



# WLA News

Information from the Wisconsin Library Association  
Summer 2020

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## WLA Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation. The Wisconsin Library Association has compiled fact-based information from a variety of sources to make them readily available to Wisconsin libraries. As more information is produced and distributed, WLA will continue to update [this page](#). If you have resources that you find useful and would like to share them, please email us. We are stronger together.

## President's Message

*By Sherry Machones, 2020 WLA Board President*

Greetings All,

Looking back at the message I wrote on February 17th, I feel like we all live in an alternate dimension. Many of us had just returned from Library Legislative Day at the Capitol where we got to shake hands, hug, and tell our stories with hundreds of our coworkers and friends. For many of us, it would be the last time we would be in the same room together this year. Its been five months and everything has changed. In those five months we've learned new phrases like social distancing, what PPE stands for, and learned new songs to sing while washing our hands for 20 seconds. We've learned just how important toilet paper and hair dye truly are to the masses.

Almost five months ago, we saw the closure of libraries across the state to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Closures of all kinds of entities paralyzed what we all knew of everyday life. I was inspired by the immediate response I saw in our Wisconsin library community to bring library service back. Teachers and academic librarians supporting the transition to online classes, librarians hosting virtual book clubs, countless Facebook storytimes, and increases in digital collections are just a few of the examples of how we stepped up. Now we are seeing libraries gradually reopening, offering curbside services, and incrementally reopening their buildings, welcoming the public back safely.

Within the last months we have seen many protests for change and justice, trying to make a difference in each community, and nationally. The library's mission is to support the community. We help alleviate the challenges people face and help them to lead successful and fulfilling lives. I could not have been prouder to see many Wisconsin libraries publicly affirm their dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion, committing to



further learning and changing for the betterment of those who need it most.

I know I am not alone in being in awe of all that we have done over these five months. I implore you to think about nominating a library, a librarian, or a trustee for one of our annual awards. We all need to hear and celebrate the hard and essential work we are doing every day. Beyond formal awards, feel free to reach out to your fellow librarians. A small note or a quick chat by phone or screen goes a long way towards humanizing this weird reality we find ourselves in.

We are all in this together,

Sherry

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## HELLO FROM THE EDITOR!

*Colleen Hallfrisch,  
2020 WLA*

*Newsletter Editor*

Hello, everyone! My name is Colleen Hallfrisch and I am the new editor of the WLA Newsletter in 2020. I currently work at UW-Oshkosh as the Metadata Librarian. I have been in this position since October 2019.



Before this position, I worked at the Beaver Dam Community Library as the Technology and Public Services Librarian. Becoming a librarian has been my dream since I was in eighth grade. I am passionate about helping people in the community and love learning about what other libraries are accomplishing. In my spare time, I enjoy running every day, reading, and spending time outdoors. I love to go camping, hiking, and backpacking as well.

I am very excited to continue the legacy of the WLA newsletter through meeting new people and sharing about library initiatives around the state. You can contact me at [hallfrischc@uwosh.edu](mailto:hallfrischc@uwosh.edu).

# Director's Message

*By Plumer Lovelace, Executive Director of WLA*



Summer is my favorite time of the year. There are very few things that can alter my joy of warm weather and longer days. However, the emotional and heartfelt response to the death of several unarmed, African American citizens left many of us feeling angry and sad. As we searched for answers, I had an opportunity to connect with many of you to share our shock, dismay, and optimism for change. In the midst of so much horror, the work that we do each day can seem almost insignificant. My goal in writing this article is to challenge that perception and hopefully replace it with a new perspective.

The setting is 1959, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Our character is a 7 year old, African American boy. His parents died when he was 3 years old. He is being raised by his Grandmother, Mary. She is a strong, articulate woman who grew up in the south. She has raised 12 of her own children and two grandchildren. Her memories of school are of four years spent in a one-room building with no heat in the winter. Even so, her understanding of the importance of education as a vehicle for black people to participate in the American dream is crystal clear. Having grown up in the south, the daughter of a freed slave, she is profoundly aware of how quickly a young black male can fall victim to racial profiling. For this reason, she watches over her grandson like a mama bear guarding her cubs. Get too close and you will feel her wrath.

In the summer of 1959 a family member shares a description with Mary about a place called a "library" where people can get books to read. The most amazing fact about this place is that these services are free. Another important point is that this place is within walking distance from their home. With authorization from mama bear, the family member escorts the young boy for his first trip to the Milwaukee Public Library. There, he is greeted warmly by staff and he receives his first library card.

The trip ends with a big smile and an arm full of books.

In the weeks and years to come, the library becomes a refuge for this young boy. With guidance from the library staff the boy discovers amazing worlds beyond his two mile radius. Most importantly he samples his first taste of African American history. This is an important discovery since the names of Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver, and Malcolm X were never mentioned in the school curriculum. As years pass and grade school becomes high school, the one constant is the public library. Years of visits have helped create a level of familiarity that is sacred. In this place you are valued as an individual. Your dreams and ambitions are supported. More than that, the people in this place have made it clear that they will do everything in their power to help you reach your goal.

In time, the boy becomes a young man. He begins an amazing life journey. Using the power of literacy developed through weekly trips to the library, he completes his college degree. With a desire to experience the distant places first discovered in the public library, he tours Europe and East Asia. Instilled with the confidence that can only come from being surrounded by people who believe in you, the once small boy has the opportunity to provide leadership to several national and international associations. Eventually, he is given the honor of serving as the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Library Association.

Sharing this story is my answer to the question, "what should I do differently. How do I make a difference?" As library professionals, you exist in the eye of the storm. You create a safe space for members of your community who would not experience peace otherwise. You treat each patron respectfully, courteously and equitably. You ensure that answers can be found for every question, even when society makes it difficult to find the truth. Moreover, you inspire patrons to navigate their way through the constant changes in information technology. Through your effort, patrons become independent and inquisitive lifelong learners. I know because I am a product of that safe, nurturing, intellectually stimulating environment created by my library. You may not always see the results of your contribution, but every day you are making a difference. Thank you for all that you do.

# WLA 2020 Awards: Now Accepting Applications

*Applications are due Friday, September 4*

Honor the innovative and exceptional library services, staff, trustees, and supporters in Wisconsin. Nominate an individual, group, or library for one of the 2020 WLA Awards.

Visit <https://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/awards-honors> for a list of awards or see the list below. The criteria, application form, and instructions to apply are listed under each individual award on WLA's website. Winners will be honored at the WLA Conference during the Awards and Honors Reception.

Questions? Contact Joseph Bongers, Awards and Honors Committee Chair, [bongers@oshkoshpubliclibrary.org](mailto:bongers@oshkoshpubliclibrary.org).

## WLA 2020 Awards

### Citation of Merit

Conferred upon Wisconsin citizens who are neither librarians nor library trustees, who have made outstanding contributions to quality library services. This award may be given to a group of people or an individual.

### Library of the Year Award

Presented to any type of Wisconsin library, library system or library network for distinguished achievement in service. The staff, library board or administering body, and the community or people served shall all be involved in the work for which recognition is sought.

### The Muriel Fuller Award

Conferred upon a library professional or paraprofessional in recognition of outstanding accomplishments which have significantly improved and benefited library services.

### Programming Innovation Award

Presented in recognition of programming leadership in providing innovative and excellent library programming in Wisconsin libraries. Nominated programs may be stand-alone programs, series, passive or cooperative. Programs for all age groups are eligible.

### Special Service Award

Presented to a group of people or an individual for noteworthy achievement as evidenced by substantial activities and exceptional service to the library profession. The Wisconsin recipient or recipients shall have influence and reputation beyond the local community.

### Trustee of the Year Award

Conferred upon an outstanding Wisconsin library trustee. The trustee must be in actual service during all or part of the year in which he or she is honored.

### WLA/DEMCO Librarian of the Year Award

In recognition of a librarian's outstanding leadership and accomplishment in library service. The librarian must be currently employed, at the time of selection, in any field of librarianship in Wisconsin and must be a current member of the WLA.

# Representation Matters

*By Tammy Mays, Center Street Branch, Milwaukee Public Library*

In my very first class in library studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, I was the only student of color in the room. Coming from Fisk University, a Historically Black University, I had to adjust to what would be the norm in order to complete my studies. I felt more academic pressure than my non-black peers in the class. When a racial or social justice issue was discussed, all heads would turn my way for either clarification or just to hear my reaction – as if I spoke for all African-Americans of the world.

Throughout the first semester of my library school experience, I felt isolated and unsupported. I was consistently searching for not only someone who looked like me, but for someone who also shared my cultural characteristics. With only a few students of color in the program, it didn't convince me from quitting. Years later, there is still an inequality in the recruitment and retention of librarians of color. In 2018, The Department for Professional Employees found that over 77% of librarians were White, non-Hispanic. Demographically, we can visually see the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among the library staff.

In light of the current reality of COVID-19 pandemic, police brutality, and protests, libraries are developing statements on race and social equity, but without benefit of diverse voices writing these statements. Society as a whole is collectively dealing with anger, grief, and the trauma of racism. There is no question that in many communities, the public library is the central and trusted location where patrons can go that is non-threatening, accessible, and has quality and reliable information. Where do we go from here? More specifically, how can urban libraries play a role in healing communities?

Libraries are at a tipping point for creating change. The Wisconsin Library Association has created the Urban Libraries Special Interest Group (SIG). The SIG co-conveners are Tammy Mays, Branch Manager, Center Street Branch and Kirsten Thompson, Coordinator of Humanities, Arts & Music, and Special Collections of the Milwaukee Public Library.

The purpose of the Urban Libraries SIG is to have members collaborate to enhance services in our libraries as they identify the challenges that face libraries in urban areas, identify and devise creative new solutions, advocate for support in legislation, grants and collaboration opportunities, provide programs to enlighten the community, support and motivate urban library staff, and build strong relationships among the community and urban library staff.

This SIG will provide opportunities to share practical and theoretical knowledge, discuss and debate professional experiences and issues, and to share critical resources to support daily professional goals. The committee will also plan and sponsor programs for annual conferences with topics related to urban libraries.

This SIG will serve members with an interest in urban libraries. For this SIG, urban libraries are defined as any type of library serving a heavily populated area and/or urban community. We will suggest and sponsor programs for annual conferences focusing on various topics of interest and importance to its members. The SIG will also address the needs and unique challenges facing urban libraries so that we can collectively seek new ideas, input, and suggestions for solutions.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### **What is the meaning of urban?**

For this SIG, urban is defined as an area that contains a diverse and highly dense population with a strong economic center. The term urban is described as a space that is a heavily populated area with a strong social, political, cultural, and economic network.

### **Why is there a need for an urban libraries SIG?**

This SIG will serve members with an interest in urban libraries. This SIG is created for library staff to share our professional and lived experiences and learn from one another. Librarians and library staff members who work in an urban setting in Wisconsin are encouraged to participate.

Article edits completed by: Kirsten Thompson, Coordinator of Humanities, Arts & Music, and Special Collections, Milwaukee Public Library; and Hermoine Bell Henderson, Coordinator of Business, Technology, and Periodicals Department, Milwaukee Public Library; and Anne Rasmussen, Public Services Area Manager – Branch Libraries, Milwaukee Public Library.

# Division & Section Updates

## ***AWSL***

*(Association of Wisconsin Special Librarians)*

Along with other legal service providers, the Wisconsin State Law Library is preparing to respond to more questions about landlord-tenant and employment law through the end of the year. Visit our legal topic pages for research sources, and contact our reference desk if you or your users have questions. <https://wilawlibrary.gov/services/ask.html>

In response to the closure of schools across the state in the Spring and the new school year starting (and as part of the library's education mission), the Wisconsin Water Library at UW Madison created at-home activities for youth and families. One is an opportunity to EXPLORE LAKE STURGEON, the unique dinosaur fish that is thriving in Lake Winnebago. Watch a dissection video and challenge yourself with a fun activity sheet at <http://go.wisc.edu/5g4c4e> The activity sheet and answer key are available in Spanish, too.

The Wisconsin Water Library also has a growing list of #GreatLakesGreatReads about all kinds of topics on the science and culture, art, and tourism. <http://go.wisc.edu/d75d61>

## ***WAAL***

*(Wisconsin Association of Academic Librarians)*

The WAAL Board made the unanimous decision not to reschedule the 2020 WAAL Conference, originally scheduled for April 16-17. This decision was made for a variety of reasons, including the lack of certainty about when it will be safe to hold an in-person conference that typically attracts 150 people.

Thank you to all members who provided comments on the proposed changes to our Policies and Procedures. The board approved those changes at its April meeting. The current version of the Policies and Procedures is online at [https://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/assets/divisions/waal/WAAL\\_Policies-Procedures\\_2020.pdf](https://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/assets/divisions/waal/WAAL_Policies-Procedures_2020.pdf)

Sarah Bakken (University of Wisconsin-Green Bay) began her term as the acting secretary in March. Welcome, Sarah!

## ***YSS***

*(Youth Services Section)*

COVID-19 has completely changed the world...and with program cancellations and the necessity to revamp Summer Reading/Learning Programs into a virtual format, the Youth Services Section has been navigating uncharted territory. However, despite the Safer-at-Home protocols, YSS remains stronger than ever, providing a multitude of resources and support to library staff serving youth throughout the state. One such resource is the YSS Blog which, despite the ever-mounting pressures surrounding librarianship as a whole, remains an extremely active, informative, and engaging hub of information, with new posts daily throughout the week. The posts range from programming ideas to safety protocols and come from peers from all ends of the state; one particularly popular addition has been the Virtual & Offline Programming YSS COVID-19 series. Visit <https://yssevents.blogspot.com/> and explore the wealth of information and inspiration!

# Division & Section Updates

## WAPL 2020: “Infinite Possibilities”

*By Teresa Schmidt, 2020 WAPL Conference co-chair*

When our committee met last year and decided on “Infinite Possibilities” for our 2020 WAPL Conference theme, we had no idea just how “infinite” the possibilities for 2020 really were.

As you know, the 2020 WAPL conference had to be canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. No one was more disappointed than our conference planning team, who spent months creating a fantastic schedule of events and program sessions. We were looking forward to welcoming author Chloe Benjamin and moderator Haley Tenpas, Gail Santy from the Great Bend Public Library in Kansas, improv troupe Backlot Comedy House, and an amazing lineup of Wisconsin library presenters. We also had some exciting social events planned, including ax throwing, escape rooms, and tai chi.

I'd like to recognize the organizations that were planning to sponsor our conference, including Novelist, the Oshkosh Public Library, UW-Madison iSchool, UW-Milwaukee SOIS, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Gale Cengage, and Backstage. Their support was invaluable in putting together our conference schedule, and we appreciate their contributions to Wisconsin libraries.

Thank you to our conference planning team, who put in countless hours to plan this event: Mark Arend, J.J. Berger, Angela Bodzislav, Wyatt Ditzler, Brendan Faherty, Leah Gentry, Kaushalya Iyengar, Eva Kozerski, and Tracy Vreeke. The Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center in Oshkosh was very gracious in assisting us with planning and later cancelling the conference, and we look forward to working with them again in 2022. I would like to particularly thank Brigitte Rupp Vacha for all her help in planning the conference.

Our WAPL Conference chair Angela Meyers deserves a special shout-out for being an incredible manager, motivator, and cheerleader for our whole team. This is not how she expected “her” conference to go, but she was a positive force of nature right to the end. Thank you, Angela, for the hours and dedication you put into building what would have been an amazing conference for the Wisconsin public library community.

I will be taking the reins from Angela and planning next year's WAPL conference, scheduled for May 5-7, 2021, at the Ingleside Hotel in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. If you'd like to get involved with planning the 2021 conference, please get in touch with me at [director@mercerpubliclibrary.org](mailto:director@mercerpubliclibrary.org). Conference planning is more fun than it sounds, and it's a great way to get involved with your library association and meet others from across the state. I'd love to hear from anyone who would like to help.

Mark your calendar and plan to join us in Pewaukee on May 5-7, 2021!

## WLA Newsletter Information from SSCS

2020 has been quite the year! Due to the spread of COVID-19, the SSCS leadership, WLA Board, and Executive Director decided to cancel this year's Support Staff & Circulation Services Conference that was scheduled back in May. The SSCS Board is looking forward to reestablishing the one-day conference that is geared toward those who are working the front lines in 2021. Each year, the SSCS Board receives several nominations for the Paralibrarian of the Year Award. This prestigious award recognizes the essential role of support staff who provide excellent library service, are committed to free access of information, encourage reading and the use of the library's resources, and work to break down barriers.



The SSCS Board would like to congratulate all the 2020 Paralibrarian nominees. Thank you for all you do! For 2020, the SSCS Board has named Alan Her as the Paralibrarian of the Year. Alan has provided exemplary service in his current role at the Milwaukee Public Library Center Street Branch. He demonstrates excellence in furthering the role of paralibrarians by being an outstanding leader in his library and community. He will receive complimentary registration to the WLA Annual Conference, including the award ceremony.

Congratulations Alan!!

In the fall, watch for more information about next year's Paralibrarian of the Year Award and the 2021 SSCS One-Day Conference. Details will be on the WLA website and/or your email.

## JUGGLING DURING THE SUMMER

By Nyama Reed,  
Whitefish Bay Public Library



No, I'm not a professional juggler travelling from library to library to entertain families at libraries during the summer reading program. I'm a library employee who cringes at the thought of having a juggler with 100 people in a room during these times! And I'm juggling offering curbside... plus reopening our doors... but at a reduced capacity... and how to disinfect everything... and... and... How to require masks for safety but balancing legal issues and concerns from people with hearing issues or people that will yell at us because safety has become a political issue and libraries try not to be political?!?!? I'm just exhausted. I bet you are too.

I initially was going to do an article on curbside. That was two weeks ago and so much has changed in two weeks. And it'll change again in two more weeks. By Labor Day, I have no idea what my library's offerings will look like aside from trying to get patrons programming and materials, whether virtually or physical items. I just want to tell staff and patrons, "We're doing the best we can, thank you for your patience and understanding."

At my library (Whitefish Bay), we have been doing curbside for about 6 weeks. We opened our doors for in-library usage with the caveat that it is by appointment in order to manage capacity. Thankfully 99.9% of patrons have been super kind and just happy to be able to come in. The 0.1% I listen to, explain the whys behind our decision making, and then I go back to focusing on the 99.9%.

So without getting into specifics because they likely will be old news by the time this is published, I just want to say to everyone: I missed seeing you at the Spring conferences and hugs and love to you as you do the best you can for your self, your staff, your families, and your communities.

Nyama  
Your 2020 WLA VP

## Supporting Collaboration Survey: The Results Are In!

By Marge Loch-Wouters



*In the spirit of work at the national level through ALA's State Ecosystem Initiative and the new [Public Library & School Library Collaboration Toolkit](#) done through collaborative efforts of AASL, YALSA, and ALSC, WEMTA, WLA, and DPI are working together to support and foster communications and collaborations among Wisconsin public and school librarians in order to better support the communities we serve. Each quarter we will share a resource, strategy, or example with you that could be used as a talking point in your community. Please use these ideas to initiate or continue to build relationships with public and school librarians.*

Beginning with interviews at the WLA Conference last fall and continuing with an online survey open through winter 2020, 90 public and school librarians shared their thoughts with Connecting Wisconsin Libraries about collaboration in their communities. It was encouraging to see that 95% of those surveyed had found an opportunity to collaborate with their public or school library colleagues. And, we were certainly not surprised

to find that the greatest challenge to successful collaborations was finding the time to make the work happen.

Please view our infographic, [What Kind of Collaborator are You?](#), to find out more about the data collected. You will also find some helpful hints for getting collaboration started in your community.

We would like to thank all those who participated in the survey. The feedback has led to powerful conversations and great ideas for how to build our community moving forward. Look for more exciting opportunities to connect with your public and school colleagues in the near future.

This message brought to you through the collaboration of Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association (WEMTA), Wisconsin Library Association (WLA), and DPI School and Public Libraries. If you are interested in working on future tidbits or have other suggestions for collaborations, please contact Marge Loch-Wouters (WLA) at [lochwouters@gmail.com](mailto:lochwouters@gmail.com) or Raquel Rand (WEMTA) at [president@wemta.org](mailto:president@wemta.org)

WHAT KIND OF  
COLLABORATOR ARE YOU?



## Inclusive Services Insights

by *Viridiana Rocha*

In general, critical librarianship encourages us to recognize how social institutions, and we ourselves, participate in regimes of oppression. It encourages us to use this understanding by incorporating social justice principles to our library work, to help fight against inequities brought on by these regimes. Libraries as socio-political institutions are no exception to being part of the issue as they have their own levels of inequities. For example, systematic inequities consider continuous historical exclusion, such as libraries relying on fines as primary revenue that create access barriers to lower income individuals, or the overall whiteness and lack of diversity in the field. Institutional inequities consider the policies and practices that create an environment for social disparities, such as policies targeting patron profiling or biased library cataloging. Interpersonal inequities consider library workers' own implicit biases and how they may be reflected in their library work. As these inequities are largely pointed toward marginalized groups, it is especially important to engage in critical librarianship if librarians

truly want to tackle issues of diversity and inclusion. It is just as important to also evaluate our own institutions' shortcomings in order to understand how we are sabotaging our own efforts. In retrospect, libraries have never been neutral entities, thus neutrality should not be an excuse when evaluating inequities that our institutions themselves perpetuate. If we truly want to move forward for greater diversity and inclusion, we must engage in critical librarianship, take a hard look at our own institutions, and face our libraries' failures.

Viridiana Rocha is a graduate student studying Library and Information Science at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. She is also a community organizer with board memberships to Racine Miss Latina Scholarship Inc. and Wisconsin Center for the Book. In addition, she is a member of WLA's new Inclusive Services Special Interest group. To learn more about the group, contact the SIG chair, Mark Jochem, at [mjochem@scls.info](mailto:mjochem@scls.info).

## A Coronavirus Tale

By *Jill Vaan Den Eng, Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library*

In March, 2020, normal library operations at the Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library came to an abrupt halt due to the coronavirus pandemic. The doors were closed for what was anticipated to be weeks, that turned into months.

Library staff still sought to engage with the community. One natural way to do this was through Facebook, our most active social media format. Children's librarian Ann Hardginski started doing story time twice a week using Facebook Live. Other Facebook events born at this time were trivia nights, movie discussions, and a question of the day to encourage thoughts and sharing.

Zoom became a way for staff to stay connected while Safer at Home, and it also became a vehicle for a new learning program. Master Gardener Presents is a monthly program that took place on the 4th Monday of the month at the library where a Master Gardener would present a gardening topic and take questions from the audience. With some coordination, cooperation, and a few practice runs, The Kimberly-Little Chute Library presented this program as a webinar in April, with Pollinators as the first topic. The program was a hit with presenters and audience alike. Participants appreciated the opportunity to get this information without leaving their homes, and the webinar format allowed for their questions to be answered live, just as they would be at the library event. Some commented that they found the webinar format to be more accessible.

Typical attendance to Master Gardener Presents at the Little Chute Library was 35-45 people. Over 70 attended the first webinar event, and more than 100 participated in the second, Shade Gardening, in May. After appearing on Zoom, we uploaded the videos to our YouTube channel ([YouTube.com/kimlitlibrary](https://www.youtube.com/kimlitlibrary)) for patrons to access again and again. A link to the Shade Gardening webinar is here: <https://youtu.be/gfnk9E7cDHQ>.

The Kimberly-Little Chute Library used video and our Facebook page to spotlight local artists, like Irineo Medina, who did a three-part series where he introduces himself, what he does, the tools and process he uses to make his art, and unveils the final products in the last video. (Irineo's last video <https://www.facebook.com/KimberlyLittleChutePublicLibrary/videos/363548971287330/>) We also spotlighted local businesses with Q&A sessions on Facebook and a virtual tour of the newly remodeled Seth's Coffee. (Seth's Coffee: <https://www.facebook.com/KimberlyLittleChutePublicLibrary/videos/553972568633577/>)

The coronavirus pandemic is far from over, and our library will continue to adapt and change to provide services safely. Some of these adaptations will become permanent fixtures in our programming schedule even after our doors are open and patrons are gathering again. They fill a need we didn't know was there until everything shut down.

# Connecting and Communicating with Virtual Programs

By Sarah Cournoyer, Beaver Dam Community Library

Leaping into livestreaming, creating a YouTube channel, learning how to schedule a Facebook premiere, and then translating the in-person experience into a viable and engaging virtual program for children and families faced many of us in Youth Services this spring. A wholly unique set of circumstances called upon us to exceed our comfort zones and try new things.

It was comforting to know I was not alone. Encouragement, collective know how, and on the fly insights came from friends and colleagues in libraries around WI and the US. Movers and shakers in the YS community shared freely and frequently. YSS board members, past and present, leapt into action and began collecting, curating, developing, and presenting up to date information and resources.

The most valuable piece of advice, besides how to flip the image on Facebook Live so viewers could see the words in books correctly, came from Abby Bussen, Children's Librarian at Muskego Public Library in a guest post for the YSS blog [Storytime Goes Digital](#):

You are going to do GREAT AT THIS! You are great at this every week in person! Your families love you and can't wait to see you! Authors and illustrators are gonna watch you read their books and be like "Wow, that librarian is CRUSHING this. They are better at this than I am! I should have them read all my books to people all the time!" I mean, maybe they'll be like that. They would be like that if they saw you reading their book. Just sayin'.

That was what I needed to hear. Perfection was not important, authenticity and relationships mattered. My community, and even patrons that had moved and watched from several states away, appreciated the normalcy of Storytime. I adapted familiar elements that viewers might not have at home. I made larger flannel pieces for our Shape Song for better visibility; stuck with one book per session; and continued with the highlight of Storytime, the Little Mouse game.

Not knowing how long the shutdown would last, I developed other virtual programs in March and April that enjoyed some success, too. For toddlers, there was Rhythm and Rhymes, shorter than Storytime and based on the early literacy practices of talk, read, sing, write, and play. For older kids, there was Shack Wacky – it means Cabin Fever – with live MadLibs and Would You Rather games. Our community enjoys crafting programs, so I recorded Art Along videos demonstrating simple projects for all ages. On Fridays, I read a chapter from a classic and gave read and watch-alikes from our digital collections. Several adult patrons reported listening to programs because a familiar voice reading gave them a sense of connection when many other social outlets were cut off by the closures.

The goal of all these programs was to keep the connection with patrons vibrant, to promote our digital collections, and to provide some library normalcy in the lives of our community.



Ready with rhythm sticks, a child participates in livestreamed Storytime

## Getting Involved with WLA

By Betsy Bleck, Chair, WLA Nomination Committee

Getting involved with WLA can be both rewarding and impactful. Whether you are able to serve on one of our numerous committees, sections, or special interest groups or volunteer a bit of your time at one of our conferences, you are furthering Wisconsin libraries. Recently, the Nomination Committee launched a Member Spotlight blog, to highlight the work you are doing as members and to spread the word on how getting involved with WLA has impacted your careers. Visit the blog to hear stories of members from all over Wisconsin and how WLA has helped to shape the librarian they are today. As you read, consider getting involved. Let us know what type of work you might be interested in by completing a short form.

Emily Sanders from Barrett Memorial Library in Williams Bay says "Being a WLA member has granted me more opportunities than I ever thought possible." Read more about Emily's story, and others, by visiting the new [Member Spotlight blog](#).



# Dear Friends,

*By Emely Villanueva, Appleton Public Library*



This year has brought along many challenges, including a global pandemic and the sudden closure of organizations, schools and businesses. Life as we knew it has changed bringing about a new “normal” that demands constant adjustment. Appleton Public Library (APL) stood strong and got creative, thanks to its multi-talented, resilient and passionate team of staff, administrators and volunteers.

As a centralized pillar of hope, reliability and resources for its diverse community, Appleton Public Library answered the call to action and immediately implemented a plan to respond to the ever-changing needs of its community members and organizations. This included assisting with the Spring election, disseminating official City information, and serving as a hub for the City’s delivery of vital supplies. In addition, APL implemented an online library card sign-up process and a curbside pick-up system to better serve our patrons during this difficult time. Friendly staff are always available over the phone to provide support, often-times, providing optimism and comfort for a lonely or distraught patron. Programming is flourishing, it never skipped a beat---now in a virtual format---from a live toddler story time, to weekly meditation sessions, a historical women’s suffrage webinar, to engaging contests, and book talks for teens. There is something for everyone at Appleton Public Library! I encourage you to visit our webpage and YouTube channel to enjoy some of these for yourself or to share with others.

Summer at Appleton Public Library will look a little different from previous years but will still be packed with exciting opportunities, virtual programs and lots of prizes! This year, we will be using an online platform called Beanstack to inspire the love of reading for all ages. Our Summer Learning Program (SLP) will run for 8 weeks, beginning June 15th to August 9th. Teens, for example, will need to log 14 hours of reading for the summer and have the option of participating in kindness/wellness activities to earn virtual badges. They will also be able to earn a free book and pick up take-n-create packs throughout the summer. Participants of all ages will automatically be entered into grand prize drawings upon successful completion of the Summer Learning Program. Make sure to visit our [www.apl.org](http://www.apl.org) website, follow our Appleton Public Library Facebook page as well as our other social media outlets for more ideas and fun!

I want to personally thank the incredible and compassionate leadership at Appleton Public Library for taking care of its staff and patrons to ensure our continued safety, health and well-being. I am proud to be a part of this wonderful team. Thank you for reading and have a healthy summer!

Warmest Regards,  
Emely

## Virtual Community Wisdom Circles at Milwaukee Public Library

*By Mark A. Zimmerman, Milwaukee Public Library, Center Street Branch*

Necessity is the mother of invention, but it’s really love, hope, and joy working together that spark innovation. Enter the Milwaukee Public Library’s Virtual Community Wisdom Circles - Teen Edition.



This MPL endeavor, based on the tenets of restorative justice, was born from conversations between MPL Administration, Restorative Circles, LLC, and Alliance High School. Designed to create and sustain a healthy library community and supportive relationships with its patrons, they started in-person at MPL’s Atkinson, Center Street, and Martin Luther King branches last Fall and have since pivoted into a virtual space since February.

Collaboration and communication are as vital as ever during these uncertain times, and these circles provide a safe space for teens to share their ideas and feelings and build community with each other, their communities, and the library. Facilitated by Alliance High School students and recent Alliance graduates, these circles create a structured forum for teens where their thoughts, ideas, and voices can be heard.

The next Virtual Community Wisdom Circles are scheduled on the GoToMeeting platform through the generous support of the Friends of the Milwaukee Public Library. Our hope is that they can continue throughout the remainder of the calendar year on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month once more branches are able to be open.

The Milwaukee Public Library is very excited to provide this resource and looks forward to seeing more teens join us moving forward.

# The Power of Personal Stories: Milwaukee Public Library's Deaf Storyslam Awarded the Inaugural ALA Libraries Transform Communities Engagement Grant

*By Kristina Gómez, Milwaukee Public Library*

I saw Mayra's story before I heard it. Mayra is a tutor at Milwaukee Area Technical College, she is a mentor, a mother, and a community activist. She was born in Guadalajara, Mexico and lost most of her hearing during childhood. At our first gathering I watched her expressions and hands jump from word to phrase to feeling. She introduced herself to us with a combination of American Sign Language (ASL), Mexican Sign Language (LSM), regional slang, and facial expressions. The voice I heard was a local interpreter skillfully keeping pace with her story. It was our first of many meetings and the first of many personal stories shared as part of a new project in Milwaukee: a Deaf Storyslam. A storyslam is a live storytelling event featuring true personal stories. Milwaukee Public Library, local storytelling non-profit Ex Fabula, and Milwaukee's Deaf community partnered last year on the first Deaf Storyslam in Wisconsin. The slam highlighted the voices and stories of Deaf community members and presented a unique opportunity to deepen connections between our Deaf and hearing communities. Our Deaf community members co-led the project planning team, storytelling workshops for fellow Deaf community members, and emceed the Deaf Storyslam event. These advisers, Mayra, Jose, Jonathon and Erin, made clear the project must provide a space where Deaf voices are prioritized, where the stories of Deaf POC are centered, and where Deaf individuals are supported as storytelling artists. Their dedication to this project is what made it a success. The end result was a vibrant, trilingual (ASL, Spanish and English) storyslam at the Mitchell Street Branch during Deaf Awareness Week 2019. The slam featured six Deaf storytellers from diverse backgrounds with over 150 attendees. It was a transformative experience.

This year Milwaukee Public Library was awarded the first American Library Association Libraries Transform Communities Engagement Grant for the Deaf Storyslam. The grant is part of the Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) community engagement initiative. The ALA funding, along with local contributions, will support a second (virtual) Deaf Storyslam and expand the community engagement efforts of our first year. Our project team recently celebrated the ALA award news over Zoom while discussing the unique challenges and opportunities of this next phase of the project during COVID-19. It was a rejuvenating conversation and we are ready for the next great slam. I hope you can join us.

View an excerpt of Mayra's story from the Deaf Storyslam here: <https://bit.ly/2z8kcLX>



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**VOLUNTEER  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Get the full experience of being a WLA member... volunteer!

Becoming a volunteer allows library professionals to develop leadership skills, create professional development opportunities, expand career networks, and learn more about your Association. It also plays an important role in advancing the mission of the Association and benefiting libraries throughout the state. If you are interested in volunteering, send your message to [wla@wisconsinlibraries.org](mailto:wla@wisconsinlibraries.org); include in the subject line, "WLA Volunteer." Thanks for your continued support.

**YOU'RE  
NEWSWORTHY!**

Submit news, ideas, updates, and stories for the 2020 Fall WLA Newsletter to editor Colleen Hallfrisch at [hallfrisch@uwosh.edu](mailto:hallfrisch@uwosh.edu) by September 30, 2020.



# Beloit Public Library Switches to RFID Tags

*By Amy Mitchell, Beloit Public Library*

Beloit Public Library has taken advantage of its doors being closed during the Safer At Home order to upgrade to Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) tags.

Over the past three weeks, staff have spent approximately 1,600 hours working to apply and activate the new tags on every item in its 160,000-piece collection. RFID tags use electromagnetic fields to automatically identify and track objects and will eventually replace the need for barcodes.

The library has been closed since March 16 due to the state's Safer At Home order. Conducting this project during closure has had its advantages.

"Tagging items while closed has been a benefit because materials haven't been moving on and off of our shelves like they would have, had we been open," said BPL Head of Library Resources Michael DeVries. "We also have been able to dedicate more staff time to getting this project done quicker—a few weeks rather than a few months."

BPL, along with the other 28 libraries in the SHARE Consortium, are upgrading to RFID tags to improve the speed and accuracy with which items are processed. The end result will be materials moving into the hands of patrons more quickly and without as much physical contact for staff behind the scenes.

Patrons also will notice a difference in the time that it takes to check out. One entire stack of books can be checked out in a matter of seconds, compared with the time it takes to scan traditional barcodes, one at a time. In the current health crisis we now are experiencing, it also means materials are being touched less.

The RFID project is possible thanks to funding from Arrowhead Library System, as well as a 2020 SHARE RFID Adoption Grant from the Lakeshores Library System.

Eight libraries applied for the Lakeshores RFID grant. BPL and Rochester Public Library were chosen. Arrowhead Library System, of which BPL is a member library, also contributed funds toward Beloit's tagging project.

The library is hoping to complete the RFID tagging project next week when the last of the back-ordered tags arrive.

Beloit Public Library provides an outstanding array of services for a population of 48,000 people residing in the City of Beloit, as well as outlying areas in Beloit and Turtle townships. In a community known for its diversity, Beloit Public Library strives to reach citizens with unique programming for all ages, a full range of library materials, and rapidly evolving computer technology and workforce development tools and resources. Located at 605 Eclipse Boulevard, Beloit Public Library is currently closed but offering contactless, curbside pickup six days a week: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. To learn more, visit [www.beloitlibrary.org](http://www.beloitlibrary.org) or follow Beloit Public Library on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/beloitlibrary).

