New Orleans. The fund-raiser garnered \$3,100 for the Belpré Awards. Thank you to all those who participated. We congratulate the lucky raffle winners:

Kristl Torres, REFORMA member: "Curandera," giclee print (by Garza).

Jose Ruiz Alvarez, REFORMA member: art piece from *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* (by Morales).

Aimee Strittmatter, ALSC Deputy Executive Director: original artwork from the Belpré Tenth Anniversary Celebration print program (by Delacre).

Kids! Campaign Update

Be sure to visit www.ala.org/kids for the latest resources from the Kids! @ your library® campaign. Download Bill Harley's infectious upbeat "@ your library" song. Shop for items that will help promote your services to children. ALA Graphics offers a colorful poster and bookmark created by children's book illustrator Michael White, along with pencils and stickers that highlight the "So Much to See. So Much to Do." campaign logo. Free campaign graphics are also available for download from the site. Take advantage of these resources and show your community what the library has to offer kids and their families.

ALSC Voices

A Distinguished Career

Congratulations to Mimi Kayden, 2006 Distinguished Service Award winner. Mimi delivered the following remarks at the Membership Meeting in New Orleans.

As I was trying to put together something to say to all of you there was discussion on the Cooperative Children's Book Center list about life-changing books. I didn't enter into it because, for various reasons, I'd really never read very much as a child. But then, I thought, yes, there was a children's book that had impacted on what I did and who I became and that was Mary Chalmers's *Throw a Kiss, Harry*.

I was working as a temp at Harper & Brothers returning unsolicited manuscripts to their authors and, as a pretty good typist, I finished early. There were lots of F&Gs [folded and gathered sheets] of a small, little, black-and-white book on my desk and the more I looked at it, the more I marveled at how the author had put so much humor and so much detail into those deceptively simple pictures. Then, the next thing I knew, someone had put *Harry, The Dirty Dog* [by Gene Zion] on my desk and I was hooked on the world of children's books. I got a permanent job doing publicity and library promotion in Ursula Nordstrom's children's book department and I've been in the field ever since.

If I am anything at all in this field it is because I am indebted to all of you. Obviously everything I ever learned, I learned on the job. I certainly didn't know it before. I was fortunate enough to travel the country in the heyday of federal funding for schools and libraries and learned as I went. I actually wanted to go to library school. It didn't happen. I guess I'm glad now that Harriet Quimby, the coordinator of children's services at the Brooklyn Public Library and an alumna of Columbia's library school, wouldn't give me a recommendation. "No," she said, "you'll never get through cataloging!" My hopes were dashed. And so I stayed in publishing.

I am grateful to so many people I've known through the years. I can't mention them all, but a few I'd like to thank are my confreres at the other publishing houses (I think that by giving me this award, you've honored us all); Bob Verrone for giving me an expense account and asking me to go out and see what was going on in libraries around the country; Ann Durell, the fabled children's book editor at Holt and Dutton, who kept me from quitting every time I lost my temper about something; Rosemary Wells who insisted that I couldn't retire when I thought for sure that I would seven years ago; all those people I've worked with who enable me to get credit for their ideas and labors. Most especially, I'd like to thank Diane Naughton and my remarkable publisher HarperCollins under whose auspices I am here now. Harper truly makes my work exciting. I opened a fortune cookie at a Chinese restaurant the week I started and it said—honestly—"You're never too old to learn." And so it is: I learn something new from every day and it's fun.

I could name so many more deserving of this award than I, but that doesn't mean that I'm not pleased to be here accepting it. I am. I'm thrilled. It's a capstone of a career that has taken me from being a temp at Harper to, well, what I am now: a temp at Harper. A job in marketing means working as a facilitator, working as a go-between books and libraries, authors and librarians, and that means I could not have done it without you.

When the first Distinguished Service Award was announced, it was my job to get Bill Morris to the board meeting. A member of the committee had told me that I *had* to get him there. Period. I knew the when and the where but not the why or the what. I got him there and I'd like to think that Bill helped get me here to this one. Many thanks.

Conference Notes

Each year four deserving children's librarians receive the chance to attend ALA Annual Conference for the first time through the Penguin Young Readers Group Award. Following are three of this year's winners' reflections on the New Orleans conference.

Within thirty minutes of arriving in New Orleans, I found myself sharing a cab, and in conversation, with Floyd Martinez, 1998 Pura Belpré Award winner. This chance encounter began a week filled with conversations with some of my favorite authors including Rosemary Wells, Robert Sabuda, Andrew Clements, and Susan Campbell Bartoletti. I sat in on ALSC Committee meetings and discussion groups; learned new ideas from programs on children and young adult services; attended events and publisher-sponsored breakfasts and cocktail parties; and celebrated the hard work and talent of authors, illustrators, editors, publishers, and librarians at the Newbery Caldecott Awards banquet. I eagerly look forward to becoming more actively involved in ALSC and ALA. The highlight of the conference was joining hundreds of people from around the country, and the world, in the efforts to rebuild New Orleans. I thank Penguin Young Readers Group, ALSC, and the people of New Orleans for this wonderful opportunity.— *Joanna Ward, County of Los Angeles Public Library, Temple City, Calif.*

Attending my first ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans was an experience I'll never forget. Hearing Madeleine Albright, Laura Bush, and Anderson Cooper speak about the value of libraries in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina inspired me. Seeing the devastation of the city's Lower Ninth Ward firsthand and gutting a severely damaged home with a team of volunteers left a permanent imprint on my mind and on my heart. Mingling with Andrew Clements, John Green, and Neal Shusterman at the Newbery Caldecott Awards banquet was a thrill, and even more touching was the ALSC Awards breakfast where authors, publishers, producers, and librarians bore their souls in the spirit of true community. On Thursday, when I arrived at the conference I had no responsibilities other than that of accepting the ASCLA NOD Award on behalf of my library. By Sunday, however, I was both appointed to and serving on the ALSC 2007 Preconference Committee—now I'm hooked! Thank you, ALSC!— *Holly Jin, Skokie (Ill.) Public Library*

During her acceptance of the ALSC Distinguished Service Award, Mimi Kayden mentioned the feeling of community she has when surrounded by members of the ALA and, specifically, ALSC. For me, as a first-time attendee, that feeling of community is perhaps the most memorable part of the conference experience. I could tell you about the sessions I enjoyed (Stephen Abram's talk on millennials and Carole Peterson and Debbie Clement's "Lyrics to Literacy" workshop were two of my favorites); and I could describe in detail each fantastic meal I was served (I get hungry just thinking about that po'boy at Mother's); but it is the camaraderie, friendship, and dedication of my fellow

librarians that I remember most. I am proud to have a new network of peers and I am reenergized to continue working with the children in my community. Thanks to ALSC, Patricia Gonzales and her committee, and Penguin Young Readers Group for making my attendance possible.— *Bradley Debrick, Johnson County (Kans.) Library, Oak Park*

Do you know an ALSC member with one to ten years experience as a children's librarian who has never attended an ALA conference? Consider nominating that individual (even if it's yourself!) for the 2007 Penguin Young Readers Group Award. For information, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Awards & Scholarships" and "Professional Awards."

ALSC Profile

Michael Santangelo

Children's Materials Specialist

Brooklyn Public Library

ALSC membership: seven years

Where did you attend library school?

Rutgers, the State University of N.J.

What attracted you to library service to children?

First, I think it was the kids at my first branch. On my first day as a public librarian, they were immediately kind and welcoming. Second, I think it was the desire to be in good company, especially with colleagues like my good friends Sheila and Ronnie.

Why did you join ALSC?

To name a few of the reasons: the mentorship, the support, the great ideas, and the connections with children's librarians across the country, if not across the world.

What to you is the biggest reward of being a children's librarian?

The unconditional enthusiasm of most kids. The way a child will rush over to you in a crowd and show you the grade he got on a report or tell you the plot of his latest favorite book.

What is your favorite job responsibility?

Selecting books I know kids will love.

What is the greatest challenge your children's services department faces?

So many books, so many possible readers, too little money.

What is the most popular children's program or event at your library?

First Five Years. This includes a set of three story times: Babies and Books, Toddler Time, and Preschool Story Time. The attendance is overwhelming, and our preschool services coordinator Rachel Payne has done a great job with staff training and community outreach.

What are you currently working on at your library?

Getting some clear bookshelves for when I start Newbery in January.

What is your favorite children's book and why?

The Egypt Game [by Zilpha Keatley Snyder]. It made literature come alive for me.

What are your hobbies?

Other than reading, I would have to say hanging out with my friends.

What three words best describe you?

Dedicated, friendly, and hardworking.

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