The libraries’ most powerful asset is the conversation they provide — between books and readers, between children and parents, between individuals and the collective world.

Take them away and those voices turn inwards or vanish.

Turns out that libraries have nothing at all to do with silence.

One LA’s Public Programs Office toured five traveling exhibitions in FY2014 to public, academic and special libraries. In addition to bringing free, museum-quality curated materials to libraries, the exhibitions sparked additional community outreach through related scholar talks, performances and readings.

- **Discover Earth: A Century of Change**: An interactive, multimedia exhibition that shows how the global environment changes — and is changed by — the local environment of the exhibition hosts’ own communities
- **Discover Tech: Engineers Make a World of Difference**: A showcase of the creative and collaborative design process that engineers undertake to help solve society’s problems
- **Dust, Drought, and Dreams Gone Dry**: An exploration of the causes and consequences of the Dust Bowl through oral histories, essays, letters and photographs
- **Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War**: A look back at our 16th president with a fresh perspective — one that focuses on his struggle to confront three intertwined crises of the war: the secession of Southern states, slavery and wartime civil liberties

The opportunity to host ALA/NEH-sponsored traveling exhibitions is one of the highlights of my career. Being able to engage students and faculty from multiple academic disciplines in conjunction with the library is a key element in helping the library maintain its standing within the campus culture. As libraries struggle on so many levels, these traveling exhibitions enable us to celebrate our important role in the community, both academic and public.

—Christine S. Fagan, collection management librarian, Roger Williams University Libraries
“The StoryCorps @ your library project gave a platform and voice to a ‘New South,’ and for me, that was the greatest success!”
—Andrea Blackman, special collections division manager, Nashville (Tenn.) Public Library

Programming grants enable libraries of all sizes and budgets to boost their offerings and infuse their communities with new ideas. More than 1,000 libraries received programming grants from the Public Programs Office in FY2014.

• A multi-year initiative, Muslim Journeys shares with the public diverse perspectives on the people, places, histories, beliefs, practices and cultures of Muslims in the United States and around the world. The project has unfolded in two stages: the National Endowment for the Humanities’ (NEH) Bridging Cultures Bookshelf, in which the Public Programs Office distributed a curated selection of 25 books and 3 films to over 900 host sites; and Let’s Talk About It: Muslim Journeys, a cash grant offered to 125 sites to fund scholar-led reading and discussion programs.

• StoryCorps @ your library: Modeled on the popular oral history project, this two-year program provided equipment, training and resources for public libraries to capture oral narratives and local history of their communities.

Public libraries dream of holding these conversations and being provided means to inspire original thought and reflection. Because of the [Muslim Journeys] grant, we were afforded the opportunity to allow our patrons to connect, to learn and to imagine in a way they hadn’t before.
—Samantha Helmick, public services librarian, Burlington (Iowa) Public Library
ProgrammingLibrarian.org is a go-to resource for information related to presenting cultural and community programs for all types and sizes of libraries. Librarians from public, academic, special and school libraries use the website and monthly e-newsletter to stay connected with the latest programming initiatives, grants and resources, and to share tips, ideas, challenges and successes.

The Programming Librarian Interest Group (PLIG), one of nine ALA Member Interest Groups, seeks to help librarians advocate for programming at their institutions; share program ideas and successful strategies; and provide a space for professional development. Membership in PLIG is open to all ALA members, free of charge.

While the Public Programs Office serves all libraries and librarians — both ALA members and non-members — the libraries we engage find a community of practice and support through ALA’s 57,000-member community.
All communities have challenges. Library professionals are uniquely positioned to help conquer them — given the right tools.

**Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC)** — an ALA initiative managed by the Public Programs Office — seeks to strengthen libraries’ roles as community leaders and give them the tools to lead positive change. In partnership with The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation and with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the initiative addresses a critical need within the library field by developing and distributing resources and support for librarians to “turn outward” and engage with their communities in new ways.

Through ALA conference sessions, free online webinars and resources, and training opportunities, libraries learn to:

- tap libraries’ natural values to contribute to the greater good and bring their communities together
- surface people’s shared aspirations for their communities and help bring them to life
- convene and lead productive, insightful community conversations
- turn “public knowledge” into action

The Public Innovators Lab was moving, challenging and world-rocking — in the best possible way.

—Erica Freudenberger, director, Red Hook (N.Y.) Public Library
What counts as “success” in the realm of library public programming? What impact does programming have on participants and communities? What skills must programming librarians hone to maximize impact and reach underserved communities?

The National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA) seeks to answer these questions. With funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Public Programs Office is developing a plan to understand and document the characteristics, audiences, outcomes and values of library public programming at the national level.

The goal: to help libraries increase public access to knowledge and foster support for lifelong learners of diverse backgrounds, including underserved populations and those with special needs.

Each and every day, libraries across the nation witness the important and lasting impact of programming in their communities. How can we assist these libraries in offering the best possible programs? What, specifically, is working? Why? Through NILPPA, we hope to develop a process to better comprehend and examine the impact of library programming, taking our basic understanding to the next level.

— Tim Grimes, advisor, National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment
The Public Programs Office supports two annual awards to recognize excellence in library programming nationwide. Beyond singling out examples of innovative or pioneering programs, the awards seek to inspire creativity across the field; through articles, Q&As, and webinars with award winners, librarians across the country can recreate and build upon these exemplary programs.

The **ALA Excellence in Library Programming Award** recognizes a library that demonstrates excellence by providing cultural/thematic programs that have community impact and respond to community needs. The winning library receives $5,000, presented at ALA’s Annual Conference.

In 2014, the award went to the Kansas City Public Library and its community partners for “Greetings from Kansas City,” an exhibition featuring historic postcards from the library’s Missouri Valley Special Collections, as well as local historical programs to connect the citizens of Kansas City to its past.

Named after the late Sara Jaffarian, the **Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award for Exemplary Humanities Programming** recognizes and promotes excellence in humanities programming in elementary and middle school libraries. The $5,000 award is presented annually by the ALA Public Programs Office in cooperation with the American Association of School Librarians.

The 2014 Jaffarian Award winner was Perry Meridian Middle School of Indianapolis, Ind., whose “R.O.A.D. (Research, Observe, Analyze, Discover) I Travel” genealogy unit, created in partnership with the Indiana State Library and Indiana Historical Society, introduced 500 students to their family histories through historic newspapers, photos, personal interviews and websites.

I applied for the Jaffarian Award because I was so inspired and proud of everyone involved, and I knew winning would give them the recognition they deserved. The teachers and librarians take pride in knowing their hard work received national recognition and is regarded as an exemplary program by fellow educators and librarians.

— Leslie Preddy, school librarian, Perry Meridian Middle School, Indianapolis, Ind. Winner, 2014 Sara Jaffarian Award
PPO: A-cycle-of-grantmaking, FY14

Generous funders — government sources, foundations and others who recognize the value of libraries as centers of cultural and civic life — provided the Public Programs Office more than $2.4 million in FY2014 to bring programming opportunities and resources to libraries.

PPO distributed grants, resources and services to public, academic, school and special libraries nationwide.

Grantee libraries hosted 2,000 programs and events as part of PPO projects, reaching an audience of more than 400,000 people.

ALA CULTURAL COMMUNITIES FUND

In 2003, a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) kick-started a campaign to secure the future of libraries as cultural destinations within the community. Since then, the Cultural Communities Fund (CCF) has grown to more than $1.9 million, serving libraries as they serve their communities through the highest quality arts and humanities programs.

Funding from CCF supports:

• professional development opportunities for libraries that address practical issues related to cultural and community programs
• awards and grants that recognize excellence in library programming
• development and promotion of effective library programming models

More than 500 librarians, culturally focused foundations and corporations have contributed to CCF. To make a contribution, visit ala.org/ccf.

PUBLIC AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Public Programs Office depends upon the support and expertise of an experienced group of programming librarians. The Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee (PCPAC) promotes excellence in cultural programming; assists library staff in becoming more effective providers of cultural programming; identifies and disseminates resources for cultural programming; and promotes the Cultural Communities Fund.

The support of the following organizations between September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014 helped to make the work of the ALA’s Public Programs Office possible. Thank you to our funders and partners.

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the Human Endeavor
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- National Girls Collaborative Project
- Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art
- National Museum of American History
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- National Science Foundation
- Lunar and Planetary Institute
- Oklahoma State University Library
- Mount Holyoke College Library
- Smithsonian Institute for Learning
- National Center for Interactive Learning at Space Science Institute
- National Museum of American History
- StoryCorps
- National Constitution Center