Overview of Public Information Office 2014

The American Library Association’s (ALA) Public Information Office (PIO) handles media relations, communication services, and public awareness through oversight of the Campaign for America’s Libraries and Ayourlibrary.org website.

PIO Goals

• Increase public awareness of the value of libraries, librarians, library workers.
• Develop awareness, acceptance of ALA’s mission and messages.
• Motivate key constituencies to advocate on behalf of ALA’s mission.

Committees

Public Awareness Committee: Sonia Alcantara-Antoine, Chair
Sonia Alcantara-Antoine is Manager of Information Services at Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.
Committee Charter: To develop programs that promote libraries and library issues nationwide
Subcommittees: Campaign for America’s Libraries

Communications Services

Results:
• Media relations training for ALA President-Elect, division presidents-elect
• Public service announcements
• Author interviews
(Photos: ALA President Barbara Stripling, Public Service announcements for National Library Week featuring Caroline Kennedy and Judy Blume, photos of authors David Baldacci, Sharon Draper and Scott Turow -participants in “Our Authors, Our Advocates” public awareness campaign of ALA President Roberta Stevens.)

Ongoing Projects

• Ayourlibrary.org website, public awareness messages for the general public
• Youth Media Awards press conference, PR Forum
• State of America’s Libraries Report, ALA Annual Report, Message Book for members and ALA spokespeople

Crisis Communications

Goal: To monitor environment and identify potential crisis situations that may damage reputation
Objectives:

- To respond quickly to breaking news stories or developing trends such as the surge in library visits during tough economic times
- To support the efforts of member quick response task force; work with Office for Library Advocacy; other ALA units

Example: As the school budget crisis deepens, administrators across the nation have started to view school libraries as luxuries that can be axed rather than places where kids learn to love reading and do research.


Media Relations Trends

- Cell phones are changing people’s relationship to news.
- Last year, 27% of Americans say they obtained most of their news from cell phones.
- Three-quarters of U.S. adults own a laptop or desktop computer. This is making news more portable, personalized and participatory.
- Mobile connectivity has turned news gathering into an anytime, anywhere affair.
- 54% of online U.S. population (133 million people) are active users of Facebook.
- More news outlets are moving to digital subscriptions as a matter of survival (150 publications are closing down, 100 more are expected to).
- Print home delivery only on Sunday may be the future.

Media Relations

Goals:

- Deliver ALA messages on a consistent basis to targeted audiences
- Emphasize messages that drive home the value of libraries and librarians

Tasks:

- Cultivate and coordinate daily interview opportunities for ALA leadership
- Craft media materials including: op-eds, talking points, web content, press releases, and letters to the editor

Media Relations Initiatives

- ALA Youth Media Awards
- Banned Books Week
- Library Card Sign-up Month
• National Library Week
• School Library Month
• Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction
• ALA/Division Conferences

**Media Targets**
- Mainstream Media
- Library Trade
- Social Media
- Ethnic press
- Talk Radio
- Carnegie Corporation of New York/New York Times I Love My Librarian Award
- Newswires
- Local and network television stations


**Recent Media Topics**
- National Library Week
- ALA’s State of America’s Libraries Report
- Top Ten List of Frequently Challenged Books
- Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction finalists
- Changing role of libraries
- Library community engagement
- School library funding
- El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day)– Día

**Media Activity (May 1 - Dec. 31, 2013)**
- More than 44,100 articles that included an ALA mention
- Efforts generated a circulation rate of more than 8 billion
- Multiple high-level print, radio, and web placements

**Media Highlights**
- NPR
- Associated Press
Communications Support

News Know-how Initiative

News Know-how Initiative helped high school students distinguish between facts and misinformation in the media and online. PIO/Campaign provided communications support: Digital supplement and press releases.

Images: Cover of News Know-how digital supplement; Barbara Jones, Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom; News Know-how logo.

American Dream Starts @ your library

Program funded by Dollar General provides grants to libraries to improve literacy services for adult English-language learners.

PIO/Campaign provided communications support: Creation of a digital supplement in 2012 and another planned for 2014.

Images: Screenshots from digital supplement.

Public Awareness

@ your library: Thousands of libraries of all types – across the country and around the globe - use the Campaign’s @ your library® brand. The Campaign for America’s Libraries is the American Library Association’s public awareness campaign that promotes the value of libraries and librarians.

Goals:

• Increase awareness, support for libraries by communicating why libraries are both unique and valuable
• Update the image of libraries, librarians and library staff
• Bring renewed energy to the promotion of libraries and librarians
• Bring library messages to a more diverse audience

Internal Goals:

• Useful to all types of libraries
• Share public relations and marketing best practices within the library community
• Tie together ALA promotions into one unified brand with consistent messages
• Promote the contribution of librarians and library staff
Image: You belong @ your library public service announcements to promote library services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Images were part of Sacramento Public Library’s public awareness campaign, funded by the Campaign for America’s Libraries Scholastic Library Publishing National Library Week Grant in 2013. The art files from this successful public awareness campaign were made available for libraries throughout the country to use.

Examples of use of @ your library brand: School Library Month: Lives Change @ your library; Every Child Ready to Read @ your library; Every Student Succeeds @ your library; Teen Tech Week: DIY @ your library.

**Key messages**

- Libraries are changing, dynamic places.
- Libraries are places of opportunity.
- Libraries bring you the world.
- Libraries change communities.

**Tools**

- @ your library logos
- Information about turnkey programs to implement locally
- Download promotional materials for National Library Week, Library Card Sign-up Month

Images: @ your library logo translated into a variety of languages. Promotional public service announcements for National Library Week.

**Connect with your kids @ your library**

The Campaign for America’s Libraries newest public awareness campaign encourages parents to spend quality family time at the library.

- A PSA to show online or embed on your library’s website
- The Connect with your kids @ your library Family Activity Guide suggests activities for families under the themes of reading together, exploring cultural heritage, gaming and more.
- A Connect with your kids bookmark template
- Articles, blog posts and promotions available through a Creative Commons license that can be repurposed on your libraries website, blog, Facebook page, etc.

Images: Screenshot from video public service announcement and cover of Connect with your kids @ your library Family Activity Guide.

**Public Awareness Partnerships**

Partnerships amplify our voice and provide greater reach to our key messages.

Partnerships in which members have indicated interest include:
• Media partners
• Corporate partners
• Nonprofit and government partners

Images: Lifetime Television logo and screenshot of the Connect with your kids @ your library public service announcement created by Lifetime and aired on Lifetime Network. Also, The American Dream starts @ your library.

**Carnegie Corporation of New York/New York Times I Love My Librarian Award**

The Carnegie Corporation of New York/New York Times I Love My Librarian Award encourages library users to recognize the accomplishments of exceptional public, school, college, community college, or university librarians.

In 2013 10 librarians received a $5,000 cash award, a plaque and $500 travel stipend to attend an awards reception in New York, hosted by The New York Times, on December 17. In addition, a plaque given to each award winner’s library.

Images: I Love My Librarian Award logo; Ten 2013 winners on stage at The Times Center in New York with ALA President Barbara Stripling, and ALA Executive Director Keith Fiels; Author Richard Ford, winner of the 2013 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction giving the keynote at the 2013 ceremony; full-page ad in The New York Times congratulating the winners.

**School Library Campaign**

American Association for School Librarians (AASL), Office for Library Advocacy (OLA), PIO, and Campaign for America’s Libraries

PIO-Campaign organized half day planning session. Units discussed efforts to date, identified needs and strategic priorities.

Next steps:

• Develop key messages
• Coordinate the allocation of existing resources to accelerate implementation of key action areas
• Implement editorial board to improve communication and coordination and develop op-eds, etc.

**What’s Ahead**

National Library Week, April 2015: Honorary Chair will be best-selling author David Baldacci.

Library Card Sign-up Month 2014: Honorary Chair will be Stan Lee

Images: David Baldacci and Stan Lee with new Spiderman “Drop in and READ” poster from
New Partnerships Under Discussion

- Baseball
- Ernest Hemingway Foundation
- Univision
- Morningstar

Atyourlibrary.org

Atyourlibrary.org is the public website for the American Library Association’s public awareness campaign, The Campaign for America’s Libraries, which promotes the value of libraries and librarians.

The goal of the website is to provide information and recommended resources that everyone can take advantage of at their local library.

The site encourages people to connect with their local library and librarians and receives 25,000 visits per month on average.

Features:

- Articles/blog posts published weekly
- Social networking: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest
- Author interviews on the value of libraries posted weekly
- Daily Booklist Online feed
- News feed about libraries
- Slideshow


Atyourlibrary.org Social Media

Twitter: 16,000 followers
Facebook: 6700 followers
YouTube: 88,000 views
Flickr: 103,000 views
Pinterest
Newsletter subscribers: 5000

Note: Facebook and Twitter accounts are up 170% in the last two years. Engagement is increasing, as well.
Author Videos
Authors and newsmakers speak about their memories of libraries, how they use the library today, budget cuts to libraries, censorship and other topics. 96 interviews with full transcripts are available for download and reuse under Creative Commons licensing.
Authors include:

- Neil Gaiman
- Judy Blume
- David Levithan
- Sally Ride
- Daniel Ellsberg
- Yuji Morales
- David Baldacci
- Andrea Davis Pinkney
- Dennis Lehane
- Melissa de la Cruz
- Brian Selznick
- Gregory Maguire
- Julie Powell
- Khaled Hosseini
- John Grisham
- Jamal Joseph
- Laura Lippman

Social Media Goals

- Increase engagement and build relationships with a variety of audiences: State libraries and library associations, general public, authors, publishers, Library Champions.
- Look for opportunities to integrate the Campaign’s key messages with social media conversations.
- Participate in efforts to improve ALA’s internal and external communication efforts through increased collaboration with Social Media Working Group.
Atyourlibrary.org Promotions

Library Card Sign-up Month “60 Ways to Use Your Library Card” slideshow
Libraries provide images and suggestions for “ways to use a library card.” Slideshow is made available to embed, so it is widely distributed. It received over 250,000 pageviews for 2013, the second year for the promotion.
Image: Screenshot of “60 Ways to Use Your Library Card” slideshow featuring children at storytime.

School Library Month 2013
We created 30 images, one for each day of School Library Month, bearing positive messages about school libraries and shared daily on Facebook. Some were quotes, others had important information about the key role school libraries play in education. All images were branded with School Library Month logo. Images were shared over 7500 times on Facebook during April.
Image: Example of School Library Month promotional image featuring Bat signal in dark sky. And quote from author Tom Angleberger, “A school library is like the bat cave: It's a safe fortress in a chaotic world, a source of knowledge and the lair of a superhero. True, the superhero is more likely to be wearing a cardigan than a batsuit, but still...”

Banned Books Week Trivia Quiz
Promotes awareness about censorship and promotes ALA product. Everyone who correctly answers is entered in a drawing to win a Banned books Week tote bag. Over 1200 entries.

Vote for Your Favorite Banned Books Week Trading Card
In 2013 Lawrence (Kan.) Public Library and Chapel Hill (N.C.) Public Library offered Banned Books Trading Cards designed by local artists and inspired by books that have been censored or banned. We asked people to vote for their favorite card. Over 200 votes.

National Library Week April 2014
The theme for National Library Week 2014 is Lives Change @ your library. This promotion encourages library users to share how the library has changed their life on social media channels by using the hashtags #NLW14 and #LivesChange. A speech bubble template for use in selfie type images was provided for libraries to help promote submissions from patrons.
Image: Speech bubble image with National Library Week, ALA and Library Champions branding.
Image: Photo of the speech bubble prop in use: Patron at Hawaii Pacific University holds speech bubble sign that says, “I grew up in a poor rough neighborhood. Libraries were (are) my safe haven.”