

Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Award Acceptance Speech



*Fred Rogers Productions is the recipient of the 2022 Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Award for **Alma's Way**. Olubunmi Mia Olufemi, Supervising Producer of Alma's Way, delivered these acceptance remarks on behalf of Ellen Doherty, Chief Creative Officer and Executive Producer on Alma's Way during the ALSC Awards Program held Monday, June 27, 2022, during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.*

I know what Alma would say if she were here — this is way, way, way ah-may-zing!!

I'm Olubunmi Mia Olufemi and on behalf of series creator Sonia Manzano and my colleagues at Fred Rogers Productions and animation partner Pipeline Studios, I'd like to thank the American Library Association for this honor.



It makes my heart happy to hear that *Alma's Way* is resonating with you, as well as with children and families across the country.

We hear from so many parents about how moved they are that their children can see kids who look and speak like them on TV. And to see families like theirs celebrated.

Many of the stories folks are sharing on social media capture why we at FRP chose to team up with Sonia to bring her ideas to life. Here are some examples.

Marisa M tweeted, "It's cool seeing cartoon characters that share the same physical features as me. Growing up, people always commented on my nose, and it brought me joy to see a character on *Alma's Way* that has a nose like me."

Omar Kelly wrote, "When you have a daughter, you realize how much representation matters. My daughter isn't even one but anytime an *Alma's Way* commercial popped up hyping the new show, she'd stop and watch. When the show debuted, she was hype."

Another dad, Brandon Howard, replied, “Man, it’s huge! They immediately gravitate to what looks like them and it’s so amazing to watch as a parent. *Alma’s Way* is on our list as well. Great choice.”

And Andrea Pérez-Maikkula tweeted, “My 3yo watches the PBS KIDS app. All of a sudden, I hear a girl talking about Puerto Rico and finding a coquí. I cried! Didn’t know about *Alma’s Way* yet. I’m a fan! Thank you, thank you. #RepresentationMatters”

Working with PBS KIDS on this series is a dream because they, along with public television stations around the US, make sure that *Alma’s Way* episodes, games, and activities reach as many families as possible.

I’d also like to acknowledge our terrific partners at Timeline Digital and Dicapta, who produce the Spanish language audio program, captions, and soon-to-launch descriptive video, and Bridge Multimedia, who produce descriptive video in English. Also, our wonderful partners at Makefully, who produce the games and series website.

We look forward to sharing more *Alma’s Way* with you for years to come. Thank you.

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2022 Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media Honor Titles



Goodnight, World!

produced by Sesame Workshop and Headspace

This original “sleepcast” features familiar Sesame Street characters helping young children calm down and fall asleep. Alan, the owner of Hooper’s Store, leads listeners through stories, guided meditations, and breathing exercises. Episodes end with quiet music or soundscapes as listeners drift off to sleep.



Tab Time

Produced by YouTube Originals, Kids at Play, and Scale Productions

“Tab Time” welcomes viewers ages 3-5 to a thematic exploration into concepts that are relevant to children’s lives, including family, music, and movement. Ms. Tab’s warmth encourages the use of imagination. Episodes take the viewer on a journey through songs, crafts, and healthy snacks in a fun and inviting environment.