

Everyday Advocacy Matters

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From the Editor

Success and Surfacing

I'm writing to you from the other side of a successful library ballot measure campaign. The happy side, where the library I work for and love gets the funding we need to thrive and grow. Oakland passed [Measure D](#), a parcel tax to provide additional funding for the Oakland Public Library, on June 7 with 76% of the vote--a supermajority that was a welcome surprise to those of us who'd been phone banking and biting our nails for weeks.

Looking back, though, I'm less surprised. When Measure D was first developed, [EveryLibrary](#) came to OPL to train staff on campaigning we could and could not do on staff time. I remember the trainer talking about the importance of the "surfacing" stage in a political campaign. To quote this [EveryLibrary blog post](#), "Surfacing is when a candidate emerges into the public consciousness and creates a public identity for themselves." It's basically building a positive reputation with the public in advance of a political campaign, so that when it's time to make voting decisions, people already know and like you. Sounds an awful lot like Everyday Advocacy, doesn't it?

I've seen OPL do this for years. My colleagues put customer service front and center and follow a "people over things" philosophy. Relationships come first. I know one isn't a tremendous sample size, but as I watched the returns with that 76% approval come in on primary night, I kept thinking, "wow, everyday advocacy is powerful stuff!"

Here's what's in the July 2018 issue: Are you uninspired by advocacy? (You can tell us.) What about activism? Cristina Mitra breaks it down. Get that funding! Plus an Awesome Advocate Profile. The latest in advocacy-related ALSC blog posts. Have you invited your local representatives to storytime yet? Learn about building relationships with stakeholders. Choose Privacy Every Day. Choose it today! Then again tomorrow! Plus a few things you can do in five minutes.

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

Everyday Advocacy Spotlight

What Does Everyday Advocacy Mean to You?

Cristina Mitra, Family Engagement Coordinator, San Francisco Public Library

Time: Sometime just before 6:30am

Location: A conference hotel in (still dark) Denver, Colorado

Bleary-eyed and not quite all-the-way awake, I exit an elevator on the way to a breakfast meeting when I run into Amy Martin. We've met years prior through the Association of Children's Librarians of Northern California (ACL), but given mutual changing hairstyles – not to mention the early hour--we are slow to recognize each other. But soon enough, we're savoring our warm beverages across from each other when I learn about her new role as the MCE for Everyday Advocacy.

All of the sudden, we are: Awake. Inspired. Engaged. Because we love what we do. And we love talking about it. Call it advocacy in action. The conversation soon turns into: What does advocacy *really* mean? How does it differ from *activism*? Where are the overlaps? Why has our profession embraced the term advocacy over activism? [Merriam-Webster](#) defines activism as “a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue.” I confide in Amy that the term advocacy always sounded a bit lukewarm to me, but is “direct vigorous action” our exact rallying call? When I start seeing these photos circulating through the Internet, they seem to support the idea that only *really* dire circumstances motivate librarians to come out and *do something*. And is that who we are?

I've been a public youth services librarian for seven years and I agree with the general consensus that we can be much more vocal. We should be, in fact. Because by digging into the passion that we share with our fellow colleagues at breakfast conference meetings, for example, and spreading it to those who may not be so hip on the value and relevance of the library means we are cheerleading not only libraries as an institution, but ourselves. Our values realized. Our dreams for the communities we serve. I'm still trying to find the right term for myself--somewhere between advocacy and activism. Something that embodies writing my local politicians to champion RFID *and* telling a Lyft driver all about hoopla and eBooks.

What's your version of “act-vocy?” What does it look like?

Ask An Everyday Advocate: How Do You Get Funding for Library Programs?

Patty Gonzales Ramirez, Manager, White Rock Hills Branch of Dallas Public Library

As a branch manager in a big city, it is hard to find funds to help with programming or celebrating big events. One way that I have found is to reach out to businesses in the community. Big or small, most are willing to help.

Some of the funding that I received in the past came from local businesses in the form of ice, sodas, water, and food. I also rely on my friends group, which is very helpful; one group even committed to meeting our friends group halfway with the purchase of eight Chromebooks for our teens/tweens computer programming class. We are now working on raising funds to buy Lego robotic kits to go with the Chromebooks.

I have made great contacts with businesses when attending community events that are not library related, such as the local hospital. They have committed to donate money to our branch for programs and to come in and offer free health screenings and programs. The biggest hurdle we sometimes have is getting the courage to ask; the benefits of asking and getting positive feedback are worth it.

Awesome Advocate Profile

Brianne Mintz, Children's Librarian, Springfield (NJ) Free Public Library

Brianne Mintz is very newly one of us! She's finishing her MLIS this summer and starting a position as a children's librarian in New Jersey. As part of her degree, Brianne wrote a paper on [improving library experiences for children with dyslexia](#). Follow the link to read her paper, and read on for a Q+A.

1) How can libraries act as advocates for people with learning differences?

Libraries can be advocates by providing resources and services for parents in regards to learning disabilities. We can also provide inclusive programming for children with learning disabilities, to make them feel like they are part of a community and they are not less because they learn differently. We can even arrange our collections to better serve learning disabled children. In the paper, I show examples of labeling that can make finding materials easier for a dyslexic child and offer some programming ideas. The goal is to make a child feel like they are part of the community and are just as welcome.

2) You're about to finish library school! What do you see yourself doing, in your future career, to increase accessibility in libraries?

I just accepted a position as a Children's Librarian in New Jersey. I am so excited to bring awareness into the library and to maybe, with my director's permission, change the way we label in order to make learning disabled children feel like they can come to the library and find materials without feeling like there are barriers. I want to ensure the library space is inclusive, fun, and welcoming for every child who walks through our doors.

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](#):

Would you like to [serve on a great committee?](#) ([Advocacy and Legislation Committee](#))

It's never too early to [talk to kids about race](#). ([Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee](#))

Meet the [2018 ALSC Distinguished Service Award winner](#). ([Intellectual Freedom Committee](#))

Learn about [time management tools](#) useful for people with ADHD as well as those who are neurotypical. ([Library Service to Underserved Children and their Caregivers](#))

Speaking of tools, here's [PAC's new advocacy one-pager!](#) ([Public Awareness Committee](#))

The [Artists' Workshop is a terrific program](#) about illustrators kids know. ([School-Age Programs and Services Committee](#))

Everyday Advocacy 101: Building Relationships

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 since we learned about the importance of building relationships, let's look at Build Relationships with Stakeholders.

Build Relationships with Stakeholders

Once you've identified your key stakeholders, it's time to begin building relationships.

Start now. Begin introducing yourself to policy makers immediately with the understanding that relationships take time to establish and build.

Be visible. Be visible in the community and at meetings. Re-introduce yourself and say hello, and let policy makers get to know you BEFORE you need them to know you (e.g. in a crisis).

Be attentive. Listen for community needs and think about whether and how the library can meet those needs.

One of the best ways to advance a relationship is to meet face to face. This can be the hardest part, but it's so important for sharing your message. And you need to meet stakeholders in person, because that is how they connect you with your library. Here's how to make that connection:

Think first. Before you set up a meeting, think about what the people you want to meet with care about. Then, try to connect your library with their interests. For example, if you are meeting with a city council representative, does that person sit on any committees that affect the library? Have they been an advocate for youth? You can provide them with information about youth in the community they may not know. You can also tell the story about how your library is essential for the youth in your community.

Find a mentor. If you've never participated in this kind of meeting with a stakeholder, ask to attend a meeting with a trusted colleague or two. You can pay attention to what they do, how they speak, and how they describe the importance of your library and its role in the community. Afterwards, ask questions that will help you be prepared for meetings when you are on your own.

Make the contact. Now that you're ready to arrange your own meeting, make the phone call, send the email, or stop by the stakeholder's office. Briefly introduce yourself and explain the reason you are making the contact. If you have a common acquaintance who helped set up the meeting, mention that. If you're a constituent, mention that as well.

Persevere. Leaders have many people contacting them for the same reasons you are. Be understanding if they can't meet with you right away, or if the meeting you did schedule gets canceled or postponed. Don't give up! Find the right balance between persistent and annoying. The worst thing you can do is be impatient or rude. You may have to try several times before you are successful.

Make yourself memorable. When you finally do get through, help your contact remember you and your library. Be cordial. Don't forget to bring business cards. Bring a fact sheet with pictures of your library. Don't overwhelm with text, but have something that is clear and succinct.

Follow up. Send a note or letter thanking the stakeholder for the meeting and reinforcing points discussed or agreements made.

Calls to Action

- “Choose Privacy Week” is now “[Choose Privacy Every Day](#).” The Office of Intellectual Freedom is taking its long-running week observance to an everyday act, which we are all about. [Visit the website](#) and dig into the resources--it’s becoming a clearinghouse for information on protecting patron privacy.
- 2018-19 ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo launched her initiative “[Libraries = Strong Communities](#)” at ALA Annual. Keep an eye on this, because new publicity tools will be released in conjunction with Garcia-Febo’s tour. [Read the press release](#) for more!
- ALA’s Washington Office invites you to [participate in a short survey](#) to share the ways your library supports democracy and civic engagement in the community. The survey is an undertaking to report on how libraries support and strengthen democracy in communities through leading civic engagement efforts, hosting elected and government official town halls, serving as polling sites, and offering many other opportunities. **The deadline to complete the survey is Monday, July 16!**

News You Can Use

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

Torn Apart [uses library science techniques](#) to map data on immigrant family separations. (Wired)

NYT coverage of [ALSC’s decision to rename](#) the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. (New York Times)

An inspiring story about how [Disa Bryant found support at the Detroit Public Library](#) while experiencing homelessness. (Detroit Free Press)

[Fort Worth Library’s new mobile hotspot](#) lending got the attention of local media. (Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

Kids are [climbing the walls](#) at the Free Library of Philadelphia--literally. (Philadelphia Inquirer)

I've Got Five Minutes

For those of you who want to do aaallll the advocacy, but it’s gotta be fast.

1. Are you an activist? [Share your ACT-vocacy story!](#)
2. Write down three local businesses that might be willing to support your programming.
3. [Read even more](#) about working with your local elected officials.
4. Print out that [PAC advocacy sheet](#) and think about where you could use it.
5. Share a news article from this issue on your (or your library’s) social media accounts.

Calendar

July is National Hot Dog Month. And, who are we kidding, it's Summer Reading. You're all immersed in Summer Reading.

August is Congressional District Days--is your member of Congress in town? [Most of August recess has been cancelled this year](#), so nab them while you can and invite them for a library tour.

August 9 [Book Lovers' Day](#)

August 24-30 [IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2018](#)

September is [Hispanic Heritage Month](#), [Library Card Signup Month](#), and Civic Awareness Month.

September 8 [International Literacy Day](#)

September 19 [International Talk Like a Pirate Day](#)

September 23-29 [Banned Books Week](#)

September 26 [Banned Websites Awareness Day](#)

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