

ALSC Matters

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Officially Speaking

New Strategic Plan: Transforming ALSC, Children's Librarianship, and Library Communities

I'm a visual thinker. So when, at the October ALSC Board strategic planning session, we sketched a way to articulate how our "goal areas" could affect "spheres of transformation," I formally fell for our new strategic plan.

Our Vision, "Members of the Association for Library Service to Children engage communities to build healthy, successful, futures for all children," requires we spend our next few years advancing work in three goal areas:

- **Diversity & Inclusion:** ALSC will become more diverse and inclusive, acting to promote these values in all aspects of library service to children.
- **Advocacy:** ALSC will champion the value of library service to children and the resources necessary to deliver on our vision.
- **Learning & Development:** ALSC will actively develop new generations of leaders.

The work in these areas has the potential for influence within our organization, our profession, and the communities we serve, as expressed through the spheres of transformation:

Transforming ALSC: Members have clear, welcoming pathways to contribute to the work of the organization.

Transforming Children's Librarianship: ALSC empowers the profession to be nimble and embrace change as children's needs evolve.

Transforming Communities through Libraries: ALSC and libraries are essential partners in a comprehensive system of care for children.

The [current plan](#) identifies concrete, measureable, and time-bound objectives within each goal area and sphere. The entirety of the plan is based upon input and feedback received from members and stakeholders through multiple channels throughout the process. Thank you for contributing your thoughts and experience to this plan, and to the ALSC Board of Directors and staff for crafting it.

Now the fun part starts! Many of you will be working on these objectives through ALSC's committees, or on one of the two new task forces just established to start on specific areas of the plan: the Summer and Out-of-School-Time Learning Task Force, and the Research Agenda Task Force.

You may see other ways to contribute, have ideas for how to expand on these objectives, or see a critical piece that is missing and will be required to get us to the next step. The ALSC Board will be reviewing progress on and updating the plan, but we need your eyes too on the vision, and the road.

Don't be shy in sharing when you see challenges or successes along the way.--*Nina Lindsay, ALSC President*

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Fight for Libraries - Round 2

Thanks to library advocates everywhere, federal legislators in the house got the message in March and signed letters to the House Appropriations Committee that supported LSTA funding and the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program in FY 2018. What a success: One-third of all representatives signed on! But, no time to rest on our laurels, as similar letters now are circulating in the Senate, and *we only have until May 19 to succeed.*

Please visit **Fight for Libraries!** today and check if your two U.S. Senators have signed on to both letters. It's quick and easy. If your Senators are not on board, they need to hear directly from their constituents—you. The **Fight for Libraries!** site links directly to ALA's Legislative Action Center, which provides call and email templates that will simplify your efforts.

Please don't put this off. All federal library funding and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) are at stake. **The deadline for contacting your Senators is May 19.**

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Thank You to Our Recent Donors

Many thanks to the following generous contributors to ALSC. To learn how you can support ALSC, [visit our website](#).

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ALSC Voices

ALSC Profile

Celebrating colleagues with 25 years or more of ALSC membership

Marsha Stewart
School Librarian
Ancona School, Chicago
ALSC membership: 25 years

Where do you currently work?

The Ancona School is an independent, Montessori based pre-primary through middle school that follows the tradition of progressive education.

Where did you attend library school?

I attended the University of Michigan

What was your very first library position?

My first library position was serendipitous. After receiving my degree I was unable to find a position in the special library field. I decided to move back home with the support of my parents and continued my job search. This decision led me back to the very library I grew up using and where I

had served as a page during high school. I ran into the Director and we chatted about what I had been doing the last few years. I told her I had just graduated from library school and was looking for a job. She asked me if I had considered children's services and that there was an opening. I interviewed and was offered the position. That was the beginning a long career in serving the needs of children.

What do you love most about your job?

The thing I love most is working with the students. I really enjoy introducing them to great books and exposing them to new resources and information. I also love integrating technology into their library experience.

What's your favorite myth, legend, or fairy tale?

My favorite is *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* by John Steptoe. I had the privilege of hosting an author visit with Mr. Steptoe as he was promoting *The Story of Jumping Mouse*. We had dinner together and he was really excited about his new project, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. He said this book would be a departure from his previous work. He was right. Not only were the illustrations magnificent, the retelling of the *Cinderella* story in an African setting was groundbreaking. It was wonderful to see people of color represented in such a beautiful way.

What was the single-most influential event in your lifetime?

The single-most influential event in my lifetime was my first children's librarian position. I knew I wanted to be a librarian, but had never considered children's services. Serving children has become my life's passion. I look forward to going to work everyday. I learn something new every day and I am always excited to share what I have learned with my students.

If you could close your eyes and be anywhere on earth when they opened, where would you be?

I would love to return to South Africa. My first trip was to build homes with Habitat for Humanity in Orange Township. It was so gratifying to work with the families that would receive these homes and to be the recipient of their hospitality. I also had an opportunity to teach at the Mveledzandivho Primary School in Soweto Township. Both were beautiful and fulfilling experiences that I will never forget.

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Delighting with 2017 YMA Winners

Children's book lovers everywhere anticipate and revel in the excitement of the ALA Youth Media Award announcements every January. *Will my favorite illustrator receive a Caldecott? Who will win the Belpré this year?* It's a thrilling time! But, how must it feel to be an award winner?! No need to imagine. Many of ALSC's 2017 award winners have shared their thoughts and feelings in personal videos. Be sure to enjoy the heartfelt responses from creators including Nikki Grimes, Alexandra Diaz, R. Gregory Christie, and others. [Watch the videos on YouTube](#).

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Bright Ideas

Creativity and Imagination Flourish in Library's Secret Garden

Several months ago, the Concord Free Public Library (CFPL) in Concord, Massachusetts, started thinking of fun community projects for children to welcome spring. Appreciating the first daffodils of the season in front of the library, we thought of how the children who planted them in the fall had done something everyone could now enjoy.

The librarians were inspired to dream up the Secret Garden, miniature gardens in terra cotta pots filled not only with plants and other natural materials, but also with fairies, wizards, dinosaurs, superheroes, and more, all lining the pathway to the library. This magical garden was one of the many activities funded by a Full STEAM Ahead grant, awarded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The library recruited a variety of youth groups to help create the small Secret Garden near a shady side entrance. Groups were provided large pots filled with soil to be used to create mini container gardens based on a variety of themes. Many containers highlighted community interests: the historical Concord Minutemen bridge, local farm life, and the upcoming Duck Race preschool fundraiser. STEAM skills included engineering fairy houses and bridges, exploring nature with rock and shell art, and growing plants from seeds and cuttings. Schools and recreation groups contributed to the project, with the participation of over 100 children, ages 5 & up.

The gardens can be made anywhere, with or without dirt, with moss or plants or even dried flowers and grasses. They are small and light enough to be portable and can be placed anywhere, brought inside for periods of time and placed outside with minimal nurturing required. Each pot has a distinct sense of place and personality, and can be changed according to the season or mood of the creator. Materials can be found everywhere, from basements, yards, storage cupboards, or recycling bins. Gardeners of all ages are welcome — older hands can guide and help, eager hands can pour endless energy and reinvention into the project, little hands can hide treasures and water.

Staff created book displays highlighting gardening and nature books for all ages. The BookMarkers, a grades 4/5 monthly book group at CFPL, read the children's classic, *The Secret Garden*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and created the first Secret Garden based on the book, making clothespin dolls for which one girl made outfits on the spot from some leftover fabric, while the other children made trees, grottos, and animals inspired by the tale.

A kindergarten class at the Thoreau School molded animals out of clay for their Rainforest and Woodlands mini gardens, assisted by their fifth-grade buddies. A fourth-grade class at Nashoba Brooks School made a fairy garden for display with solar panels as part of their science curriculum. A local art teacher created a series of gardens with several of her pupils. Using shells, sea glass, minerals, and other natural materials inspired the young artists. A fifth grader commented about making the gardens: "I like organizing the different pieces and seeing what works best." Her third grade companion was equally enthusiastic: "It was fun to do outside with good company!" Their teacher commented, "I like seeing how the imagination of my students gets used to create."

The Secret Garden project is a wonderful way to involve local groups and families in an outdoor project that promotes:

- Creativity, curiosity, and imagination
- Physical activity
- Nature exploration

- Development of problem solving skills with STEM activities (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)
- Storytelling

Most of all, making the gardens makes people happy. We all long for a place hidden away, full of colorful plantings and green glades, only to be discovered by a lucky few. What a delight it is to see the surprise on the little ones' faces when strollers turn up the pathway or toddlers race down the ramp when they visit The Concord Free Public Library.--**Fayth Chamberland & Fiona Stevenson, Concord (Mass.) Free Public Library**

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TeleStory: Library-to-Jail Video Storytime

Editor's Note: Brooklyn Public Library was named one of 20 Top Innovators by [Urban Libraries Council](#) for TeleStory, which received an Honorable Mention in the category of "Race and Social Equity."

If you've ever visited someone on Rikers Island in New York City (NYC), or pretty much any other city, county, state, or federal correctional facility, you'll know that it can be a long, uncomfortable, and, quite often, traumatic experience. This is particularly so for children visiting their incarcerated parents or siblings. Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) now offers an alternative to in-person visits with our TeleStory program. At 12 of our 60 branches, we have dedicated televisiting units – basically large flat-screen TVs with adjustable cameras and on-table microphones – that can connect to almost any facility in the NYC Department of Corrections system.

Using this technology, we can host hour-long family visits with incarcerated loved ones in the trusted, safe, and friendly environment of a public library. We use private and semi-private, or windowed, programming spaces and, if a televisit involves children, we will set up the room with age-appropriate books, drawing materials, and toys. In some cases, we are also able to supply books to the correctional facility, so that parents can share the experience of reading the same book with their child. Library staff will check in on families during visits, and will step in to help if needed or requested. We also have social work interns from The Osborne Association, a prison and reentry agency, on hand to help with the visits and to connect families with needed resources.

To aid the program, we have also developed a Welcome Packet for families that includes an introduction to the program, a run-down of services offered by BPL, a brief "How Can We Help?" questionnaire designed to assess family needs, as well as feedback forms, including a drawing sheet that asks young children to draw a picture of how the visit made them feel. We also include library card applications, since many TeleStory participants are first-time library patrons. With these tools, we are able to refer patrons both to library services and to social service programs offered by partner organizations. Incarceration and a criminal record can create barriers to employment, housing, education, and full citizenship, and we see televisits as providing not only a critical family connection, but also an opportunity for the library to support people as they return to their communities from incarceration and face these barriers.

Ms. S is a good example of a patron who currently uses TeleStory. She has visited her husband on Rikers Island a number of times since his arrest in 2016 and has taken the couple's six-year-old daughter along with her. The family found the process of going through the visitor's center and the security checks at the jail stressful and scary. Now, while Ms. S still makes in-person visits, and sometimes takes along her daughter, she regularly brings the girl to our New Lots branch to televisit with her dad. This way, they are able to maintain family connections in a supportive environment.

For other patrons, televisiting is a necessity, rather than a complement to in-person visits. Ms. J's son was incarcerated in December 2016. She is undocumented and has no state identification, so cannot visit him on Rikers Island. She comes to a BPL branch each Wednesday evening after work to spend an hour with him. He has been battling an opioid addiction and we have been able to get some recovery books to him through our jail services and had an immigration specialist contact Ms. J to assess her situation. Without TeleStory, there would be no connection between mother and child outside letter writing and the occasional, and expensive, phone call.

BPL has been providing televisiting since 2014. In 2016, with support from the New York City Council, we were joined by our colleagues in the Queens Library and New York Public Library systems, so that TeleStory is now available in all parts of the city. We aim to expand TeleStory not only to more of our branches, but also into the juvenile justice system and into the New York State prison system, where it is estimated that more than 7,000 Brooklyn residents are incarcerated, around 60% of whom are parents of minor children.

Televisiting has been growing in popularity nationwide, with both public and private for-profit models in different states. In some states and counties there has been a push to replace in-person visits with televists. In NYC we understand the importance of in-person visits and have been careful to emphasize that nothing can replace the physical presence of family. Our partners at NYC DOC have been very supportive of this approach and, with their help, we have been able to build a program that is free, easily accessible and that operates in harmony with in-person visitation. TeleStory is a unique program and can be a national model for how to do televisiting well. It is also a good example of how public libraries can connect and support vulnerable families.--***Michael Carey is Televisit Services Coordinator at Brooklyn Public Library***

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Getting Together

ALSC Preconference Features Top Authors, Illustrators, and Publishers

Don't miss the ALSC "PREconference: Perceive. Rise. Engage: Celebrate the 2017 ALSC Honor Books," scheduled for Friday, June 23, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at McCormick Place, Room W186, during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. Join us in conversation with authors, illustrators, and publishers as we celebrate and explore the 2017 Batchelder, Caldecott, Geisel, Newbery, Pura Belpré, and Sibert Honor Books. The event will feature three separate panel discussions with honorees, and lunch is included.

Tickets for the preconference are available for purchase through [ALA Conference registration](#).

ALSC members: \$120; ALA members: \$175; and non-members: \$200. Ticket price includes a box lunch and registration materials.

Please note: You don't have to sign-up for the full ALA conference to register for the preconference.

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ALSC President's Program in Chicago -- Plugging In

Please join ALSC on Monday, June 26, 1-2:30 p.m., in Room W185bc of McCormick Place for "["Plugging into the Digital Age: Libraries Engaging and Supporting Families with Today's Literacy."](#)"

Digital technology impacts all areas of life: brain development, learning styles, and interpersonal relationships. Experts in the field have gathered to present the latest research on digital-age technology and its relationship to childhood development and childhood literacy. This panel will feature Chip Donohue, Erikson Institute, and Sarah R. Lytle, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, who will present the latest research in this area of study. Lisa Regalla, Center for Childhood Creativity at the Bay Area Discovery Museum, will discuss practical ways to implement this information in our libraries and services. This program will provide innovative ways for librarians to enhance their professional development and grow into their role as media mentors for children and caregivers.

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Myers Memorial Lecture

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) invites ALA Conference attendees to the [Inaugural Walter Dean Myers Memorial Lecture 2017](#), "Second Chances: Strategies for Working with At-Risk Youth in Libraries." The lecture will be held on Saturday, June 24, 3:00-5:30 p.m., at the Palmer House, during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Co-sponsored by BCALA, American Association of School Librarians, Association for Library Service to Children, Coretta Scott King Book Award Committee, Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT), Young Adult Library Services Association, and Simon & Schuster, Inc., this engaging panel discussion will feature Phoebe Yeh, vice president and publisher, Crown Books for Young Readers/Penguin Random House; librarians Jessica Anne Liddell, Karen Lemmons, and Janice Greenberg; and award-winning author Jason Reynolds.

We hope to see you there!

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Special opportunity for ALA members!

The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) is holding its [11th national conference](#) on June 26 - 28 in Chicago at Roosevelt University. The conference theme is "Engaging Citizens, Building Community." The mission of the conference is to explore the relationships among media literacy education, civic participation, and community-building within our contemporary culture. Scholars, educators, media professionals, students, and activists interested in furthering media literacy will be in attendance.

NAMLE is inviting ALA and ALSC members to extend their stay in Chicago beyond ALA Annual Conference and join in on the NAMLE conference. This is a great opportunity to continue the learning and connect with the media literacy community. ALA/ALSC members are welcome to take advantage to the PK-12 educator rate. Any questions? Reach out directly to [NAMLE](#).

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IBBY Conference to Honor Eliza Dresang

The 12th IBBY Regional Conference will be held October 20-22, 2017, at the University of Washington (UW), Seattle. As home computers and digital games exploded in the 1990's, the late Eliza Dresang, a professor and researcher at UW, began to note the changing ways children interacted with literature. Her research was published in *Radical Change: Books for Youth in a Digital Age* in 1999. In honor of Eliza Dresang, the theme of this IBBY conference is "Radical Change Beyond Borders--The Transforming Power of Children's Literature in a Digital Age." Speakers and participants will explore the changing role of children's literature reflecting changing times and an international lens.

Conference speakers include: Sonja Danowski, Pam Muñoz Ryan, Jerry Pinkney, Duncan Tonatiuh, Sarah Ellis, Karen Bass, Christy Jordan-Fenton, Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, Sherman Alexie, Peter Sis, and 2016 Hans Christian Andersen Award winner for Writing, Chinese author, Cao Wenxuan. The conference includes plenary, breakout, and poster sessions, book discussions, story telling, local Seattle authors, USBBY and IBBY outstanding books exhibit, and more. For further details and to register, please visit the [USBBY website](#). The site also includes information on the call for program proposals and poster sessions.

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Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Member News

Congratulations to ALSC member **Anne Mlod**, school librarian, and Cinda Gilmore, 4th-grade teacher, from Genesee Elementary School in Auburn, N.Y.! They are the recipients of the 2017 American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) Roald Dahl Miss Honey Social Justice Award, which recognizes collaboration between school librarians and teachers in the instruction of social justice using school library resources. Mlod and Gilmore collaborated to create Harriet Was Here: A Research & Song-Writing Project that focused on the life of Harriet Tubman and her work as an abolitionist, suffragist, Civil War scout, spy, and nurse. To learn more, please see the [press release](#).

Kudos to **Angie Stava**, La Jolla Riford Library, California. She was interviewed in her local newspaper's "[People in Your Neighborhood](#)" column. From her responses, it's obvious how much joy and passion Angie brings to her job at the library!

Congratulations to **Ashley Waring**, who was promoted earlier this year to Assistant Director at Reading (Mass.) Library.

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Suggestions for Lecturer Sought

The 2019 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture committee welcomes suggestions from members for the 2019 lecturer. The lecturer may be an author, critic, librarian, historian, or teacher of children's literature, of any country, who shall prepare a paper considered to be a significant contribution to the field of children's literature. For more details, please visit the [Arbuthnot site](#). Please send your proposed lecturer(s), with supporting rationale for each recommendation, to **Barbara A. Genco**, chair.

The 2019 lecturer will be announced at the 2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting.

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ALSC Seeks Research-to-Practice Webinar Proposals

To increase ALSC's continuing education opportunities, the Education committee recently announced its new Research-to-Practice webinar series. The purpose of the series is to disseminate current research related to youth services and address how it can be applied in public and school libraries. The committee invites proposals for webinars to be presented in the series. Proposals may be on a wide array of research topics, but they should have a strong emphasis on how the research findings inform the practices of librarians and others working with children.

For more information, please see the [news release](#).

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Volunteers Needed - 2018 Local Arrangements Committee

ALSC President Nina Lindsay is seeking members to serve July 2017 to June 2018 on the ALSC Local Arrangements Committee, which will assist ALSC leadership and staff in preparations for our 2018 Annual Conference in New Orleans.

While New Orleans residents are desirable for this committee, direct locality is required. Members from surrounding parishes with knowledge of the city would be helpful. Members should have capacity and knowledge to assist with recruiting local volunteers for the conference and/or compiling local information for posting in ALSC communications. The committee will be chaired by Kacy Helwick, New Orleans Public Library.

Interested members should complete an ALSC [Committee Volunteer Form](#), selecting the Local Arrangements Committee.

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DC'S Teen Titans to Champion Library Card Sign-Up Month

This September, crimefighting DC Super Heroes, the Teen Titans, team up with ALA to promote the value of a library card as Library Card Sign-up Month Honorary Chairs. As honorary chairs, DC's Teen Titans, a group of young crimefighters, will remind parents, caregivers, and students that signing up for a library card is the first step towards academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Teen Titans posters and bookmarks are available for purchase through the [ALA Store](#). Posters and bookmarks featuring other DC Super Heroes, including Supergirl, Batman, Super Sons, the Justice League, and Wonder Woman, make their debut in the ALA Graphics summer catalog.

In coming months, the Teen Titans will appear in Library Card Sign-up Month print and digital public service announcements (PSAs). The free PSAs will be available for libraries to use in print materials and online. Sample media tools also will be offered to shine a light on all the resources the public can get for free with a library card. Tools will include a sample press release, proclamation, radio PSA scripts and tweets. Additionally, free Teen Titans artwork for library cards will be provided by

DC. Stay tuned to the [Library Card Sign-Up Month website](#).

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Annual Report from ALA Provides Information on Library Trends

During National Library Week in April, ALA released its State of America's Libraries Report, an annual report capturing usage trends within all types of libraries. The report finds that library workers' expertise continues to play a key role in the transformation of communities through access to services that empower users to navigate our ever-changing digital, social, economic, and political society. The full text of the [2017 State of America's Libraries report](#) is available online.

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PLA Publication on Family Engagement

The Public Library Association (PLA) and Global Family Research Project (GFRP) recently released "Ideabook: Libraries for Families," a publication designed to help libraries develop outstanding family engagement initiatives. The Ideabook presents case studies from more than 50 diverse libraries on how they are incorporating the five "Rs" of engagement: reach out, raise up, reinforce, relate, and reimagine. The [free publication is available online](#). Users will be asked to provide some basic demographic information to access the file.

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Bridge to Understanding Award

USBBY is seeking applications for the Bridge to Understanding Award, recognizing a program that promotes reading as a way to expand understanding of one or more cultures or countries outside of the United States. The award carries a monetary prize of \$1,000 and a certificate. Preference is given to programs that focus on contemporary life and culture. A considered program may be a one-time event or an ongoing series that serves children ranging in age from kindergarten through tenth grade. Applications and criteria for the 2017 award are available at the [USBBY website](#). Deadline for submissions is January 31, 2018.

Reading without Walls: A Conversation

In case you missed it in April, a virtual program was held, featuring Gene Luen Yang, National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, and Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, in an informal conversation about their own personal histories as readers and the role reading can play in breaking down barriers. The discussion also addressed Yang's "Reading without Walls" challenge, which encourages students to read books what they wouldn't normally choose on their own. The program is available on [YouTube](#). More information about the challenge itself is on [Yang's website](#).

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Engle Named Young People's Poet Laureate

The Poetry Foundation has announced that Margarita Engle is the new Young People's Poet Laureate. Awarded every two years, the \$25,000 laureate title is given to a living writer in recognition of a career devoted to writing exceptional poetry for young readers. The laureate advises the Poetry Foundation on matters relating to young people's literature and may engage in a variety of projects to help instill a lifelong love of poetry among the nation's developing readers. This laureateship aims to promote poetry to children and their families, teachers, and librarians over the course of its two-year tenure. Engle's poetry is featured on the [Poetry Foundation's website](#).

Kwame Alexander on Summer Reading & Learning

Kwame Alexander, 2015 Newbery Medalist, is the spokesman for the 2017 Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP). This year's theme is Build a Better World and free resources include PSA's featuring Alexander speaking on the value of libraries and the importance of summer reading and learning. Check out the PSA's and other resources on the [CSLP website](#).

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