

# Everyday Advocacy Matters

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## From the Editor

### What Do You Do Every Day?

Hello, Everyday Advocates! It's a pleasure to introduce myself as your new Member Content Editor (MCE). I'll be reaching out to you every couple months in the form of this newsletter, and also working behind the scenes at [Everyday Advocacy](#) to keep the site humming along and the content fresh.

So, let's talk about Everyday Advocacy!

\*waves\* Hi, my name is Amy, and I'm an Everyday Advocate. I'm a daily cheerleader for libraries and the power they have to offer. But, I'm gonna be real: I do not sit down every day and write a postcard to my member of Congress. I use [5calls.org](#) sometimes, but not every day. In my library work, I'm a constant advocate for the people we serve--but, weekends.

When I first thought of applying to be your MCE, I had a pang of guilt. I remember thinking, "*I don't do this EVERY day.*" But then I got to wondering: what *do* I do every single day?

1. Drink coffee
2. Write with glitter pens
3. Eat food
4. ~~Pet my dog~~ (wait, not if he's on vacation with his dog BFF)
5. Breathe
6. Carry and live out my values

Notice you do not see "travel to Washington and meet with lawmakers on Capitol Hill" on that list. But, friends, that's the whole point of Everyday Advocacy: it's the little things you do between breathing, coffee, food, and glitter pens. It's the way we carry our love of libraries and our belief in their ability to empower people and communities. It's the friend who gets their first library card since childhood after you tell them libraries offer downloadable audiobooks. It's the dad who works at the corner store who brings his toddler to storytime on your recommendation, then they come back every week. It's the way we treat our colleagues and lift them up, so the entire library rises. If those things inspire you to sign up for [National Library Legislative Day](#) (or [Virtual Library Legislative Day](#)), great! But, if you're mostly here to warm and stretch your advocacy muscles on a daily basis, or just talk about what advocacy even means, well, you've come to the right place.

So here's what's in the April 2018 issue:

- [LJ Movers and Shakers!](#) We've got MIN-terviews with four of their awesome [Advocates](#), so I hope you like inspiration.
- Advocacy on the desk, survey results, anti-gun violence, and painting under the table: great recent ALSC Blog posts from good old Priority Group I.
- A deep dive into the ALSC Everyday Advocacy site that'll take us to Washington D. C.
- Linky library links

- A calendar of library months, weeks, and days for your advocacy planning
- Finally, something new: I've Got Five Minutes, a quickie roundup of actions you can take from this month's issue and do on your ~~five stolen minutes scarfing a burrito before your ref desk shift~~ lunch break.

(By the way, glitter pens write fantastic postcards to members of Congress.)

[Amy Martin](#), Member Content Editor  
ALSC Everyday Advocacy Website & Electronic Newsletter

## Everyday Advocacy Spotlight

### MIN-Interviews with LJ Movers and Shakers: ADVOCATES!

I LOVE when [Library's Journal](#)'s annual [Movers and Shakers](#) comes out. Now, there's phenomenal work being done everywhere by library staff who work diligently at tasks that don't get recognized as "moving" or "shaking." But there's something about these quick peeks at amazing people and their standout projects that always gets me inspired.

I caught up with four of the [Advocates](#) named as 2018 Movers and Shakers. Can confirm: they are all Everyday Advocates you'll be delighted to meet! Read on for special mini-interviews--MIN-interviews--with Rebecca McCorkindale, April Hathcock, Robin Bradford, and Rachael Rivera.

#### Time to Sparkle with [Rebecca McCorkindale](#)

Rebecca McCorkindale doesn't know it yet, but she might be my new best friend. Emailing with her about glitter, disability, and her [Libraries Are for Everyone](#) project with Julie Syler made me feel all warm inside. Rebecca is the Assistant Library Director and Creative Director at Gretna Public Library in Nebraska, and blogs at Hafuboti.

**AM:** A thing I love about Libraries Are For Everyone is that it honors language diversity, including ASL as well as African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Native American languages (go Native Languages of the Americas!). I'm just going out on a limb and guessing you don't speak all 80+ languages represented in LAFE.

**RM:** I do not speak all 80+ languages - shocker, I know! The only two that I was confident in the translations were French and Spanish. The amazing thing about this campaign, and where I feel like my heart overflows with warm fuzzies, is that it is reliant on others working together. I've had lots of emails from library workers asking for certain translations because they have members of their community or schools who speak that language. It's the best when I ask them to reach out to those members to get the translation for me - and they do!

**AM:** What can we learn from sparkles and glitter about library advocacy?

**RM:** I actually have a whole presentation that I worked on with Brytani from The Neighborhood Librarian that explains the connection between sparkles/glitter and advocacy. But what it boils down to is that advocacy is incredibly important, and there is no single "right way" to do it. What has worked for me is that I shifted the focus from myself over to my team and what they do. After all, I mainly work at my desk with less time devoted to directly serving our community. But I remain aware of what our amazing staff is doing, and so when I have a chance to brag about our library to anyone, I almost sparkle with pride when describing what's happening at our library. There's no pressure of

an amazing "elevator speech." I can just reflect what's happening, encourage the listener(s) to check us out, and leave them with a great feeling about what we do for them and our shared community.

**AM:** Like you, I have fibromyalgia. When my symptoms are flaring, finding the energy to speak out about libraries is tough. What message would you like to send to library advocates who live with disabilities?

**RM:** When I'm having a pain and/or exhaustion flare, I have no energy to even speak about anything, let alone libraries. I guess what I'd say to library advocates with disabilities is to do what you safely can. There's so much more to advocacy than being part of a march, or calling your representatives. Challenge your libraries to adopt universal design. Ask for accommodations. Advocate for yourself and your community first, and then if you feel comfortable doing so, shine the light on your library and how it truly is for everyone.

### **Empowerment and Intersectionality with [April Hathcock](#)**

I've followed [April Hathcock on Twitter](#) for a year, mostly with my mouth open a little bit in awe. I love her quick, smart takes on the diversity issues we face within ALA, especially her reports from ALA Council (where she's an At-Large Councillor) and conferences. April is the Scholarly Communication Librarian at New York University Libraries, and her blog is [At the Intersection](#).

**AM:** You do a lot of great work on [Twitter](#) and your blog calling out microaggressions toward marginalized people in the library world. What kinds of reactions do you get from other library workers about your writing?

**AH:** Pretty much all of the reactions I've gotten have been positive. There are, of course, trolls out there, but that unfortunately seems to be the nature of doing social justice work in a public forum. When it comes specifically to library colleagues, though, I hear only wonderfully positive things about the ways they feel my work has helped challenge them to learn more or the ways that having access to my work has helped them, if they are from a marginalized group, express to their coworkers and supervisors the realities of their day to day experiences. I get quite a few emails, twitter messages, and even mailed postcards (which I love!) from people all over who have found some positive way to interact with my work.

**AM:** You talk often about your experience as a Black librarian in ALA, which is very largely White. What impacts do you think increasing the number of people of color in librarianship would have on libraries?

**AH:** Librarianship is over 85% white and despite our best efforts, that number has been holding. I think that only good can come from increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of our profession: we'll find ourselves better equipped to build inclusive workplaces, better equipped to meet the diverse needs of our users, just better equipped to be a profession as a whole, when we bring more diversity into our ranks.

However, it isn't just about increasing the numbers; it's also about retention and empowerment. We can add all the people of color we want, but if we aren't building organizations that welcome diversity and provide places for marginalized folks to thrive, then we'll continue to lose them by the droves. It's also important to think, particularly when considering racial and ethnic diversity, beyond just "black and white." We need more people of Asian descent, more Latinx people, more people of Arab descent, more Native people, etc. And taking it even further, we need to think intersectionally: so looking to create a safe and empowering working environment for queer and disabled people of color, for example.

**EAM:** What message would you most like to share with children's librarians, school librarians, and other ALSC members?

**AH:** In many ways, you all are the first line of approach for recruiting more diversity in libraries. The extent to which your work reflects the experiences of marginalized people is the extent to which young folks from underrepresented communities can begin to see themselves in the library profession.

### **Bodice Rippers and Self-Es with [Robin Bradford](#)**

I have a friend who loves romance novels and will staunchly defend them to those who say they aren't great literature. Robin Bradford knows this struggle well, and is doing her part to get romance, self-published books, and other books in demand by patrons onto shelves. She probably has a recommendation for you [on Twitter](#) right now.

**AM:** I'm reading your twitter feed and loving that you advocate for romance readers, diversity in books and TV, and self published books. What kind of responses have you gotten from librarians when you talk about the books you read?

**RB:** I have gotten a tremendous response when talking about books I'm buying for collection development. When talking about books I actually read... I feel like I don't talk about those books quite as much. My whole feed is like a rolling discussion of books, movies, music. Sometimes it's because I read, or watched, or listened to something. Other times, it's because we're discussing things we're ordering. Or, it's a jumping off point from someone else's conversation.

Sometimes, I'll throw out a question just to see what kind of response I get. Sometimes, I'll use a poll. Sometimes, people will see a book cover, and that will lead to a greater discussion. That's one of the best things about Twitter, that ability for meaningful conversations to happen from a sometimes throwaway comment.

**AM:** In children's librarianship, we talk about how self publishing can be an important tool for writers who are people of color, LGBTQ, disabled, or otherwise not part of the mainstream voices that tend to get picked by the publishing industry. What would you say to library workers who want to add independent voices to their collections but aren't sure where to start?

**RB:** Wow, this is an ongoing struggle. First, I would acknowledge that it's overwhelming. It's overwhelming with traditionally published materials, and it's not like you can put that to the side and focus on indie pub. No, you're required to do BOTH, and it's okay to acknowledge how big that job is. Second, take manageable bites. If you go into it saying "I'm going to buy fiction today" you're going to be quickly overwhelmed. Decide you're going to focus on a genre, or a subject. And then keep drilling down until you get to something you can handle. Maybe you're going to go to Amazon and look through the detective fiction, or the thrillers, or the suspense. Maybe you're looking at an Ingram catalog, and you're going to focus on Publisher Selects part, which features self/indie pub. Maybe you're going to look for blogs that deal with a certain genre and that's all you do that day. You gather information. And then, on another day, you start diving into titles.

You can tell a lot about a book from the blurb. If it's supposed to be an action/adventure/thriller, but the blurb reads like a thesis...think about that. It doesn't give you a definitive answer on the quality of the book, but it's a hint. You have a lot of books, and not a lot of time (or money) so maybe you move on. If the blurb has misspellings, bad grammar, etc, maybe you move on.

The cover is supposed to attract readers. Does the cover support what the book's description is claiming to be? Will a reader pick it up? This has nothing to do with the quality of the book, and everything to do with will anyone pick it up to DISCOVER the quality. If no one checks it out, you wasted your money.

If you don't take patron requests, START TAKING PATRON REQUESTS!!!! Patrons don't care about the divide between traditionally published and indie published. They see books and would like to read them. They can be a great resource into trends too. If you start getting a lot of books on a certain topic that you may have been neglecting (for me it was Korean dramas, and lesbian fiction/lesbian romance), then patron requests put it back at the forefront.

### In the Living Room with [Rachael Rivera](#)

Okay, they call it a lounge in New Zealand, not a living room. But that's where you'll find Rachael Rivera, who's been recognized for her work with people experiencing homelessness in Auckland, and was inspired to start after learning that the local "rough sleeping" community considered the public library their "lounge." (I love this.) Rachael is the Manager of Central Library Experience at Auckland Central Library in New Zealand.

**AM:** Your work with Auckland's "rough sleeper" community is unique because it reaches beyond the most visible needs of people experiencing homelessness--shelter, food, bathrooms--to the more intangible needs for community, entertainment, and intellectual stimulation. How has this approach impacted the experiences of patrons in your library?

**RR:** I guess it's important to come back to where this started. One day, by chance, we found this document about the experience of rough sleepers in the Auckland CBD. It outlined the movements of rough sleepers throughout a typical day and highlighted the significance of the places they visited.

We were surprised to see the Central Library in here, referred to as the 'lounge'. If you think about your own home, the lounge instantly gives a feeling of warmth. It's a place for connection with friends and family, and for recreation and relaxation. It's a simple way to describe it, but it really helped us to understand the place of our library and our service to people without homes. The work we did with rough sleepers was a direct result of thinking about that 'lounge' concept, and whether or not we were doing everything we could to make it a great place to be.

We've had some of the rough sleeping community say that it feels like they are part of the real world, or that it helps them feel like a 'normal person', which to me is just awesome. One of my staff actually did a project on how rough sleepers perceive our library, and she surmised: "One of the interviewees emphasised that he feels a sense of belonging and respect. He feels like he is part of the team and the community."- Hao Zhang

I loved reading that. Supporting the development of community is an amazing part of library work.

We've had feedback from other library customers that they value this service offer too. Once people heard about our Monday movies sessions, we had a wait list of people interested in providing morning tea, including the local culinary school. Other central city residents started providing food for the morning teas, which led to both the housed and un-housed central city residents getting to know each other, which is a fabulous outcome.

Around some of the more visible needs this community have, we shouldn't forget we are part of an ecosystem. Even though there were lots of things the library couldn't support this community with, the knowledge we gained through our engagement meant we could advocate for them to people

who can make change in those areas. I have since had the opportunity to work with colleagues in my council around the creation of more public amenities such as showers and lockers.

**AM:** If you could recommend one practice for libraries to adopt that could improve library visits for people experiencing homelessness, what would it be?

**RR:** Ask them. Find a way to create a safe, respectful place and ask them what they like to do, and get to know them a little, just like you know some of your other regular customers. Ask them what challenges they face and how they find the current experience of using your library.

Feeling safe and welcome is something that came through as a clear theme for our rough sleeping community, and there were lots of little things we could do together to make that less of a barrier. From ensuring they knew of all the services that could help them, to creating new ones that we wouldn't have come up with by ourselves- it's all gone a long way to building mutual trust and respect.

## From the ALSC Advocacy Committees

ALSC [Priority Group I](#) is all about Child Advocacy. Here's a snapshot of what committee members have been writing on the [ALSC blog](#).

- How do you [learn to be](#) an advocate? ([Advocacy and Legislation Committee](#))
- Omg omg [survey](#) results ([Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee](#))
- Ever had a patron demand you [take this terrible book](#) off your shelf? ([Intellectual Freedom Committee](#))
- You can make an [inclusive play space](#) for babies and toddlers on a shoestring. ([Library Service to Underserved Children and their Caregivers](#))
- Wondering how to [support library patrons](#) who are protesting gun violence? ([Public Awareness Committee](#))
- Is it hard to [paint like](#) Michelangelo? ([School-Age Programs and Services Committee](#))

## Everyday Advocacy 101: What's Up in Washington?

If you're new to Everyday Advocacy or just want a refresher, you're in luck! Each issue of Everyday Advocacy Matters helps you dig into the initiative's five tenets—Be Informed, Engage with Your Community, Speak Out, Get Inspired, and Share Your Advocacy Story—by directing you back to the great content on the [Everyday Advocacy website](#).

In this issue, let's take a trip to [Washington, D. C.](#) and learn about the doings of [ALA's Washington Office](#).

Find out how you (yes, you!) can make an Everyday Advocacy difference at the national level.

Everyday Advocacy is a grassroots effort that starts with the great things you're doing in your library community, but that doesn't mean you can't take Washington, D.C., by storm!

Keep up with the awesome that's going on in the [ALA Washington Office](#) and learn about big and small ways to lend your voice to the national landscape of libraries and library legislation.

Here are a just a few ways to stay engaged in the Washington conversation:

Subscribe to [District Dispatch](#), the official blog of the ALA Washington Office, for the low-down on key library issues and legislation.

Check out the [ALA Legislative Action Center](#) for details on how you can call, write, or tweet Congressional leaders with your support.

Participate in a [webinar](#) to build your skill set on issues you're sure to encounter while serving youth and families in libraries.

Attend [National Library Legislative Day](#), a two-day advocacy event championing libraries and library legislation in Washington, D.C.

Don't miss out on a single chance to make an Everyday Advocacy difference for the youth and families you serve.

Learn about what's up in Washington today!

## News You Can Use

Articles from outside the library world for you to email, tweet, or cite in your speech to elected officials.

- British survey shows [children are hit hardest](#) by cuts to library service. (*The Guardian*)
- Opinion: [Americans need open libraries](#), and libraries need IMLS funding. (*The Hill*)
- Opinion: A heartfelt argument that [libraries belong to everyone](#), and why IMLS faces cuts in Trump's proposed budget. (*The Nation*)
- As local newspapers disappear, some [small-town libraries are becoming centers for local news](#). (*The Atlantic*)
- Dolly Parton [donated her 100 millionth Imagination Library book](#) and did storytime at the Library of Congress. (*NPR Ed*)
- Vince Staples [plays viral prank, then makes good by promising to donate](#) \$2,022 to the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library in Long Beach, CA. (*Long Beach Post*)

## I've Got Five Minutes

For those of you who want to do *aaal!!!* the advocacy, but it's gotta be fast.

1. Think of someone you work with who deserves major praise, and tell them!
2. Read a post from a fellow Everyday Advocate on the ALSC blog.
3. Sign up for [ALA District Dispatch](#). Alerts about library policy news will come right to your inbox!
4. Share an article about libraries on social media.
5. Jot down a program or display idea for your community around one of our calendar listings.

## Calendar

**April** is [School Library Month](#), [Autism Awareness Month](#), and [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#)

April 8-14 [National Library Week](#)

April 10 [National Library Workers Day](#)

April 11 [National Bookmobile Day](#)  
April 20-22 [Global Youth Service Day](#)  
April 30 [Día](#)

**May** is [Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#), [Jewish American Heritage Month](#), [Older Americans Month](#), and [National Foster Care Month](#)

May 1-7 [Choose Privacy Week](#)

May 6-12 [Hurricane Preparedness Week](#)

May 7-8 [National Library Legislative Day](#) and [Virtual Library Legislative Day](#)

May 21 [National Readathon Day](#)

**June** is [Gay Pride Month](#)

June 1 [National Donut Day](#)

June 21-26 [ALA Annual Conference](#)

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