

# american libraries

July/August 2020

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## Advancing Digital Equity during COVID-19

p.14

International  
Innovators p.18

Bringing Books to  
Syrian Refugees p.22

**PLUS:** Yaa Gyasi, Socially  
Distanced Services, Disaster Planning

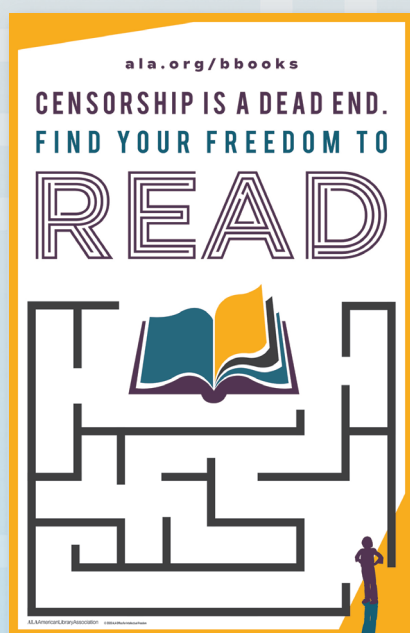


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# CONTENTS

July/August 2020

American Libraries | Volume 51 #7/8 | ISSN 0002-9769



## COVER STORY

- 14 **Advancing Digital Equity**  
Public librarians strategize best ways to reach patrons during COVID-19

- 18 **International Innovators**  
ALA Presidential Citations honor forward-thinking global libraries

BY Phil Morehart

- 22 **Bringing Books to the Desert**

For Syrian refugees, a network of libraries and literacy

BY Karen E. Fisher and the Zaatari Camp Librarians

- 30 **Responding to a Threat**  
The importance of immediate action

BY Deborah D. Halsted, Shari Clifton, and Daniel T. Wilson

## UP FRONT

- 2 **From the Editor**  
Sparkling Change  
BY Sanhita SinhaRoy

- 6 **From Our Readers**

## ALA

- 4 **From the President**  
Black Lives Matter  
BY Julius C. Jefferson Jr.

- 5 **From the Executive Director**  
Let Our Legacy Be Justice  
BY Tracie D. Hall

- 8 **Update**  
What's happening at ALA

## TRENDS

### NEWSMAKER

- 12 **Yaa Gyasi**  
Author's latest work deals with addiction, depression, and faith  
BY Sallyann Price

- 13 **Noted & Quoted**

## SOLUTIONS

- 34 **Arts Online**  
Streaming services highlight art, music, and fashion  
BY Carrie Smith

## PEOPLE

- 36 **Announcements**

## THE BOOKEND

- 38 **The New Normal**

ON THE COVER: Illustration ©ivector/Adobe Stock

## ADVERTISER INDEX

International Monetary Fund 11 | American Library Association Editions 29 | eLearning Solutions 3 | Graphics Cover 2 | JobLIST Cover 3 | Resource Description and Access Cover 4

# Sparking Change



Sanhita SinhaRoy

Welcome to *American Libraries*' annual digital-only issue. The COVID-19 pandemic has only widened existing disparities in our world, which is why we're heightening our focus on parity and how libraries can work toward it. In "Advancing Digital Equity" (cover story, p. 14), adapted from a Public Library Association webinar, Larra Clark talks with three librarians about how they have been reaching digitally disconnected patrons and ensuring access during these troubled times.

Of course, the digital divide is just one of many injustices that deserve our outrage—and our action. As protesters rally around the world against systemic racism and police brutality, ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall proffers three library-focused action items in "Let Our Legacy Be Justice" (p. 5). And in ALA President Julius C. Jefferson Jr.'s inaugural column ("Black Lives Matter," p. 4), he invites us to join him in what he calls "this fight for social justice and humanity."

Like protest, art can change society profoundly. As award-winning Ghanaian-American author Yaa Gyasi reminds us (Newsmaker, p. 12), fiction helps us "step into the consciousness of other people" and "think about people fully, differently, to recognize beauty."

Both beauty and inspiration are abundant in the international stories we feature in this issue—like "Bringing Books to the Desert" (p. 22), in which Karen E. Fisher reports on the thriving refugee-run library system in Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp. The ingenuity and determination on display will amaze you.

By the time you read this, ALA Virtual 2020 will be over. Normally during a conference, the *American Libraries* team is darting between sessions, interviewing featured speakers, and reporting on programs. As in previous years, we continue our extensive and reliable coverage—though admittedly with fewer steps on our pedometers during this first-ever online-only event. Read our coverage online ([bit.ly/AL-Virtual20](https://bit.ly/AL-Virtual20)) and in the *Daily Scoop* e-newsletter. We hope you find the reporting useful, and as always, we welcome your feedback.

In solidarity.

Sanhita

As protesters rally around the world against systemic racism and police brutality, let's mobilize for reform and societal change.

# american libraries

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

**ALA** American Library Association

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with Dominique Turnbow and Amanda Roth

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with Kathy Parker and Kate Hall

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# Black Lives Matter

Leading in tumultuous times



**Julius C. Jefferson Jr.**

was born in 1968, a year many describe as the most tumultuous of the second half of the 20th century. Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered April 4, 1968, as he was protesting the conditions of Memphis sanitation workers whose rallying call was “I Am a Man.” Presidential candidate Robert Kennedy was murdered while campaigning. The US was engaged in the Vietnam War. It was a presidential election year, and civil unrest and violence ravaged major cities, which would take decades to rebuild.

These events spurred singer-songwriter Marvin Gaye to record “What’s Going On” 50 years ago.

As I assume leadership of ALA, we are confronting an unprecedented global pandemic, the like of which has not been seen since 1918; an economic collapse, including the highest unemployment rates since the Great Depression; unjust police killings of unarmed Black people and domestic civil protest not seen since the Sixties; and, like 1968, another pivotal election year. Racial animus and a pandemic make a perfect storm for a revolution, and we are in uncharted territory.

COVID-19 made us stay inside the house, and George Floyd brought us out. What’s going on?

In addition, our Association is in the midst of change. We have a new executive director; we continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our governance structure; we have moved into a new headquarters building; and we continue to be challenged by financial issues.

If someone had told me I would be ALA president at a time of so much change and distress—and that the beginning of my term would be virtual—I would not have thought it was possible. But the reality is that I will serve a mostly virtual presidency, and our new reality will be to connect remotely in a virtual environment.

How do we adjust and thrive in this new reality and focus on ALA’s mission? How will we confront systemic racism and discrimination? How do we support library workers faced with COVID-related unemployment? And what is ALA’s role? Where do we go from here?

I will recognize, accept, and embrace your identity and humanity. I want us all to proactively address the social issues that affect our daily lives: police brutality against Black people and the systemic racism against Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). I want ALA members to accept individual responsibility for our social issues. I want each member to take our values of equity, diversity, and inclusion to their libraries and communities and make a difference. The change we want begins with each of us.

We are not going to end centuries of institutional racism, oppression, and economic, social, and political exclusion in the next year. We must continue to advocate for providing information access to all. We must continue to safeguard our right to read and maintain our privacy. As ALA–Allied Professional Association members, we must continue to support library workers during COVID-19 by sharing their stories.

We must move the needle of equity and justice in our Association and in the libraries where we work and the communities we serve. It may be uncomfortable, but systemic change is necessary. Join me in this fight for social justice and humanity. We must go forward together because we cannot continue to live in tumultuous times.

Black Lives Matter. **ALA**

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**JULIUS C. JEFFERSON JR.** is acting chief of Researcher and Reference Services at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

We must address the social issues that affect our daily lives: police brutality against Black people and the systemic racism against BIPOC.

# Let Our Legacy Be Justice

Confronting racism and prioritizing action



Tracie D. Hall

**W**e are living in extraordinary times. A time when a pandemic has required that we distance ourselves from one another, and a time when the stand against racism and racial violence requires we come together.

Just as there was an outcry across the field to keep our staff and communities safe and protected from COVID-19, so too are we obligated to decry racism. As library and information workers, our resistance in both fights requires resilience.

The future of libraries rests on building institutions and developing leaders who will promote racial equity, confront racism, and recognize the fundamental truth that the Black lives of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Botham Jean, Charleena Lyles, Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, and too many others to name—matter.

In 2026 ALA will turn 150 years old. That birthday will be a milestone in the evolution of our institutional legacy and what's to come.

Let our legacy be justice.

I invite all of us to explore the role of the library as both a vehicle and driver of justice. What is our responsibility to justice when literacy and educational attainment are two key contributors to economic self-sufficiency—and their absence contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, high unemployment, and cyclical poverty?

Because progress and change are the Association's birthrights, I am issuing three calls for urgent action:

**A call for universal broadband.** If the first great wave of library services was concerned with reading literacy, and the second with technological literacy, then the third must be with universalizing broadband access and broadening digital literacy. The United Nations has identified universal internet access—which it defines as bringing 90% of the global population online—as a central goal. Experts say that breakthrough is at least

30 years away. We cannot wait. Alongside access to food, housing, social services, and medical care, access to broadband should be considered a determinant of individual and community viability, and, like the right to read, a human right.

**A call for rapid diversification of the LIS field.** According to surveys of the field, more than 80% of librarians are white. The profession's inability to reflect its current and potential diverse user base limits its resonance and credibility. We must fund and expand library workforce diversity endeavors such as the Spectrum Scholarship Program to grow the ranks of librarians of color. Let's also be intentional in the effort to retain and equitably promote people of color to decision-making positions within the field and the Association.

**A call for additional funding to broaden library and information access.** As we balance on the precipice of another recession, there is a need to resource innovative delivery models, such as a library and information services corps that can extend the reach of libraries even further into our communities. Previous projects—for example, the Works Progress Administration's traveling libraries and the library service systems set up through the Civil Works Administration during the Great Depression—may provide blueprints. Evidence correlates socioeconomic mobility to information access and knowledge building. What if every low-income family was matched with an information navigator? Think of the return on impact investment in such a program could yield.

Embedded in each of these calls for action is the overarching call for justice: the desire for equity, universal well-being, and mutuality.

Where is ALA headed? Let it be toward justice. That is the star on the road map. Email me at [thall@ala.org](mailto:thall@ala.org). I look forward to continuing the conversation. **AL**

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**TRACIE D. HALL** is executive director of the American Library Association.

As we near  
ALA's 150th  
birthday,  
I invite all of  
us to explore  
the role of  
the library as  
both a vehicle  
and driver  
of justice.

🐦 Libraries have always been adaptable and at the forefront of technology! Interested to see what other types of programming pop up online soon.

**@MARIAREILOVA,**  
in response to “Digital Escape Rooms and Other Online Programming” (The Scoop, March 31).

🐦 This is a big, big deal. It’s sad that the three divisions are going away. So something is lost. But something is gained as well, and I’m eager to see where things go.

**@LIBRARYTHINGTIM,**  
in response to “ALCTS, LITA, and LLAMA Members Vote to Create New ALA Division” (The Scoop, April 8).

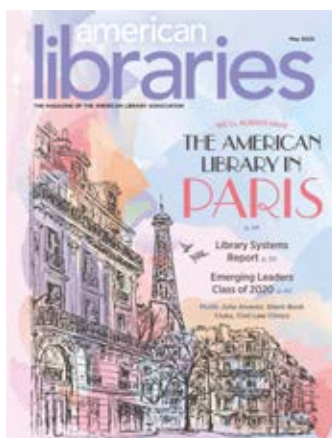
### Shhhh, We’re Reading!

I enjoyed reading about the popularity of Silent Book Clubs in libraries (“The Sound of Silence,” May, p. 16). When reading professional literature, I wonder why librarians are prone to despair that libraries are still viewed as a quiet place. Is quiet study dangerous? Is it a waste of time? Is pondering peacefully a cause of global warming? Hardly.

Libraries offer a product that you can’t buy at any store and a service that is very hard to find. Can you name another indoor place you know that will offer a quiet and safe space to read, study, or contemplate the mysteries of life?

I have seen time and time again the number of people who visit the library to take a break from our noisy society—and it is noisy. Witness the differences we’ve seen while staying home during the pandemic: How much traffic had you gotten used to tuning out? How much did you get done at home while someone else there was watching TV, wanting to engage you in a discussion about something they had just seen online, or generally just interrupting your train of thought?

As a profession, let’s avoid the trap of suggesting that only one or the other end of the spectrum is right and good and true at all times. Making a racket—for whatever reason—is sometimes a great idea. Another great idea is to recognize the value of a safe,



quiet, dedicated reading space. It is a worthwhile product that only libraries sell—for free! Or, rather, for the cost of their keepers’ vigilance. Let’s stay on the job. Our communities appreciate us.

**Marie Day**  
Kennesaw, Georgia

### Until Next Year

Although I know it was a difficult decision, I commend American Library Association (ALA) leadership for making the right decision: to cancel the 2020 Annual Conference and Exhibition in these uncertain times. We have closed Knox County (Ind.) Public Library under the guidance of the Knox County health officer, consistent with Gov. Eric Holcomb’s school closure directive.

I know that doing the right thing for the right reason can be tough and may cause some sleepless nights. As president of the library’s board of trustees, I have had to make a hard decision regarding closures. However, one person getting sick from walking through our doors or attending the conference is one too many; it is inhumane, a form of collateral

damage that is simply not acceptable in a civilized world.

Though I am going to miss attending the event, I applaud ALA leadership’s strength in making the right choice to cancel the conference. Thank you.

**Yvette Kirchoff**  
Vincennes, Indiana

### Thanks, Library Heroes

Never has the word “public” been as relevant for public libraries as it is during the COVID-19 pandemic (“Other [Pandemic] Duties as Assigned,” The Scoop, April 24). Even with most libraries closed, public library staffers are stepping up to provide essential services that fall through the cracks, from assistance with unemployment and food aid to services for the homeless and more. Public libraries are where the public goes for help, whatever form that help takes.

Public librarians are always key pillars of their communities, but their level of service is above and beyond right now, especially in areas where social services are not available or cannot keep up with the emergent demand brought on by this crisis. Front-line librarians should be commended for their service, but they also need and deserve health and safety support and protection from government and administration.

All too often, public library staffers are considered essential but also expendable—their sacrifices expected, with no other

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agencies providing similar support. Public libraries performing incredible feats for their communities are more than heroic; it's a call to other public entities to step forward and do the same.

Anne Meyers  
Miami

### A Hazardous Path

No library worker should be forced to choose between getting paid and using sick leave or vacation time ("Staying Open during COVID-19," The Scoop, March 23). Anyone who does work should get hazard pay.

David Broughall  
Mississauga, Ontario

### The Limits of Free Speech

After reading "When Speech Isn't Free" (May, p. 48), I was disappointed with Meredith Farkas's disingenuous characterization of the Women's Liberation Front (WoLF) and its supporters. Though careful to never directly call it a hate group, the author describes WoLF in nearly the same breath as neo-Nazis and the Klan.

I am not a member of WoLF and do not claim to speak for them. But, like many women, I share their concerns.

We define sex as an immutable characteristic and *gender* as the restrictive social roles imposed on people due to sex. We do not argue that transgender individuals do not exist, but that they remain biologically male or female, regardless of how they present. We worry that replacing sex with gender identity in law will be detrimental to the rights women have worked so hard to achieve.

Farkas discusses the silencing of marginalized people at some length but ignores the abuse and threats of violence the organizers encounter regularly. How can anyone subjected to that gauntlet, for having the temerity to speak, be considered privileged or powerful?

Katie Gilmer  
Lebanon, Virginia

Before I read the comments on "When Speech Isn't Free," I knew what sort of direction they would take. The author, whom I consider a thoughtful and inclusive person, is promoting what seems to be a modern heresy: that not all speech is equal and that some of it should be rejected.

I know many people today think that a free dialogue will bring out the best in people, creating kumbaya moments around a communal campfire. Spending even a few seconds on Twitter shows that free speech brings out both the best and the absolute worst in people.

Libraries need to establish strong criteria when they make decisions about what speech will be heard and what will not. That is not an easy task, but it should address speech that promotes or suggests hatred and othering. We've all seen what unbridled free speech has done to the grand dream of social media. We have to think about this before we simply open the doors.

William Badke  
Langley, British Columbia

### CORRECTION

In "A New Tech Revolution" (May, p. 49), *American Libraries* used a photo of Bohyun Kim without her permission. We regret the error.

## What You're Reading

1

**2020 Library Systems Report** Marshall Breeding's annual review reveals fresh opportunities amid industry consolidation. [bit.ly/AL-LSR2020](https://bit.ly/AL-LSR2020)

2

**The Sound of Silence** Silent Book Clubs let librarians engage less-social readers of all ages with low-cost, low-tech programming. [bit.ly/AL-SilentBook](https://bit.ly/AL-SilentBook)

3

**Emerging Leaders** Meet the class of 2020 and read their ideas on the future of the profession. [bit.ly/AL-Emerging20](https://bit.ly/AL-Emerging20)

## In Case You Missed It

**Reflections on Race and Racism** ALA affiliate and division leaders speak out on their experiences in the wake of global protests and calls for change. [bit.ly/AL-Reflections](https://bit.ly/AL-Reflections)



**ALA Virtual: Community through Connection** Read our team coverage of ALA's first-ever online-only member event. [bit.ly/AL-Virtual20](https://bit.ly/AL-Virtual20)

**Do Online Storytimes Violate Copyright?** Our latest Letters of the Law column tackles fair use, remote programming, and census privacy. [bit.ly/AL-LetterLaw5](https://bit.ly/AL-LetterLaw5)

**COVID-19** Our ongoing coverage of libraries and the pandemic, from online summer reading programs to contact tracing to the effects of furloughs. [bit.ly/AL-COVID-19](https://bit.ly/AL-COVID-19)

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See the best new and renovated libraries in our **Library Design Showcase**.

ALA's **2020 Award Winners** honor excellence and leadership in the profession.

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## ALA Stands with Black Caucus against Racism, Racially Motivated Violence

Against a backdrop of widespread protest and civil unrest across the world, the American Library Association's (ALA) Executive Board announced that it stands with the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) in condemning violence and racism toward Black people and all people of color.

In a May 28 statement, endorsed by ALA's Executive Board, BCALA stated it decries the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Department officers and cited Floyd's death as "the latest in a long line of recent and historical violence against Black people in the United States."

The statement urged members to take "proactive and preventative measures in the fight against racism," such as participating in protests and other forms of activism, promoting and creating antiracist media content, becoming actively engaged in local policy development, exercising the right to vote, or "running for office to be a voice for historically disenfranchised groups."

The ALA Executive Board similarly calls on the entire Association to work against racial bias and prejudice actively and

intentionally through one or more of these means. Read the full statement at [bit.ly/AL-BCALASTatement](https://bit.ly/AL-BCALASTatement).

In its June 1 statement, the ALA Executive Board stated: "[We stand] in solidarity with BCALA, with library workers, with library users, and with communities who are susceptible to threats and acts of prejudice and violence. The pervasive racism present in our nation denies its residents equal rights and equal access and as such is a barrier to the goals of this association and to the wider profession.

"Wherever it resides, racism leads to degradation. It weakens our institutions and destroys our communities and is one of the greatest obstacles to the American Library Association's mission 'to enhance learning and ensure access to information to all.' Diversity is one of ALA's key commitments and guiding principles. For this reason, the Executive Board calls on library and information services leaders, staff, and advocates of all races and backgrounds to abolish racism against Black people and against all people of color." ●

### More Library Census Equity Fund Grants Awarded

In November, more than 500 libraries of all types submitted applications for Library Census Equity Fund mini-grants of \$2,000 each to bolster their service to hard-to-count communities and help achieve a complete count in the 2020 Census.

ALA awarded 59 mini-grants in December 2019 and has continued to grant more as funding allows. An additional 21 mini-grants were awarded on April 9 with support from the LOR Foundation, and 13 more a few days later with support from Capital One. Recipients were chosen by members of the selection committee established by ALA's 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force.

Read how libraries have begun to use these funds at [bit.ly/AL-CensusGrants](https://bit.ly/AL-CensusGrants). Residents can respond to the census through August 14.

To learn more about ALA resources for libraries supporting a complete count, visit [ala.org/census](https://ala.org/census). Follow the conversation on social media with #CountOnLibraries.

### ACRL 2021 Keynote Speakers Announced

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) announced the opening and closing keynote speakers for its 2021 conference, "Ascending into an Open Future," to be held April 14–17 in Seattle.

Tressie McMillan Cottom, author of *Thick: and Other Essays* (The New Press, 2019) and finalist for the 2019



Tressie McMillan Cottom



Mona Chalabi

National Book Award, will deliver the opening keynote on April 14. She cohosts the *Hear to Slay* podcast with Roxane Gay, and in July joins the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science as associate professor.

The closing keynote, on April 17, will be delivered by journalist Mona Chalabi, data editor of *The Guardian*. She formerly worked as a statistical analyst for the United Nations and for data website FiveThirtyEight. Her data illustrations have been exhibited by the

# ALA Executive Board Condemns Police Violence

In a June 11 statement, ALA condemned police violence against people of color, protesters, and journalists. The statement reads, in part:

"The American Library Association is deeply saddened by the death of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department, as well as the killings by police or vigilantes of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, and far too many others. We recognize 'that institutionalized inequities based on race are embedded into our society and are reinforced through social institutions' [ALA Policy Manual, B.3.2] and we condemn the systemic racism and violence that Black people, Indigenous people, and all people of color experience on a daily basis in our inequitable society.

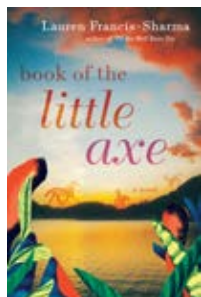
"We also condemn the violence that protesters and journalists across the country are facing while exercising their First Amendment rights. The former raise their voices to demand justice; the latter seek to document and share history as it is being made.

"ALA has long sought to safeguard the rights of library users, libraries, and librarians, in accordance with the First Amendment to the US Constitution, and the Association's leadership has pledged to 'support antiracism work within the broader society by monitoring, evaluating, and advocating for human rights and equity legislation, regulations, policy, and practice' [ALA Policy Manual, B.3.3]." ●

Design Museum and commended by the Royal Statistical Society.

## Libraries Transform Book Pick

ALA's Libraries Transform Book Pick returns September 14–28 with its second ebook selection: *Book of the Little Axe* by Lauren Francis-Sharma (Atlantic



Monthly Press, 2020). Ambitious and masterfully wrought, the story spans decades and oceans, moving from Trinidad to the American West during the tumultuous days

of warring colonial powers and westward expansion.

Ebook copies of *Book of the Little Axe* will be available for simultaneous download without waitlists or holds through US public libraries using OverDrive. The Book Pick is a digital reading program that connects readers nationwide by offering free access to the same ebook through public libraries.

## New Joint Task Force on Cultural Competencies

In a May 18 statement, ACRL, the Association of Research Libraries, ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS), and the Public Library Association (PLA) announced the formation of the Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force.

The 12-member task force is charged with creating a framework for cultural

proficiencies in racial equity that can be used in public and academic libraries. It will circulate drafts of the framework for public comment and incorporate revisions before a final document is submitted to the associations in summer 2021. Requests for comments will be communicated through each of the four groups' communication channels.

## The Power Project Receives AASL Honor for Social Justice

The Power Project, an initiative of the Chinese American International School in San Francisco, is the recipient of the 2020 American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Roald Dahl's Miss Honey Social Justice Award. The award recognizes collaboration between school librarians and teachers in the

## CALENDAR

SEPT.

### Library Card Sign-Up Month

[ala.org/librarycardsignup](http://ala.org/librarycardsignup)

SEPT. 27–OCT. 3

### Banned Books Week

[ala.org/bbooks](http://ala.org/bbooks)

SEPT. 30

### Banned Websites Awareness Day

[ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad](http://ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad)

OCT. 1–3

### ALSC National Institute

[ala.org/alsc/institute](http://ala.org/alsc/institute)

OCT. 18–24

### National Friends of Libraries Week

[bit.ly/alafolweek](http://bit.ly/alafolweek)

OCT. 19–25

### Open Access Week

[openaccessweek.org](http://openaccessweek.org)

NOV. 6–8

### YALSA Young Adult Services Symposium

[ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium](http://ala.org/yalsa/yasymposium)

NOV. 18 & 20

### 2020 Core Virtual Forum

[core.ala.org](http://core.ala.org)

instruction of social justice using school library resources.

During the monthlong capstone experience, learners research a current social justice movement, tie the movement to historic events and changemakers in the curriculum, and take participatory local action in the movement.

The Power Project and other AASL award winners will be honored during a virtual awards ceremony this fall.

### **GameRT Awards First Game On! Grant**

The Games and Gaming Round Table (GameRT) of ALA on April 29 named Prairie State College Library (PSCL) in Chicago Heights, Illinois, as the recipient of its inaugural Game On! Grant. GameRT introduced the grant program in January to provide an opportunity for a library to fund gaming programs and collections in its community. Libraries of any type are eligible to apply.

The winning application from PSCL proposed expanding the library's outreach and engagement activities in an effort to provide programming opportunities that focus on creating a "third space" for students to encourage collaboration, relaxation, critical thinking, and play. PSCL was awarded a \$500 grant, though future grants may be split between two winners.

### **First of Communities Engagement Grants Awarded**

ALA's Public Programs Office (PPO) has awarded its first Libraries Transform Communities Engagement Grant to Milwaukee Public Library for its Deaf Storyslam program, a free event in which deaf individuals of varying backgrounds share personal experiences with the community.

The \$2,000 grant will help launch the program's second wave, in which the library will seek to increase the

participation of deaf community members in the planning process, train additional community members as storytelling coaches, increase attendance, and continue to offer the program in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language.

Learn more at [bit.ly/AL-LTCEG](https://bit.ly/AL-LTCEG).

### **New STEAM Funding and Exhibits for Rural Libraries**

PPO announced on May 1 a new initiative to engage public library workers in rural communities and bring culturally inclusive STEAM programming and exhibitions to their patrons, especially Latinx populations, which are historically underserved and underrepresented in these fields.

Through the STAR Net STEAM Equity Project, 12 public libraries will receive \$15,000 over four years to participate in professional development activities and support community partnerships.

The initiative is offered in collaboration with ALA by the National Center for Interactive Learning at Twin Cities PBS, the Space Science Institute, Institute for Learning Innovation, the National Science Foundation, and Education Development Center. Visit [bit.ly/AL-STEAMEquity](https://bit.ly/AL-STEAMEquity) to learn more and apply by July 20.

### **Landmark Status Rescinded**

After a unanimous vote on June 12, the five-member executive board of United for Libraries rescinded the Literary Landmark status of Beauvoir, the house of Confederacy president Jefferson Davis, after an inquiry from website Book Riot.

United for Libraries also voted to establish a joint working group with ODLOS to review both the guidelines for issuing Literary Landmark designation and the status of existing landmarks.

"United for Libraries recognizes that significant efforts are needed on our part as an organization to develop truly antiracist initiatives and become an inclusive and diverse organization," the division's statement reads. "Our board

## ALA Condemns Racism Tied to COVID-19 Pandemic

ALA's Executive Board stands with the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA) in condemning xenophobia and racism linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ALA Executive Board endorses APALA's March 13 statement, in which it "unequivocally denounce[d] the rise in racism and xenophobia against Asians and Asian/Pacific Americans in the wake of the outbreak of COVID-19 (caused by the novel coronavirus). Members of APALA, our library community, and the users we serve have reported a rise in racial discrimination, bigotry, and attacks aimed at people of Asian and Asian/Pacific American backgrounds due to fear, ignorance, and misinformation about the coronavirus." Read the full text of the statement at [bit.ly/AL-APALASTatement](https://bit.ly/AL-APALASTatement).

A May article in *Against the Grain*, an LIS trade publication, demonstrated that these acts of racism and xenophobia can come from within our own community. The Executive Board also endorses APALA and the Chinese American Librarians Association's May 15 letter to the editor of *Against the Grain*, and thanks both associations for the advocacy and work on behalf of their communities.

The Executive Board invites ALA members, library community members, and library institutions to join them in signing APALA's pledge at [bit.ly/AL-APALAPledge](https://bit.ly/AL-APALAPledge). ●



is committed to doing this work and putting ideals into action.”

### New Member Benefit Unveiled

ALA Member Relations and Services has announced member-exclusive access to two ALA Publishing eLearning courses on timely topics.

“Mindfulness for Librarians: Handling Stress and Thriving Under Pressure” addresses burnout theory and the impact it has on librarians and library workers, library users, and organizations. Participants are introduced to mindfulness and learn techniques to put theory into practice.

“Fighting Fake News with Information Literacy” covers techniques and strategies for teaching how to analyze and critique news and media sources.

Members can now use their ALA login info to access these courses at [bit.ly/AL-MRSbenefit](https://bit.ly/AL-MRSbenefit). **AL**

## New Emergency Funds to Support Programming

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded ALA \$300,000 in emergency relief funds to help libraries present virtual and socially distanced programming for their communities. All content and resources will be freely available on [ProgrammingLibrarian.org](https://ProgrammingLibrarian.org), a PPO website.

The funding, awarded through the NEH Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, will also support the continuation of ALA's national humanities programming initiatives, which had been suspended because of the pandemic. These include traveling exhibitions; film, reading, and discussion programs; and measurement and evaluation projects. Funded activities will be carried out from June through December.

“As library workers everywhere can attest, COVID-19 has pushed libraries into uncharted terrain, especially in regard to programming—a vital and growing part of library work,” said ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall in a June 19 statement. “This timely and generous NEH CARES support enables ALA to generate the ideas and start the conversations that libraries need to remain a central resource and a catalytic force within their communities in this new reality.” ●

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- **access** major new releases, historical information, and data
- **discover** an extensive archive with cutting-edge financial research
- **find** the latest research on the economic impact of COVID-19

**[eLibrary.IMF.org](https://eLibrary.IMF.org)**

I N T E R N A T I O N A L M O N E T A R Y F U N D

# Yaa Gyasi

Author's latest work deals with addiction, depression, and faith



When it was published in 2016, Yaa Gyasi's first novel *Homegoing* was lauded for its broad historical, geographical, and generational sweep, tracing a sprawling family tree back to two half-sisters in 18th-century Ghana. *Transcendent Kingdom* (Knopf, September) also explores the Ghanaian-American immigrant experience, this time through the eyes of a neuroscientist named Gifty, who turns to a discipline called optogenetics to make sense of family tragedies and an upbringing immersed in the racism and evangelism of the American South.

BY Sallyann Price

**One of the central themes of *Transcendent Kingdom* is the tension between science and faith.**

**How did you approach the science aspect?** Talking to scientists, many of them conceptualized their work as a series of questions, as trying to get closer to something that's ineffable. That mapped onto the ways that I think about other things I'm interested in, such as religion. Even the act of fiction writing is similar to that idea—of trying to get closer to something through ques-

#### MORE ONLINE

For the extended interview, visit [bit.ly/al-Gyasi](http://bit.ly/al-Gyasi).

tioning. Once I was able to see those connections, the science opened up in

a way that surprised me. It was one of the most interesting research experiences I've had.

**What was your research process like for this book?**

The science in the book is based on the research of my close friend who's a neuroscientist, so I started with her. Whenever I would talk to her about her work, before I started writing this book, she would colloquially explain her research as being about reward-seeking behavior, and she then would say she studies addiction and depression. That was her

way of giving me the layman's version of what this research entails: looking at diseases wherein someone is doing a lot of reward-seeking even at great cost—the addiction side of it—versus not doing very much reward-seeking even when there would be great benefit, and that was the depression side of it.

**What role did libraries play in your research process? Do you have a favorite library?**

I wrote a lot of this book on a fellowship at the American Academy in Berlin, and the librarian there was open to getting us anything we needed through the German library system. I definitely took advantage of that for this book. A favorite library for me, in particular, is the Bailey Cove branch of the Huntsville–Madison County (Ala.) Public Library, where I spent probably at least 60% of my childhood.

**How did you wind up setting the novel in Alabama?**

I'm always interested in writing about place; it's one of the things I'm really fascinated by,


in part because I moved around so much growing up and recognized at a pretty young age that place accounted for a great deal of one's political ideologies, one's cultural interests. To me, it's always one of the things I think about most, how place informs character and how place informs beliefs. For this book, which has such a specific look at the evangelical community, I don't think I could have set it anywhere else than in the South.

**What role do you see fiction playing in the national discourse happening now around racism and policing?**

I hate when people say things about how fiction “humanizes people” or “teaches empathy.” You should already see Black people and characters as humans. At the same time, one of the unique things fiction provides us is the opportunity to step into the consciousness of other people, albeit invented people. That's valuable right now. The more fiction that we read, the more opportunities we have to think about people fully, differently, to recognize beauty, the better off we always will be. **AL**



Photo: Peter Hurley/Vilek Foundation



“I miss not caring who had my book last, and even delighting in the evidence left behind by previous readers: the to-do list tucked between the pages, the bookmark from another era. Who knows how we’ll feel about sharing books with strangers in the future?”

AMY SHEARN, “I Miss Libraries,” *Human Parts*, April 28.

“Anticipating what the public will expect, Marcellus Turner [executive director of Seattle Public Library] described how his pandemic-era trips to Target and grocery stores have become research trips. He notes the Plexiglas, and he observes the processes and standards for health and safety for what that means for the future of the Seattle libraries. What can they model?”

DEBORAH FALLOWS, “The Post-Pandemic Future of Libraries,” *The Atlantic*, May 12.

“I LOVE MAKING PEOPLE SMILE! I’VE TALKED TO PEOPLE WHO ARE HAVING A HARD TIME BEING SECLUDED INSIDE THEIR HOMES DUE TO THE VIRUS. I CAN HEAR THE SOUND OF RELIEF IN THEIR VOICES WHEN THEY REALIZE THE LIBRARY STAFF IS REACHING OUT TO THEM. THEY ARE VERY SURPRISED AND THANKFUL THAT WE CARE.”

ABIGAIL WATTS, part-time customer service specialist at Fort Worth (Tex.) Public Library’s Central branch, in “Library Staff’s Phone Calls Provide Personal Touch for Senior Citizens,” [fortworthtexas.gov](http://fortworthtexas.gov), May 4.

“As part of their criticism of the April 18 report, librarians from around the country pointed out that many of them are de facto social workers, community organizers, and even first responders. They stand next to people to help them on the libraries’ free computers, give out food, and many have even been trained to administer the opioid-antagonist drug Narcan to prevent fatal overdoses.”

LEAH ROSENBAUM, “Johns Hopkins Changed Its Guidance on Reopening the Economy after Pushback from Librarians,” *Forbes*, April 23.

“[San Francisco Public Library Program Manager Jana] De Brauwere’s Spanish proficiency made her a strong candidate for the task of reaching out to contacts, given the disease’s disproportionate impact on Bay Area Latinos. She already understood the importance of confidentiality, a tenet of the American Library Association’s code of ethics. And part of her professional training had included reference interviews, which use open-ended questions to determine what information a patron wants to know.”

MEERA JAGANNATHAN, “Librarians Are Being Enlisted to Help in the Battle against Coronavirus—How You, Too, Can Get a Contact-Tracer Job,” *MarketWatch*, May 9.



Eletha Davis, mobile library services outreach manager at Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library, drives a van that provides Wi-Fi to the community.

# Advancing Digital Equity

Public librarians strategize best ways to reach patrons during COVID-19

**I**n an April 23 Public Library Association (PLA) webinar, “Public Libraries Respond to COVID-19: Strategies for Advancing Digital Equity Now,” three public librarians shared their experiences with everything from lending laptops and mobile hotspots to low-tech solutions like using sandwich boards and direct mail to advertise library services.

Photo: Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library



Larra Clark, deputy director of PLA and the American Library Association's Public Policy and Advocacy Office, moderated the event, joined by Betsy Fowler, director of Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library; Misty Hawkins, director of Arkansas River Valley Regional Library System; and Julie Walker, state librarian for the Georgia Public Library Service.

As nearly every aspect of our lives moves online, approximately 20 million people still lack home broadband access. But with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing building closures, how are library workers reaching their digitally disconnected patrons to ensure equality?

Clark cited key findings from PLA's March 2020 survey ([bit.ly/PLA-DigitalEquity](https://bit.ly/PLA-DigitalEquity)) of 2,545 library workers:



**93%**

leave their Wi-Fi on when their building is closed.



**44%**

have located Wi-Fi access points to improve access outside library buildings.



**23%**

check out mobile hotspots to patrons.

In addition, a small number of libraries are deploying their library vehicles with hotspots to provide community internet access.

**Tell us a little about your library and share one or two new programs or services you've begun in the last few months to improve internet access during this crisis.**

**BETSY FOWLER:** Williamsburg (Va.) Regional Library serves a population of approximately 90,000—the city of Williamsburg and some very affluent suburbs around it, farming communities, working-class communities, historically disadvantaged communities, and the two counties around Williamsburg.



Betsy Fowler

We have introduced a mobile Wi-Fi community hotspot program using two of our outreach vans. We've put two Wi-Fi devices on each one, they have a radius of about 30 feet, and they serve 15 devices each. Working with the schools, we've mapped out a schedule of approximately 25 different locations where people were doing community food giveaways, including schools, grocery store parking lots, dollar-store parking lots, and other locations where we felt there was demand. We're going out six days a week, and each stop is for two hours. We've been building a real usership as we get the word out in a variety of ways to the community.

We also put out a sandwich board and a banner at each stop. Most of the users are sitting in their cars. We have a few on foot, and we put a reminder on the sandwich board to please observe social distancing practices. We have a cell number posted so they can call the driver and ask questions if they need help. We also boosted our Wi-Fi access in our buildings, with outdoor access points, range extenders, and antennas to cover as large an area as possible around the buildings.

**MISTY HAWKINS:** We have seven libraries in the four counties that make up the Arkansas River Valley Regional Library System. That's approximately 3,000 square miles and a population of 90,000. We are very small and very rural, and luckily, our previous director had already started working on a mobile printing app. We knew that if



Misty Hawkins

we were not able to have our doors open, that was going to be a service that we needed to provide using our Wi-Fi. Our patrons are able to print [inside our building] while they're outside using their laptop or mobile device. Our staffers pass [printouts] through the door, and they never have to come in face-to-face contact with any of our patrons.

**JULIE WALKER:** We have 408 public libraries in 159 counties in Georgia. We are a big state with some large rural areas, and a vast number of urban libraries in our large cities as well.

My agency is a unit of the University System of Georgia. That's a unique position for a state library, and it does come with a lot of advantages. We were keenly aware of the plight of the 333,000 college students on our 26 public campuses who moved to online instruction in mid-March, as did our K-12 schools.

Because we work closely with our state legislature and other state agencies to address broadband issues in Georgia, we knew it would be difficult for our students to complete online coursework. We worked with our libraries to make sure their Wi-Fi would be accessible outside their buildings, and we gave grants to about 70 that did not have the technology ready to offer that service.

Now, 400 of our libraries offer Wi-Fi access outside the building; most of them do not require a password. We published a map ([bit.ly/GeorgiaWiFi](http://bit.ly/GeorgiaWiFi)) of all libraries so people could locate the library nearest to them that was offering this service. And when you click on a location, you get a link to sign up for an electronic card.

We also worked with the governor's office, the Georgia Technology Authority, and the Department of Community Affairs to contribute our locations to a larger map of public Wi-Fi sites.

The other immediate issue we found had to do with the college students who were required to complete online coursework but didn't have devices and were trying to work on smartphones. We had several libraries across the



Julie Walker

**"I don't think we have really questioned whether people have a library card or not. They'll have a library card after this, I can guarantee it."**

**MISTY HAWKINS**, director of Arkansas River Valley Regional Library System

state that already circulated Chromebook laptops, and we had about 250 in the inventory. We scrambled to purchase every Chromebook we could get our hands on and added about 250 more.

**Can each of you talk about how you are making these services visible to your patrons and the community, particularly if they're not connected, but also for people who may have some online access, even if just through their cellphone?**

**WALKER:** We are using social media as much as we possibly can. We created a "Library Everywhere" page on our website where we've curated all the information. We are sharing it with our K-12 schools, our colleges, other state agencies. I've done newspaper and television interviews; we had a front-page story in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* about the first student who got a Chromebook, which was really exciting, and it also touched on our Wi-Fi access as well.

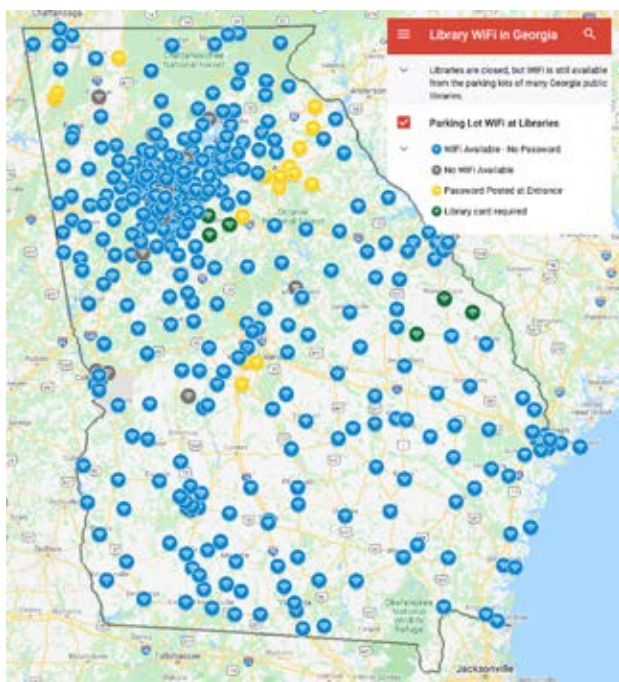
**HAWKINS:** We're small, we're rural, and we take to the radio station and the newspaper probably just as much as we do social media because we have to reach such a large space, and people don't have internet. Arkansas is ranked 48 out of 50 states in internet connectivity.

We made yard signs that say LIBRARY WI-FI ZONE—NO PASSWORD REQUIRED and placed them at every library branch. That was very simple, and it was cost-effective, and we just needed people to know. Also, word of mouth has been great.

**FOWLER:** We've thrown the net out pretty wide. We're using the library windows as giant bulletin boards, so we're blowing up big posters with all the information if people are around the buildings. We had great coverage from the TV station in Norfolk, big newspaper stories.

But then we were really looking at how we could reach the communities that needed it most, which probably weren't reading the newspaper or looking at social media or our web page. And we have several different ways—the local bus service gave us free advertising space, so we are advertising in all 20 buses that are circulating through the region right now. We are sending targeted postcards to every address in specific neighborhoods because we found that that kind of direct mailing is very effective. The school foundation offered to pay the postage.

The Williamsburg Health Foundation helped us print thousands of fliers to go in all the food distribution bags



Georgia Public Library Service created a Google map of libraries offering Wi-Fi access outside of their buildings.

that are going out in the community. And we are also leaning heavily on our community partnerships with the jurisdictions, with all the nonprofits, to help get the word out as well.

**Talk a little bit about your partners and collaborators. Any best practices? What have you had to do to make it happen?**

**WALKER:** We have been working with several other state agencies, particularly on our big, statewide Wi-Fi map, and they are really helping us get the word out. We've always partnered with our public radio stations, which is another wonderful way we're getting the word out.

We had a strong strategic partnership unit in our agency for a long time, where we offer passes to our state parks, to Zoo Atlanta, to some of our professional sports teams, to a lot of museums, so we are working with them on some virtual museum tours and virtual experiences for students. We already had those relationships in place, so we didn't have to build those from the ground up.

We also sit on a lot of our statewide literary committees with our Department of Education and our Department of Early Care and Learning, so those built-in relationships have helped us to quickly determine what the needs of those students and teachers are.

And then of course there's our parent agency, the University System of Georgia. Just being integrated in that has really made us super-aware of the needs and how we can play a part in meeting those.

**HAWKINS:** Each branch manager has been doing a fantastic job reaching out in their individual community and trying to assess the needs. But I will say, at a regional level, we wouldn't have Wi-Fi to publicize if we didn't have

E-Rate. Because a year ago, without fiber internet connectivity, our branches didn't have that [high-speed broadband]. Without E-Rate, and without our partners at our state library, it wouldn't have been possible.

**FOWLER:** Our Friends of the Library were the initial purchasers of the Wi-Fi, and they have stood behind us in our outreach efforts. We have a great web of nonprofits and cooperative arrangements with a lot of groups.

Because we were also spearheading the Complete Count Committee locally for the census, we made a lot of new contacts, especially with local churches. We built up this huge email list of local pastors and other trusted community leaders, and we're using that as well in this effort.

**What are you doing in your outreach, your materials, or anything online for folks who may not have English as their first language?**

**HAWKINS:** All our signage is translated into Spanish because of our demographics in two of our counties. Anything we produce on our front doors or in the newspaper, we partner with our local literacy council to translate that for us.

**WALKER:** Our libraries do the same thing. We do have a lot of Spanish speakers in Georgia, and so many of our libraries are very good at making sure their websites and all their fliers and hand-outs are in multiple languages as well. That's a big benefit of being with the university system.

**FOWLER:** One county that our HR department falls under allows staffers who have special language skills to take a test, and if they score high enough, they get a slight bump in their pay to do translations for the library. So we have two staff members who can translate all our fliers and materials. And we also have a very vibrant Literacy for Life organization, which has been comprehensive in working with immigrant populations and new arrivals in the community to get the word out.

**Are programs and services widely available to anyone, or do they need a current library card?**

**HAWKINS:** We now have an option for an online library card application, but at this time, I don't think we have really questioned whether people have a library card or not. This isn't the time; they'll have a library card after this, I can guarantee it.

**FOWLER:** We don't have a password; there's no restrictions to accessing the Wi-Fi. We're really pushing our digital materials and resources and have been investing heavily in them. We wanted to make sure there were no barriers to access. **AL**


# ALA Presidential Citations honor forward-thinking global libraries

by Phil Morehart

**F**our libraries earned this year's American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects. Their projects included smartphone training for seniors, multicultural events, a country-wide reading festival, and programming to raise awareness of Indigenous populations and their perspectives and needs.

The Presidential Citations began as an initiative of former ALA President Lorie Roy (2007–2008). Presented by the International Relations Round Table, the awards recognize exemplary services and projects that draw attention to the potential for library services to create positive change, demonstrate sustainability, and provide a model for others.

The winners are: Fran Galović Public Library in Koprivnica, Croatia; Guangzhou Library in Guangzhou, China; National Central Library in Taipei City, Taiwan; and Vancouver Island Regional Library in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Interested in nominating a project for 2021? The deadline is January 1. More information can be found at [ala.org/irrt](https://ala.org/irrt). 

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**PHIL MOREHART** is senior editor of *American Libraries*.

INTERNATIONAL  
INNOVATIVE





Photos: National Central Library in Taipei City, Taiwan

## The Taiwan Reading Festival

**National Central Library  
in Taipei City, Taiwan**

The Taiwan Reading Festival, started in 2013 by the National Central Library, is the country's largest reading festival. Fifty-two libraries and more than 100 organizations participate, holding reading-related activities across the country. The designing and planning of these events also offer library staffers added opportunities for professional growth and development.



National Central Library is being recognized for:

- initiating a service that has become a national reading brand in Taiwan and has enhanced the nation's reading appreciation
- incorporating STEAM, early literacy initiatives, and the country's new curriculum for elementary and secondary schools into festival events to help develop lifelong learners
- encouraging interaction and partnerships between libraries, schools, publishers, book clubs, foundations, bookstores, and bloggers and offering ways to help people experience reading
- attracting government funding to support reading festivals in Taiwan ●



# Journey around the World in Guangzhou Library

**Guangzhou Library  
in Guangzhou, China**

For the past three years, the Journey around the World in Guangzhou Library project has connected Guangzhou residents with different cultures. To date, the library has collaborated with 12 countries on 13 events for 50-plus activities, ranging from programs on Belgian singer-songwriter Jacques Brel and Italian polymath Leonardo da Vinci to Ecuadorian graffiti art and the history of the Silk Road. The project has helped broaden understanding between Guangzhou and its international visitors and nourish cultural openness.

Guangzhou Library is being recognized for:

- coordinating with a range of outside institutions, including the Guangzhou Foreign Affairs Office, foreign consulates in Guangzhou, cultural and educational institutions, and the foreign affairs departments, libraries, media, and other cultural advocacy partners of Guangzhou's sister cities
- attracting more than 100,000 visitors to its 13 events
- establishing a model of sustainability and leadership for other libraries in the Pearl River Delta Metropolitan Region of China and beyond ●



Photo: Guangzhou Library in Guangzhou, China

## Indigenous Voices Project

**Vancouver Island Regional  
Library in Nanaimo,  
British Columbia**

Since its launch in 2018, Vancouver Island Regional Library's Indigenous Voices Project has partnered with First Nations elders across the library's service area to create programming that celebrates and shares the diversity and perspectives of Vancouver Island and increases community understanding and closeness. The programs have included sessions on reconciliation and residential schools, medicine walks to

discover healing uses of local plants, drum-making classes, and smudging ceremonies.

Vancouver Island Regional Library is being recognized for:

- doing the community-building work of understanding Vancouver Island's people, geography, and traditions to develop a program that creates greater understanding and facilitates closer community ties





## “Smartphone? Yes, Please!” Face-to-Face Training for Seniors

**Fran Galović  
Public Library in  
Koprivnica, Croatia**

Since 2018, Fran Galović Public Library has offered weekly smartphone training for senior citizens, taught by high school students. The informal, one-on-one sessions have helped seniors learn to communicate with family and friends, many of whom have emigrated out of the country.

Fran Galović Public Library is being recognized for:

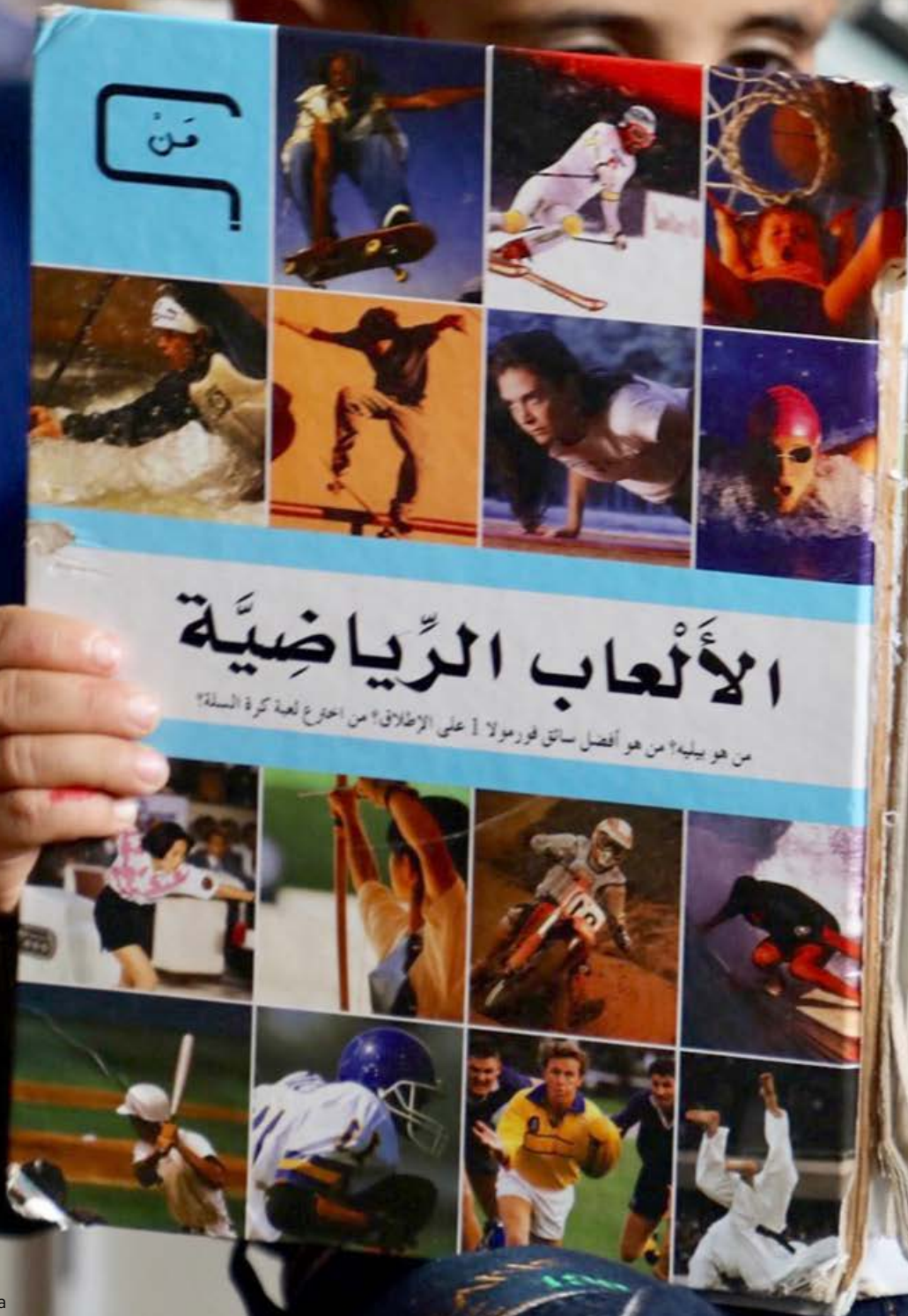
- successfully helping Koprivnica’s senior population fight loneliness

and depression resulting from changing demographics and emigration

- creating positive change in the lives of seniors, particularly regarding digital inclusion, social inclusion, and social cohesion through intergenerational collaboration
- introducing a sustainable, free service staffed by volunteers that can be adopted by other libraries •

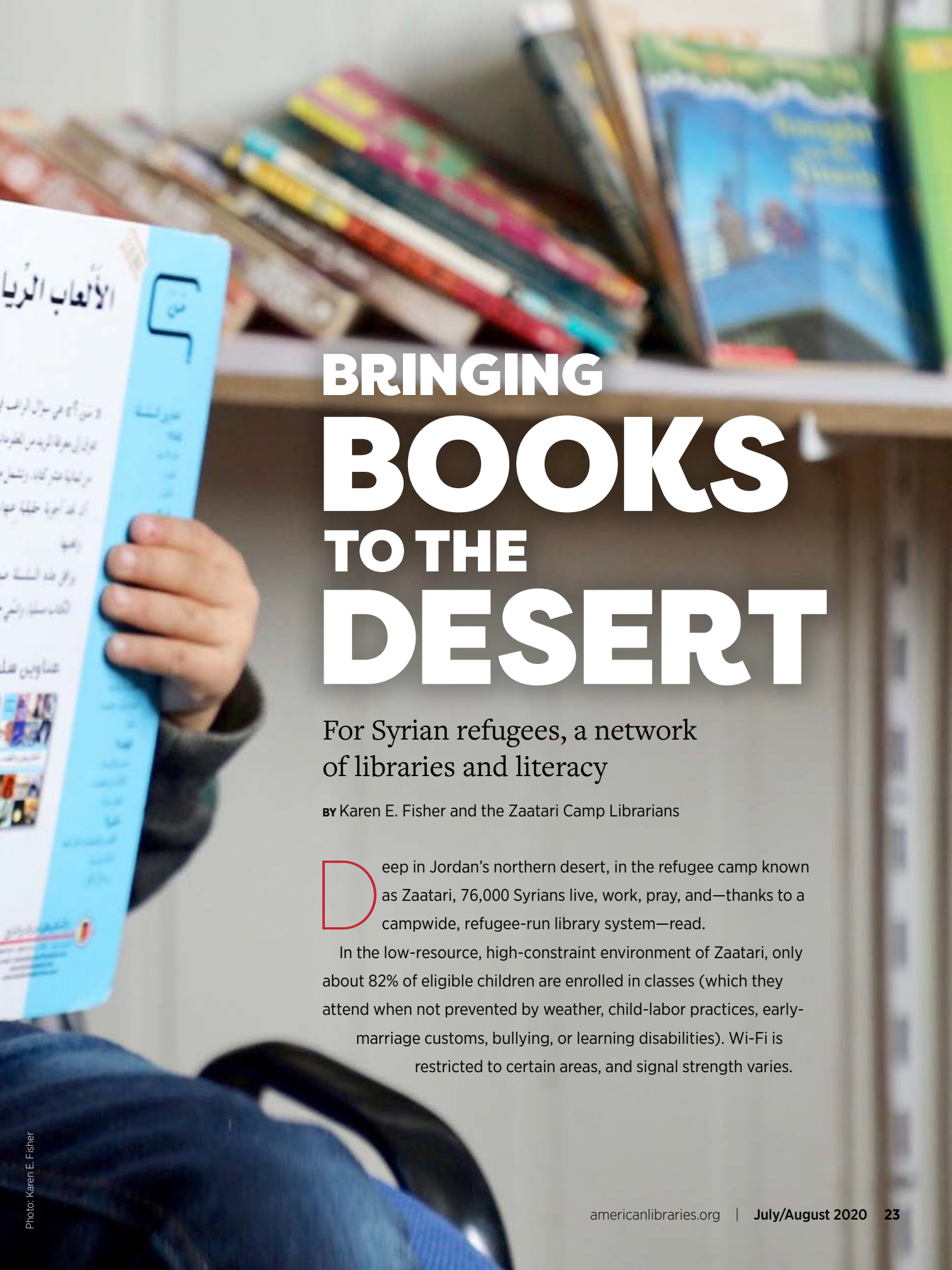
- reaching out to dozens of First Nations elders to form relationships that allow for successful programming that is educational, entertaining, and inspiring
- using elder-driven programs to share the rich diversity, voices, and perspectives of Vancouver Island
- introducing a sustainable program model that includes a Vancouver Island Regional Library Indigenous Committee •





A boy reads at a Blumont library facility. Most books are nearly destroyed from overuse.





# BRINGING BOOKS TO THE DESERT

For Syrian refugees, a network  
of libraries and literacy

by Karen E. Fisher and the Zaatari Camp Librarians

**D**eep in Jordan's northern desert, in the refugee camp known as Zaatari, 76,000 Syrians live, work, pray, and—thanks to a campwide, refugee-run library system—read.

In the low-resource, high-constraint environment of Zaatari, only about 82% of eligible children are enrolled in classes (which they attend when not prevented by weather, child-labor practices, early-marriage customs, bullying, or learning disabilities). Wi-Fi is restricted to certain areas, and signal strength varies.

Among the camp's adult population, literacy is low: 79% of its residents are from the agricultural region of Dara'a in southern Syria, where people are typically less educated than in a metropolis like Damascus.

Before the Syrian civil war, Syrian schools and universities were considered among the best in the Arab world. Resourcefulness and creativity are always on display at Zaatari—in its 32 schools, five playgrounds, 58 community centers, and 12 libraries.

There is not one bookstore in camp. As is the norm in Arab (and many other) countries, all books and periodicals that enter camp must have their political, religious, and cultural content approved by national authorities. (Books about sexuality or drug abuse, for example, would be deemed inconsistent with Islamic and cultural norms.)

Thanks to the library system, camp residents—as vendors hawk cucumbers and onions from donkey-pulled carts and calls to prayer echo from the *masjid* (mosque)—can heed the first word of the Koran: “*Iqra*.” (“Read.”)

## A dozen libraries in the desert

Zaatari Camp was established in 2012, when a few refugees crossed the border into Jordan's desert to seek refuge from the Syrian Civil War. The settlement quickly grew, requiring coordinated emergency response from Jordan's government and partners such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The camp is now under the joint administration of the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate and UNHCR,

## Taking Precautions

COVID-19 measures were implemented in Jordan and its refugee camps in early March. The camps were placed under lockdown, and all schools, libraries, and community centers were closed; curfews were implemented; and aid workers were limited to emergency staff only. As of late June, no coronavirus cases had been reported in the camps. Still, the pandemic has prevented refugees who would normally earn income by working outside the camps from doing so.

Networking with each other via WhatsApp, Zaatari camp librarians have used their library and personal Facebook pages for COVID-19 safety campaigns, writing and reading programs, education support, and inspirational messages. ●

with many UN, governmental, humanitarian, national, and international partners.

I first visited Zaatari in 2015, when UNHCR invited me to research how young people use the internet and mobile phones. Little did I know that six years later, I would be spending as much time at the camp as in my Seattle home. (Indeed, Syrians often ask me which district of the camp I live in, or what my tribal/family name is.)

On that initial visit, I encountered a library in the camp, and—as a professor of library and information science—thought, “*Alhamdulillah*” (“Praise be to God”). As I went on to



From left: At a book club run by NGO Relief International, young people play a game with book questions created by camp librarians; a teen displays a question about the book her club has read.





★ Zaatari  
Refugee  
Camp



discover, it was just one of 12 libraries in Zaatari, run by six nongovernmental organizations (NGOs): Blumont, Lutheran World Federation, Norwegian Refugee Council, Questscope, Nour Al Hussein Foundation, and Relief International.

Zaatari's libraries are unique in several ways. First, they're run by refugees themselves, rather than NGO staff or external visitors. Second, the libraries operate as a network, which of course requires the cooperation of the six NGOs that run them.

Third, the library network's innovative operations and service delivery rivals the quality of many Arab cities' public libraries. The Zaatari libraries offer book clubs, writing clubs, cultural preservation services, storytime programs, literacy initiatives, readers' advisory services, internet and media safety training, and community outreach. They also provide information literacy education—a pressing need, as many refugees are targeted by online scammers who proffer fake employment, immigration, and other opportunities, as well as disinformation about amnesties, return of property, and military conscription in Syria.

Finally, the camp residents who work as librarians have no formal training in the profession and, before coming to Zaatari, had never even visited a public library. With Rivkah Sass, executive director and CEO of Sacramento (Calif.) Public



Library, I organized field trips in 2018 for Zaatari librarians to Abdul Hameed Shoman Public Library in Amman, Jordan. There the camp librarians saw professional library operations first-hand and received training in specific operations and services. Sass also taught workshops on library operations, customer service, and early learning, and demonstrated techniques for storytelling and puppetry.

A Blumont library facility in Zaatari Camp; women at a camp beauty salon take advantage of Zaatari libraries' outreach.

## Individual strengths and needs

The libraries in Zaatari—which communicate with one another via the WhatsApp messaging platform and with

patrons via Facebook ([facebook.com/zaataricamplibraries](https://facebook.com/zaataricamplibraries))—are run by different NGOs, are located in different areas of

The camp residents who work as librarians have no formal training in the profession and, before coming to Zaatari, had never even visited a public library.

the camp and have different hours of operation, facilities, resources, staffing, and strengths.

The five libraries operated by Blumont, for example, have the strongest presence in the camp because of their multiple locations as well as their extended hours, which include weekends and evenings to support university students and people who work during the day. Those five libraries are located in community centers also run by Blumont.

Blumont libraries in Zaatari offer strong early education and children's reading programs, thanks to a 2019 donation of materials, includ-

ing board books, from the Kalimat Foundation in the United Arab Emirates. Multimedia programming for young children focuses on interactive Arab storytelling.

As part of its mission, Questscope, an NGO dedicated to helping marginalized youth, supports Arab culture by collaborating with experts in different fields. Its library in Zaatari has three full-time librarians who run book clubs and writing clubs for boys and girls. Last winter, thanks to an anonymous donation, it piloted the camp's first Kindle/ebook club.

The humanitarian nonprofit Relief International, which runs three libraries in Zaatari, is heading the library network's current effort to create a shared, cloud-hosted catalog and circulation system while still protecting users' personally identifiable information (PII). (While protecting PII is of universal concern, PII for war refugees is of particular importance and is governed by UN regulations.) Once complete, the shared catalog and circulation system will support collection development, build staff technical competency, and help users identify where a book is located system-wide.

Another Relief International effort: book clubs for older youth. To bypass chronic book shortages, stapled copies are made.

Part of a multiservice complex for children and adults in distant parts of the camp, Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) library stands out for its services to support children's early literacy and education. NRC librarians use stories written



Above: A Society Box at a *masjid* with a calligraphy mural from the Koran that reads: "Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend—indeed, Allah is knowing of it." Left: The box holds books, *fenjan* (cups for Arabic coffee), *misbaha* (prayer beads) and *miswak* (traditional toothbrush).

by Syrian children and illustrated and published by NRC in an approach based on the Syrian oral storytelling tradition known as Al-Hakawati. The librarians' technique involves placing the storyteller's traditional red hat (known as a tarboosh) on a child who wishes to read, in order to provide individualized attention for literacy support.

The newest members of the Zaatari library network are run by Lutheran World Federation and Nour Al Hussein. Each has a collection of about 40 to 50 books and is looking to the network's other members for guidance in growing collections and designing services. Both have loyal communities of users already.





Above: A Norwegian Refugee Council librarian wears the traditional Syrian tarboosh (red hat) as he practices Al-Hakawati, the Syrian oral storytelling tradition. Left: Teenage girls read on their Kindles at Questscope's library.

To make the premise more understandable, a camp artist painted a mural depicting books alongside a verse from the Koran (Surat 92): “Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend—indeed, Allah is knowing of it.”

Sourcing books to place in the boxes is challenging and requires a lot of legwork. Many titles that camp residents would like to have are not available in Arabic. High-quality books are expensive, particularly translations and literacy workbooks for children, and our budget is limited.

In addition to increasing the number of Society Boxes across camp, Zaatari librarians engage in outreach by identifying the needs and interests of groups that cannot easily access libraries and communicating information on health, sanitation, and other topics to them.

For example, to reach camp residents who might not currently visit Zaatari's libraries, librarians are partnering with its many beauty salons—where women and children spend hours preparing for weddings—to supply books and magazines about beauty, fashion, and food as well as health and parenting, along with materials for children. Also targeted for library partnerships are barbershops, coffee and shisha (tobacco) shops, and maternity hospitals, as well as communities of Syrians and Jordanians in semiurban and rural areas outside camp.

## Creative outreach

One important offering of the Zaatari library network is something called Society Boxes. Much like a Little Free Library, a Society Box is a container from which community members are free to take needed items and to which they can also donate items. In Zaatari, Society Boxes contain books along with items such as games for early literacy, reading and calligraphy aids, reading glasses, small toys, playing cards, and household items such as prayer beads and mobile-phone stands.

Society Boxes came about in 2017 through the generosity of the information studies program at Finland's Åbo Akademi University. By underwriting my travel costs and supplying an annual €500 grant, the program allowed for the placement of Society Boxes in 10 locations across Zaatari, such as a *masjid* and a maternity hospital.

Explaining the concept of the Society Boxes to camp residents was a challenge. We had to explain repeatedly that everything in the boxes was free for anyone to take anonymously, and that anyone could also contribute anonymously.

## How to Help

Tax-deductible donations to benefit the Zaatari Camp Libraries can be made through University of Washington: [bit.ly/syrianlibraries](http://bit.ly/syrianlibraries) •



Because libraries—especially outreach-based library services—are novel to the Syrian community, external communications are a key element of the Zaatari libraries' success.

Books are needed by the thousands. The camp's youth have read every book in Zaatari's libraries beyond repair.

Signage at all locations explains the library system and gives locations, hours, and services, along with a camp map. Other important external communications include messaging through imams, teachers, and social media.

With the Zaatari librarians and other camp residents, I am creating a book that will showcase the culinary knowledge and practices of Syria. Currently titled *Zaatari: Food and Stories from the Syrian People of Zaatari Camp* (Goose Lane, 2021), the book will introduce readers

to the women of Zaatari as they prepare regional foods for weddings, births, Ramadan, and other special occasions. All royalties will return to the people of Zaatari.

## Looking ahead

Zaatari librarians aspire to integrate library services with the camp's new Innovation Lab. Created by UNHCR and Blumont, the lab contains 3D printers, robotics, and other technologies. The Zaatari librarians would also like to begin including tools, sewing machines, and apparel as lending items in their collections.

Once COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lift (see sidebar, p. 24), the librarians will carry out a culturally appropriate

media and information literacy (MIL) program to protect vulnerable populations such as women and girls. As women and girls are less likely to own mobile phones and have little experience with social media, they are especially vulnerable to scammers. Existing MIL programs are Western-based; ours draw on teachings from the Koran and Arab culture to guide practices such as information sharing, verifying information, and developing personal pages with focus on privacy preservation.

Zaatari librarians also dream of creating a central branch, designed Syrian-style. It could include fountains; floor cushions for playing backgammon (a Syrian game) and reading over Turkish coffee and mint lemonade; a children's area; a student study area; a computer learning and homework center; and more.

Before these aspirations become reality, much has to happen. Zaatari librarians need formal training delivered in Arabic and certificates in librarianship. They also need the networking and camaraderie of professional library associations, as well as the opportunity to participate in conferences without the barriers of cost, travel, and visas.

And, of course, books are needed by the thousands. The camp's youth have read every book in Zaatari's libraries beyond repair. By providing financial, professional, and social support, together the global library community and Zaatari librarians can help mend the collateral damage of the Syrian war. **AL**



**KAREN E. FISHER** is professor at the Information School of University of Washington in Seattle.

Young girls read books donated by the Kalimat Foundation at a Blumont library facility.



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# RESPONDING TO A THREAT

The importance of immediate action



This is an excerpt from *Library as Safe Haven: Disaster Planning, Response, and Recovery: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians* (ALA Neal-Schuman, 2014). Download a free PDF of this book, courtesy of ALA Editions: [bit.ly/LibraryAsSafeHaven](http://bit.ly/LibraryAsSafeHaven)

by Deborah D. Halsted, Shari Clifton,  
and Daniel T. Wilson

**H**ow you and your staff react to a threat is paramount to the success of your response. The inability to react effectively may damage your facility or collections and could contribute to injury or death.

Take the Cologne Archives in Germany, for example. The archives building was constructed in 1971 to hold myriad materials, some of which date to 922 AD. The building was located in downtown Cologne next to a tunnel that was being excavated for a subway line. On March 3, 2009, construction workers noticed large cracks appearing in the building structure, and they notified archives staff and patrons about the impending disaster. Three minutes later, the building collapsed. Two people died, both of





whom were inside an adjoining building; all archives staff and visitors were able to escape the six-story building.

Three minutes may not sound like a lot of time, but much can happen in three minutes. Think of your library. Could you evacuate all patrons and staff within three minutes on a busy weekday afternoon? Use this three-minute measure as a cautionary guide for your evacuation planning efforts.

### Planning responses based on potential risks

Fortunately, not all threats require an extreme response. Some allow ample lead time for careful planning and mitigation, whereas others offer no warning. When faced with a sudden emergency, those responding may be at the mercy of the situation, but even for unforeseen events, carrying out plans put in place ahead of time can help to mitigate the impact and improve outcomes.

Following is a list of potential risks that can be considered either a disaster or a major cause of service disruption. They can be grouped into three categories: advance warning, little warning, and no warning, with some falling into more than one category. Grouping risks can help with emergency planning, since response procedures will be similar within each group.

### Events with advance warning

Some events provide advance warning, which affords the opportunity to plan ahead. Of these events, one of the most common and destructive is a hurricane. Fortunately, modern storm-tracking technologies make it possible to assess this type of risk. Other types of disasters that offer advance warning include severe winter storms and pandemics.

**Weather-related events.** Hurricanes can be quite destructive. However, in most cases, you and your staff may have several days to prepare, as their paths are somewhat predictable. Hurricanes, like the other risks in the advance warning category, usually require no immediate response procedures because of the availability of weather reports. Even these relatively slow-moving storms do, however, require carefully thought-out response procedures as well as mitigation steps.

**Public health events.** In the summer of 2009, many libraries worldwide were preparing to deal with possible consequences of the H1N1 influenza (“swine flu”) pandemic. An example of the types of plans being made can be found on a website produced by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, which released guidelines for public libraries specifically urging libraries to work with their municipalities “to determine what services the library might be expected to provide in the event of a pandemic outbreak in the community.” In addition, the American Library Association has advised its members to develop policies to address the following issues:

- criteria for closing the library
- employee policies for sick leave, payroll, banking and financial issues, and working from home

### ALA's COVID-19 Response

To help libraries dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on their communities, ALA has compiled an online portal of resources ([bit.ly/AL-PandemicPrep](https://bit.ly/AL-PandemicPrep)), including news items, policy suggestions, training guides, federal and state resources, and more general information on pandemic education, prevention, and preparation. ●

- mandated documentation of procedures or cross-training so others can take over for sick employees
- social-distancing policies
- criteria for suspending storytimes and other library programs
- providing masks and gloves and training staff in the removal and disposal of these items
- standards for cleaning bathrooms, railings, doorknobs, telephones, keyboards, counters, and the work areas of employees who go home sick, including emptying wastebaskets
- setting a schedule for addressing critical facility and administrative needs if the library is closed for an extended period (boiler and building checks by custodians, book drop, payroll, and banking considerations)
- communications plan for reaching staff and informing the public
- means for continuing to provide information services for the public, such as online ordering of materials and alternate pickup and drop-off locations for materials or expansion of online services
- accommodation of the needs of disadvantaged people in the community who may not have personal access to materials such as the local newspaper or resources like a home computer



- education of the public in advance of a widespread public health event

On August 10, 2010, World Health Organization Director-General Margaret Chan announced that the H1N1 virus had moved into the post-pandemic period; however, she cautioned, localized incidents were likely. “Based on experience with past pandemics,” she said, “we expect the H1N1 virus to take on the behavior of a seasonal influenza virus and continue to circulate for some years to come.”

Other illnesses that could require a public health emergency response would be an *E. coli* outbreak, food-chain terrorism, and superbugs, which are bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics. Each of these risks has the potential to be dangerous and could be included in the “little advance warning” category.

When planning for any incident for which you would have advance notice, expect the worst and be thankful if it does not happen. Being well prepared for the worst possible scenario can mean the difference between a minor emergency and a catastrophic event.

### Planning for events with little advance warning

Your library’s ability to respond to emergencies is measured by how well situations with little advance warning are handled, including tornadoes, tsunamis, an active shooter, protests and social unrest, and bomb threats. Open communication is essential when responding to these incidents, specifically communication between public safety agencies and the library.

**Tornadoes.** Tornadoes can be catastrophic, and while forecasters now announce warnings when conditions exist for their formation, the paths and intensity levels can still be very unpredictable. Librarians should check with public safety personnel at their parent institutions or in their communities to determine what alerting systems exist for tornadoes in their areas and how these can be incorporated into planning.

**Riots and mobs.** On June 15, 2011, riots broke out in Vancouver, British Columbia, following the hockey team’s game seven loss in the Stanley Cup finals. Vehicles were overturned and burned, stores were looted, and police were confronted. Vancouver officials took steps to keep violence at bay, such as limiting access to the area, but mayhem still ensued, and several people were arrested and injured throughout the evening. Fortunately, the Central Library suffered minimal damage during the riots, with only a short-term closure of the children’s library because two windows were smashed.

Similarly, on December 10, 2009, more than 600 students at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, used social media to stage a flash mob at Perry Library. Captured on video, the event resulted in a packed lobby and included crowd surfing. Police efforts to disperse the crowd failed, and they resorted to using pepper spray.

In some cases, flash mobs and riots can be anticipated, such as in the case of the Vancouver riots, or officials can catch wind of a flash mob through social media. Therefore, libraries may have some advance notice and can prepare a strategy to minimize the impact. Once again, talk to local law enforcement officials about appropriate procedures to put in place at your library. This is necessary because the physical structures of libraries differ, as do the environments surrounding them.

Perhaps the most difficult situation to plan for is an active shooter. The unpredictable behavior of the shooter and the potential for serious harm create sheer terror among everyone in the vicinity. The best strategy for developing responses to an active shooter incident is to consult local public safety personnel for recommended practices. Unfortunately, shooting incidents happen, and they must be planned for.

### When there’s no warning

Incidents that occur without warning can produce intense fear and unpredictable behavior. In August 2011, a 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck in central Virginia and was felt throughout much of the Mid-Atlantic region. Because earthquakes are not common in this area, people responded to the shaking in different ways. Some sought cover, some ran from buildings; some took charge, some looked for guidance; some made good decisions, some did not. It is therefore important to drill employees frequently on proper response. At minimum, these incidents can cause damage to library facilities and in worst-case scenarios can result in injury and death. A burst water pipe, for instance, can flood a nearby space without any notice and cause extensive damage.

In January 2008, in just 18 minutes, more than 11,000 gallons of water poured onto the second floor of Renne Library at Montana

Being well prepared for the worst possible scenario can mean the difference between a minor emergency and a catastrophic event.



State University in Bozeman, damaging thousands of materials, which had to be sent to a freeze-drying facility in Texas. The cost of the freeze-drying, paid for by insurance, was approximately \$29,000. Unfortunately, this was the second flooding incident at the library, both caused by a burst pipe. The first incident, which had occurred a week earlier, damaged nearly 250 items in the special collections area. Smaller in number but greater in value, the special collections materials took much longer to restore.

If prepared for nothing else, a library should be prepared for water damage. Preparation activities include ensuring that plastic sheeting is available and that highly valued materials are appropriately marked to expedite proper rescue.

Earthquakes, though not as frequent as hurricanes, can be very destructive, as witnessed in Chile, Haiti, Japan, and New Zealand in the last decade. In 1994, a 6.7-magnitude earthquake damaged the library at California State University, Northridge.

In today's world, cyberterrorism cannot be overlooked or downplayed. Cyberterrorism can pose different threats to your library, including long-term disruptions to power and internet connectivity. Many articles and reports have been written about the vulnerability of the electrical power

grid in the United States. R. James Woolsey Jr., Central Intelligence Agency director under President Clinton, testified to Congress that "it would be hard to intentionally design an electricity delivery system more vulnerable and fragile than the one on which the United States presently relies." As a result of the potential for a major power outage, it is essential that all libraries take this threat seriously, develop plans for days without power, and be aware of emergency power plans at the parent institution.

## Training and review

Well-developed emergency response plans are of little use if library staff members are not well trained. One of the best ways to familiarize them with response procedures is to perform a tabletop exercise during which participants respond to a designated scenario through role play.

Also critical: an after-action review (AAR) to identify successes and deficiencies. To perform AARs, you'll need to develop a reporting structure. The report itself should feature such information as date and time of incident, staff who responded to the incident, outside agencies involved (police, fire, facilities), and actions taken. Keep the AAR as informal as possible and set ground rules clearly specifying that the purpose of the review is to improve the response system, not to place blame. As a matter of course, staffers should expect an AAR within 48 hours after an incident. Thorough notes should be part of the AAR structure, and all procedural changes that result from the review should be implemented within seven days.

## Be proactive

We live in a world of many risks that should be dealt with proactively rather than reactively. Emergency situations are very stressful and can rattle the most composed among us if we are not adequately prepared. Always remember: The most effective preparedness activities involve vigilance and incorporating risk assessment into all ongoing planning. **AL**



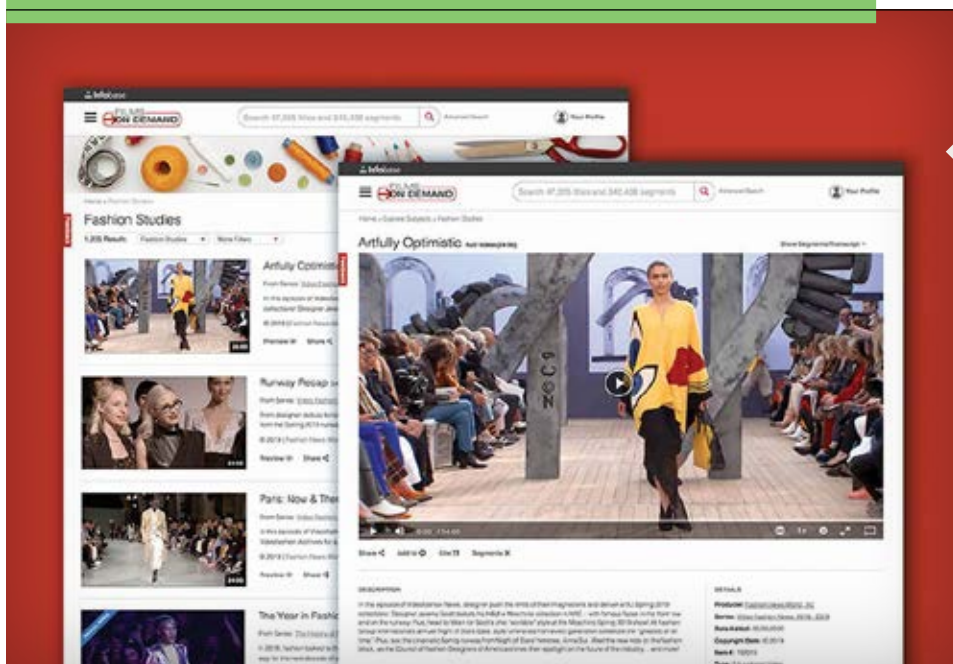
**DEBORAH D. HALSTED** has more than 30 years of professional library experience, primarily in academic medical libraries. She is coauthor

of *Disaster Planning: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians*. **SHARI CLIFTON** is associate director and department head of reference and instructional services at University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center's Robert M. Bird Library in Oklahoma City. **DANIEL T. WILSON** is associate director for collections and library services at University of Virginia Claude Moore Health Sciences Library.



# SOLUTIONS

*Products and services*



Infobase's Films on Demand fashion studies streaming video collection includes more than 1,300 titles.

students wherever they are. With the app, users can watch videos, view playlists and assignments, and resume previously viewed videos and segments on mobile devices.

New content is added frequently, with recent subject collections including fashion, computer science, and entertainment. Each is available alone or as part of the Films on Demand Master Academic Collection. The fashion studies streaming video collection includes more than 1,300 titles with a focus on fashion history, designers, and elements of style. It includes video of runway shows as well as documentaries on designers.

Pricing is based on full-time equivalent (FTE) student population, with the fashion studies collection starting at \$960. For more information, visit [films.com/academic\\_collections](http://films.com/academic_collections).

## DIS.art

DIS, a collaborative art group known for *DIS Magazine*, launched DIS.art, a streaming platform for original series and documentaries, in 2018. Unlike streaming services that aggregate content, DIS produces videos it hosts in partnership with contemporary artists, architects, professors, and other contributors. Most videos are less than 30 minutes long and can be streamed on desktop browsers, mobile devices, and AppleTV.

DIS.art series blend education, entertainment, and art to spark

DIS.art videos explore social issues.

## Arts Online

Streaming services highlight art, music, and fashion

BY Carrie Smith

As colleges and universities gear up for distance learning or a limited return to campus, streaming media is emerging as a key tool. The on-demand availability and unlimited simultaneous use offered by some platforms make streaming a valuable resource for both independent study and structured lessons, on and off campus. Additionally, with museums, concert halls, and other cultural institutions closed, or open with reduced in-person access, these platforms also help libraries provide an alternate way for students to experience art and music.

### Infobase

Infobase is one of the largest providers of streaming services to libraries. Its Films on Demand service provides more than 42,000 streaming videos to academic

libraries on a variety of subjects.

Each video is divided into searchable segments, and users can create and bookmark their own segments. Downloadable and searchable transcripts accompany each video, with keyword tags on video pages making related material easy to discover. Users can add videos or segments to their favorites, playlists, or classes, and a citation-export tool generates citations in common formats. Instructors can also upload content to the platform for their students and add YouTube videos to class lists for a unified resource playlist. Videos on the platform include public performance rights and can be used freely in the classroom and on campus for registered users.

Infobase launched a Films on Demand app for iOS and Android in March, making it easier to reach



## SUBMISSIONS

To have a new product considered, contact Carrie Smith at [casmith@ala.org](mailto:casmith@ala.org).

## CASE STUDY

# Arias over the Internet

### How do you use medici.tv?

Medici.tv is a classical music live performance streaming database that is available to all students, faculty, and staff at Berklee via our website to supplement Berklee's programs in music, dance, and theater. With the pandemic shutting down in-person classes, streaming video services have become more important for everyone, particularly the performing arts students and faculty. Our students are performers, and medici.tv videos bring you into the orchestra pit and onto the stage to experience performances up close.

**USER:** Julie Schaeffer, electronic resources librarian, Berklee College of Music/Boston Conservatory at Berklee in Boston



**PRODUCT:** Medici.tv

**DETAILS:** Medici.tv is a streaming video platform with recorded and live performances and master classes from institutions around the world.

conversation about social justice and political topics, including media theory, technology ethics, post-capitalism, and sustainability. Videos are categorized into four main collections—capital, identity, nations, and nature—with trending content highlighted.

For educators, DIS provides downloadable toolkits and syllabi to support courses and compiles resources and related media on its platform. DIS also hosts talks, lectures, and workshops for fees ranging from \$500 to \$2,000.

Dozens of new videos are added annually and are available for unlimited, simultaneous streaming. While individual accounts are available, institutional subscription access is IP-address based with proxy support for offsite users. There is no extra fee for using DIS.art content and resources in classes, either in person or online.

DIS.art recently added full, item-level MARC records for easy integration into library systems. An upcoming website redesign will also add closed captioning to videos.

Pricing for academic institutions is based on FTE student population, starting at \$780 annually. Other libraries interested in the service can contact [info@dis.art](mailto:info@dis.art) for pricing. Visit [dis.art](http://dis.art) for more information. **AL**



Medici.tv provides access to live and recorded music, dance, and theater performances.

### How does medici.tv serve your library's needs?

We've had medici.tv for eight years, and it has helped supplement local performances with national and international performances that might otherwise be out of reach for most of our users. The immediacy of streaming databases serves our users well when they need to study a particular piece of music or observe a professional's technique to further their studies. Now during the pandemic when we are all stuck at

home, medici.tv allows us to visit the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center or the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. There are also documentaries, which faculty are using for their classes.

**What are the main benefits?** Medici.tv is one of several streaming databases we offer our users, and it includes many internationally renowned artists. You can watch a ballet in Paris and see the facial expressions of the dancers and study the choreography, the details of their costumes, and the layout of the set. As live productions shut down around the world, demand increases for the opportunity to experience performances at home. There are also master classes for students who want more informal learning over the summer.

### What would you like to see improved or added to the service?

Our summer semester is online, so we are looking to add library resources to our learning management system (LMS). I would love to see medici.tv make their videos embeddable. The LMS is used for both online and in-person classes, and we are always looking for new ways to bring library resources directly to users. Improved integration will continue to be useful for us. ●



# PEOPLE

## Announcements

### ON THE MOVE

April 6 **Meaghan Alston** joined University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as project archivist in the Wilson Special Collections Library.

In March **Julia Birch** joined Jefferson (Wis.) Public Library as children's and youth services librarian.

March 30 **Alexandra Deyneka** became librarian for art and art history at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Sloane Art Library.

**Jacqueline Frank** became instruction and accessibility librarian at Montana State University Library in Bozeman in February.

**Twanna Hodge** joined the George A. Smathers Libraries at University of Florida as diversity, equity, and inclusion librarian February 7.



**Wendy Knapp** was named state librarian of Ohio, effective June 8.

**Paula S. W. Laurita** joined NASA Marshall Space Flight Center's Technical Library in Huntsville, Alabama, as senior librarian in March.

**Lori Lee** joined INFOhio, a virtual library for Ohio schools based in Columbus, May 19.

North Canton (Ohio) Public Library appointed **Andrea Legg** library director effective April 13.

**Nicholas Perilli** became innovation librarian at Temple University Libraries' Ginsburg Health Sciences Library in April.

May 11 **Amy Phillips** became head of technical services at Howard University Library in Washington, D.C.

In February **Jennifer Podolsky** was appointed executive director of Princeton (N.J.) Public Library.

### Kudos

**Chad Hutchens**, associate librarian and head of digital collections at University of Wyoming Libraries in Laramie, received the university's 2020 Agnes Milstead Distinguished Librarianship Award April 27.

**Nichelle M. Hayes**, leader of Indianapolis Public Library's Center for Black Literature and Culture, received the Indianapolis Center for Leadership Development's Achievement in Arts and Entertainment Award May 7.

In May **Rebecca Jefferson**, curator of the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica at University of Florida in Gainesville and a joint faculty member of the university's Center for Jewish Studies, was named to the Florida Commissioner of Education's Task Force on Holocaust Education.

**Deborah Margolis**, Middle East Studies Librarian at Michigan State University, received a Fulbright US Scholar Program award to conduct research in partnership with Tomorrow's Youth Organization in Palestine and University of Jordan Libraries American Corner to encourage youth development and relationships among college-age youth and professionals around the world.



**Christine Morris**, deputy director of OhioNET in Columbus, and **Tracee M. Murphy**, director of Wellsville Carnegie Public Library, were selected as members of the Leadership Ohio Class of 2020.

*Hartford Business Journal* recognized Hartford (Conn.) Public Library President and CEO **Bridget Quinn-Carey** as one of its 2020 Women in Business Award winners.

**Margarita Vargas-Betancourt**, associate librarian and Latin American and Caribbean Special Collections Librarian at the University of Florida's George A. Smathers Libraries in Gainesville, was named one of 15 RBS-Mellon Cultural Heritage Fellows for 2020–2022. ●

**Jill Porter** joined Everett Roehl Marshfield (Wis.) Public Library as director June 1.

April 20 **John Zarrillo** became bioethics archivist and reference librarian at Georgetown University Library's Bioethics Research Library in Washington, D.C.

### PROMOTIONS

April 6 Santa Clarita County (Calif.) Library District promoted **Rose Baiza** to Los Altos community librarian.

**Cecilia Saldago Begent** was promoted to branch librarian at San Diego County Library's Imperial Beach branch in April.

INFOhio promoted **Erica Clay** to director May 19.

**Ann Ewbank**, associate professor and director of the School Library Media program at Montana State University in Bozeman, was appointed head of the university's Department of Education June 1.



## In Memory

**James Bobick**, 76, a science librarian for 35 years, died May 3. He worked at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island; Temple University in Philadelphia; and Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland before serving as head of the Science and Technology Department at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh for 16 years. He coauthored and edited *The Handy Science Answer Book* and *Science and Technology Resources: A Guide for Information Professionals*.

**William Garrison**, 70, dean of University of South Florida (USF) Libraries in Tampa from 2008 until his 2015 retirement, died April 28. Before joining USF, Garrison had more than 30 years of library experience at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois; Stanford (Calif.) University; University of Colorado in Boulder; and Syracuse (N.Y.) University. He was instrumental in creating and supporting the LGBTQ Collection at USF and oversaw major renovations of the library's first and second floors. He also taught cataloging throughout his career, published numerous papers, and was an Association of Research Libraries Leadership Fellow (2004–2006).



**Barbara Burns Moran**, 75, faculty member and former dean of the School of Information and Library Science at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, died May 2. She was a member of the faculty from 1981 until her retirement in 2017. During her time as dean (1990–1998), she enhanced technical resources, added an undergraduate minor program, increased graduate enrollment by 32%, and began the school's London and Prague summer seminars. She published more than 85 journal articles and book chapters, and coauthored *Library and Information Center Management*.



**Lillian E. Potter**, 87, longtime head of monographs cataloging at University of Texas at Austin Libraries, died April 30.

**Barbara Van Deventer**, 82, assistant director for collection development at University of Chicago (UC) until retiring in 1999, died April 22. At UC, her duties included public services for humanities and social sciences, and she was noted for her skills in cultivating donors and incorporating digital materials into the collection. She previously worked at Stanford University Libraries as government documents librarian, head of Cubberley Education Library, and social sciences curator. ●

University City (Mo.) Public Library promoted **Kathleen Gallagher** to assistant director in March.

Sanibel (Fla.) Public Library promoted **Beth Jarrell** to reference librarian in March.

**Sarah C. Johnson** was promoted to assistant professor and social sciences librarian at Hunter College, City University of New York, in February.



In May Minot (N.D.) Public Library promoted **Randi Monley** to children's librarian.

## RETIREMENTS

**Cassandra Allen** retired January 3 after 33 years at the National Library of Medicine.

June 6 **Lori Belongia** retired as director of Everett Roehl Marshfield (Wis.) Public Library.

**Karen Burstein** retired in March after 35 years as librarian at Temple University Libraries' Health Sciences Libraries.

**Sara Charlton**, director of Tillamook County (Oreg.) Library, retired June 1 after 29 years with the library.

**Sandra Lang** retired as director of North Canton (Ohio) Public Library April 30.

**Clara Latham** retired in May after 30 years as librarian at Midwestern State University's Moffett Library in Wichita Falls, Texas.

After 27 years with Elgin (Tex.) Public Library, **Sandy Ott** retired as director April 20.

**Paula Rowlands** retired in May as director of Barnesville (Ohio) Hutton Memorial Library after 30 years with the library.

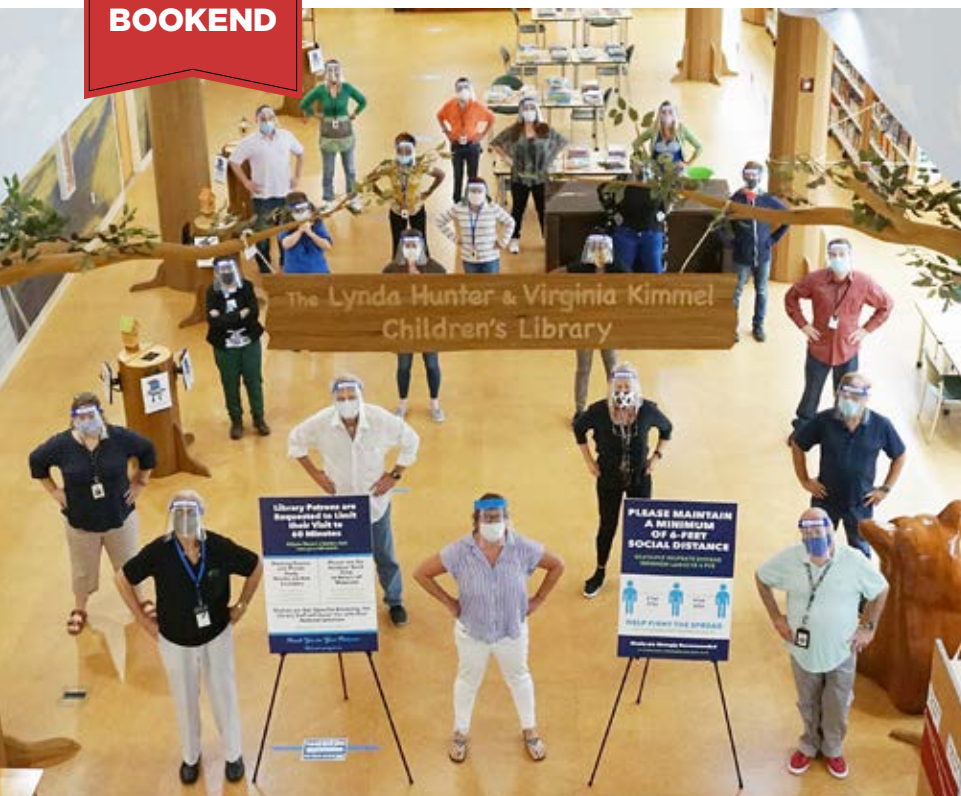
## AT ALA

**Nick Aleck**, IT user experience manager, left ALA May 29.

**Robert Skwarczynski**, building services technician, left ALA's maintenance department May 29.

**David Valentin**, building services technician, left ALA's maintenance department May 29. [AL](#)





## The New Normal

As communities struggle to contain COVID-19, their libraries ask: What do regular services look like in uncertain times?

Some of our favorite examples of libraries meeting this challenge in creative ways, clockwise from top left:

- Delray Beach (Fla.) Public Library staffers, wearing masks and face shields, welcomed users back on May 21 to a partially reopened building. Stacks were closed, a limited number of computers were available, and each visitor could stay an hour.
- Michelle L. Johnson, cataloging technician at Grand Rapids (Minn.) Area Library, passes books through a drive-through window. The library averaged 50 pickups per day following the expiration of state stay-at-home orders May 18.
- Pottsboro Area (Tex.) Library adapted its e-sports program to a distanced drive-in format. At a March event, *Mario Kart* was projected onto the side of a trailer, and staffers ran sanitized Nintendo Switch controllers out to cars.
- Tina Chenoweth, young adult services manager at Baxter-Patrick James Island Library in Charleston, South Carolina, created a virtual branch in the videogame *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*, complete with makerspace and teen room. **AL**

**THE BOOKEND** showcases librarians, their work, and their work spaces. For consideration, email [americanlibraries@ala.org](mailto:americanlibraries@ala.org).

Photos: Robyn Huff (reopening); Nicole Johnson/Grand Rapids (Minn.) Area Library (drive-through); Pottsboro (Tex.) Area Library (e-sports); Tina Chenoweth (*Animal Crossing*)



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# EXPLORE THE NEW RDA TOOLKIT WITH THE RDA LAB SERIES

Presented every Tuesday from June 30 through December 8 as live webinars, with recordings available to all registrants 48 hours after their live presentations, the RDA Lab Series is designed to help participants understand how to apply the new RDA and RDA Toolkit created by the 3R Project.

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### **Not yet an RDA Toolkit subscriber?**

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**Questions about RDA Toolkit, the RDA Lab Series, and how they serve cataloging needs of libraries everywhere can be e-mailed to [RDAToolkit@ALA.org](mailto:RDAToolkit@ALA.org).**

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