American Library Association  
Report of Camila Alire, ALA President  
April, 2010

Everywhere I go, someone inevitably asks me what has been the highlight of my presidency to date. At first, I would answer that it was getting out to the various chapter conferences and other venues in different cities/states. Now, I add to that the fact that my presidential advocacy initiative – frontline library advocacy coupled with advocacy for literacy – has come to fruition. That is very exciting.

Presidential Initiatives

Frontline Library Advocacy: The frontline library advocacy initiative (http://www.ala.org/frontlineadvocacy) is alive and living on Advocacy University (http://www.ala.org/advocacyuniversity). I encourage folks to take a look at the hard work the Steering Committee and Working Groups did. Librarians, library support staff, and library administrators can now go to the website and find all the help they need to begin this newly-developed type of advocacy that engages frontline library staff in advocating the value of their respective libraries and their value as library employees to their communities – city/county, college/university, school districts, and corporation/government agency.

Additionally, the Steering Committee is working with a consulting group to have the materials that are presented on the website developed into an online tutorial for library staff and administrators. This tutorial should be completed and rolled out by the end of April. Plans are being made to develop a webinar on frontline library advocacy that would be available to ALA members for free.

What is most exciting for me and others who have been working with the Steering Committee is the very positive reception we are receiving when presenting or doing workshops on frontline advocacy. People are getting it! They see this initiative as an enhancement to the hard efforts of folks working on legislative advocacy for libraries. Marci Merola was the ALA staff member advising this project.

My sincere thanks go to my co-chairs – Patty Wong and Julie Todaro – our Steering Committee (to include ALA staff members – Marci Merola, Dale Lipschultz, and JoAnne Kempf) and the working groups as well as PRL and REACT advisory groups.

Advocacy for Literacy: This initiative is also well underway. As a reminder, this became an initiative after reviewing the startling illiteracy data of minority residents in the U.S. I wanted to work with the ALA ethnic affiliates on developing some models to get libraries involved in family literacy programs. The five ethnic affiliates have developed family literacy focus [FLF] projects. See Appendix A for descriptions of their project foci.
The ethnic affiliates’ FLF working groups have awarded grants to various libraries who submitted grant applications. These libraries will develop FLF projects that can be replicated by public libraries all over the country. See Appendix B for the list of our first libraries to commit to the FLF Projects. My sincere thanks to Mary Jo Venetis, chair of the FLF initiative, and Dale Lipschultz, ALA staff advisor.

APPEARANCES AND INTERVIEWS
Again, I had a very aggressive travel schedule and thoroughly enjoyed representing ALA. I think the highlights of these past travels were conducting half-day workshops/preconference on Frontline Advocacy at the Louisiana Library Association, San Antonio Public Library, and Oklahoma Library Association/Mountain Plains Library Association. It has been these venues where the frontline toolkits were premiered and well-received. Additional workshops will be offered in Atlanta, GA for Georgia Public Library Services and the Southern California Library Cooperative (April and May). The following are activities since ALA Midwinter-Boston thru March 2010:

Travel/Personal Appearances—February/March 2010
- 2/5 University of Denver, ALA-Student Chapter
- 2/8 Coalition of Library Advocates (COLA) 25th Anniversary-Providence, RI
- 2/8 University of Rhode Island-LIS Providence, RI
- 2/9 Pratt Institute, LIS Program-Brooklyn, NY
- 2/11 Queens College/CUNY- GSLIS
- 2/16 Yolo County Public Librarians (EI-In-service workshop)
- 2/16 City of West Sacramento and Los Rios (Officials and Library Partners)
- 2/16 Yolo County Public Library Management Team (Leadership Intensive)
- 2/16 Winters Community Library/Yolo County Public (Literacy Initiative)
- 2/17 REFORMA presentation-Sacramento Chapter
- 2/18 San Francisco Public Library Staff (Staff Day speech and session with SFPL Leadership Academy)
- 2/24 John Steinbeck Library-Salinas Public System Breakfast- Trends talk
- 2/24 Cesar Chávez and El Gabilan Libraries-Salinas Public System (Tours and “Salon” Talk)
- 3/4 Dominican University (Graduate School of LIS), River Forest, IL
- 3/5 Cervantes Institute, Chicago, IL
- 3/9-14 Louisiana Library Association-Baton Rouge, LA
- 3/18-19 Tennessee Library Association-Memphis, TN
- 3/24-27 Public Library Association-Portland, OR

Media & Interviews
- 1/28 Northwest Herald (Illinois) -- Libraries and the economy
- 1/28 Associated Press on San Francisco Public Library
- 2/4 Press of Atlantic City, NJ/ Vincent Jackson --Libraries-job seekers, classes
- 2/11 Cedar Rapids Gazette, IA--Community Needs-21st Century Library
- 3/8 Content That Works (syndicate) Top Jobs column with Teresa Odle--
Library Information Careers

- 3/13   *VOYA* (Voice of Youth Advocates) Magazine--Presidential Initiative
- 3/23   Radio Disney / Jennifer Zappola - -National Library Week
- 3/26   AOL News with Scott Martelle -- Bad economy’s effect on libraries
- 3/30   CBS radio/Deborah Gordon--National Library Week and activities
- 3/31   Hartford Journal Inquirer --Changing role of libraries

Correspondence

- 3/19   (Sent) – Ramon Cortines-LA Unified School District to Eliminate All Certified Librarians   [Co-signed with Cassandra Barnett AASL]
- 3/22   (Sent) – Ann Arbor School Superintendent.   [Co-signed with Cassandra Barnett AASL]
Appendix A

**Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA)**
The Chinese American Librarians Association's (CALA) project, *Dai Dai Xiang Chuan: Bridging Generations, a Bag at a Time* brings generations together through literacy and cultural activities that emphasize verbal/written language skills and cultural and digital literacy. “Dai Dai” in this case is an appropriate pun in Chinese, carrying two meanings signifying bags and generations. The "bags" will include bilingual (Chinese and English) print and digital materials on varied intergenerational topics and include instructions for family activities. CALA will also host the project website that includes a blog for participating families. The culmination of each project implementation is the Community Showcase Day which will demonstrate impact of the *Alire Family Literacy Focus Initiative* on the local community while participating families share their fun and meaningful experiences with the rest of the community.

**Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA); American Indian Library Association (AILA)**

*Talk Story: Sharing Culture, Sharing History* is a library pilot program to serve Asian/Asian-American, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander/Pacific Islander-American, American Indian and Alaska Native families. The goal is to bring basic and cultural literacy together by combining story time and oral traditions. Event programs will be hosted at selected public/tribal libraries with a focus on basic literacy: pre-readers, early readers, and family members. The event programs will allow for positive family experiences and help participants develop greater respect and understanding of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaskan Native cultural identity, history, and traditions. Participants will strengthen literacy skills, gain self-confidence through culturally appropriate materials and positive role models and reinforce or create partnerships between libraries and communities.

**Black Caucus of ALA (BCALA)**
The Black Caucus (BCALA) will launch an intergenerational literacy project, entitled *Reading is Grand! Celebrating Grand Families @ Your Library*, targeted at grandparents raising their grandchildren. The primary focus of the project is to foster a lifelong love of reading. On June 1, 2010, BCALA will host a kick-off celebration at one of the branches of the Chicago Public Library. BCALA will provide a toolkit and other resources aimed at helping all types of libraries plan and implement this new literature based intergenerational literacy program.

**REFORMA: The National Assn. to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos & the Spanish Speaking**
REFORMA believes that storytelling and the oral traditions are essential in the transmission and preservation of culture, as well as a significant tool in developing literacy skills. The mission of *Noche de Cuentos* is to promote and preserve the art of storytelling within our Latino communities in the US. The goals and objectives of the program are to honor home languages and cultures, and thus promote literacy in our multicultural community, specifically targeting the Latino community, through storytelling and the oral traditions; to promote literacy and the importance of linking storytelling, language, libraries, and culture by bringing family stories and oral literature to life through storytelling; to provide storytelling and programming resources, training, and a promotional toolkit to help participating libraries and organizations organize their events; and to attract new users to the library in communities serving Latino families. Five libraries will be engaged in the initial kick off of the program. Promotional materials will be available to help libraries promote their events, and a logo and poster will give the program its unique identity and will facilitate the promotional outreach work needed to grow the event. The success of this
program will be measured by attendance at the five participating libraries, surveys filled by the public and staff, and the number of partnerships and collaborating agencies.

APPENDIX B

List of Family Literacy Project Participating Libraries

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>APALA Libraries</th>
<th>AILA Libraries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carson Regional Library</td>
<td>Jemez Pueblo Community Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Los Angeles Public Library System</td>
<td>Jemez Pueblo, NM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln City Libraries</td>
<td>Laguna Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln, NE</td>
<td>Laguna Pueblo, NM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing Branch- Queens Public Library</td>
<td>Tuzzy Consortium Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing, NY 11355</td>
<td>Barrow, Alaska</td>
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</tbody>
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BLACK CAUCUS OF ALA (BCALA)
Whitney Young Branch
Chicago Public Library

CHINESE AMERICAN LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION (CALA)
Cleveland Public Library
Cleveland, OH
Middlebury Community Public Library
Middlebury, IN
Miami University Libraries
Oxford, OH
Visitacion Valley Branch
San Francisco Public Library

REFORMA
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library
Charlotte, NC 28202
Mexican American Cultural Center
Austin, TX
Charlotte, NC 28202
Half Moon Bay Branch
San Mateo County Library
Half Moon Bay, CA
San Mateo County Library
National City Public Library
National City, CA

Salinas Public Library
Salinas, CA

Alalthough the following libraries did not receive the Family Literacy Focus funding, they participated in REFORMA’s Noche de Cuentos kick-off events.

Baltimore County Public
Woodlawn, MD

Dallas Public Library
Dallas, TX

Excelsior Branch - San Francisco Public Library

Kanoon Magnet Elementary School
Chicago, IL