

**TO:** ALA Executive Board/Council

**RE:** Communications and Marketing Office Media Report

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Information Item – No Action Required

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Mary Ghikas, Executive Director  
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**DRAFT OF MOTION:** NA

**DATE:** Jan. 28, 2020

**Subject:** Midwinter Meeting Media Activity Report (Dec. 1 – Jan. 28, 2019)

**BACKGROUND:**

At the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Pennsylvania, thousands of library professionals and supporters from coast-to-coast gathered for the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits from Jan. 24-28, 2020. Attendees shared their expertise and explored new ways to transform their communities through education and lifelong learning.

**MEDIA COVERAGE SNAPSHOT:**

According to Cision, the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits earned 402 mentions, with a reach of more than 1.2 million and a publicity value of more than \$597.8 million.

To pitch ALA issues and awards, the ALA's Communications and Marketing Office (CMO) reached out to more than 130 local media contacts in the Philadelphia market, as well as more than 90 library trade press members. In addition, nearly 40 press members registered for media credentials. Local press, including WHYY radio, registered onsite.

Outreach to media included press releases, the availability of a web press kit, pitch letters to print, radio and television, emails and follow up phone calls in the weeks and months leading up to the conference.

Extensive preparation in advance of the conference involved intense planning efforts in advance of the Youth Media Awards – setting the stage for the webcast, arranging the work of the committees, communicating with division and ALA leadership, preparing a script and templates for press releases, and envisioning the layout of a room where hundreds of eager attendees would gather.

In the days leading up to Midwinter, the CMO coordinated media interviews involving ALA leadership. During the Midwinter Meeting, CBS Sunday Morning interviewed Miguel Figueroa, director of the Center of the Future of Libraries. The CBS crew attended several Future of Libraries Symposium sessions. Larra Clark, deputy director of PLA, and Siobhan A. Reardon, president and director, Free Library of Philadelphia, took part in an in-studio interview on [NBC10 Philadelphia](#) on Jan. 24.

Meanwhile, the press room was set up with accommodations for the flurry of press members picking up badges, making requests, picking up press releases, reserving interview space, and arranging interviews. Amenities included snacks and charging stations, as well as computer space and a printer.

Onsite guests included Peter Crimmins, a reporter with WHYY radio, who covered the [Youth Media Awards ceremony](#) and several reporters from library trade, such as Lisa Peet from Library Journal.

The press room was a lively place during the Youth Media Awards, with committees gathering for photographs prior to making phone calls to the winners. The calls were private, but there was no hiding the feeling of joy that erupted from the walls of the press room.

It was the culmination of a long and arduous process of checking details from copyright pages, handing materials to committee members and scripts to leadership, and combing the script for any errors that might crop up.

The Youth Media Awards ceremony began on Monday with the opening of the doors to the convention center at 5:30 a.m., as the committees began congratulating the winners. At 6:30 a.m., the crowd lining up in front of the ballroom doors began growing, with the faithful entering at 7:30 a.m.

The crowd viewing the event live was supplemented by the virtual crowd. More than 21,000 Facebook viewers enjoyed the live stream.

The YMA announcements also ignited a social media explosion on Twitter. Particular attention was drawn to history in the making, as Jerry Craft's "New Kid" became the first graphic novel to win the coveted Newbery Medal.

Twitter abounded with viewing parties not only around the country, but throughout the world. Tweets about the Youth Media Awards could be seen in such languages as Chinese.

Videos of viewing parties, including students watching enthusiastically from their classrooms, as well as mock Newbery and Caldecott elections, flew across the Twittersphere. In one school, students filled the gym to watch the proceedings.

Librarians also posted photos in their libraries with the winning books.

As the ceremony unfolded, the CMO team fed about two dozen press releases onto the website, ready for publication as soon as the winners were announced. After the ceremony, the CMO would distribute releases to daily and trade press via the Cision platforms, gaining in many cases an instant response for interviews and artwork.

The YMA announcements received enthusiastic national press attention, and the CMO. The awards garnered coverage from the [New York Times](#), the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#), , NPR, [American Libraries](#), [School Library Journal](#), [Comics Beat](#), [the comics publication downthetubes.net](#)

In addition to the YMA ceremony, coverage of the Midwinter Meeting also included another significant literary award. The winners of the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction were unveiled during the Midwinter Meeting. The medals, which recognize the best fiction and nonfiction books for adult readers, garnered media coverage from [Publishers Weekly](#) and [Associated Press](#), among others.

Other conference coverage included a [Publishers Weekly article](#) on the keynote speech of Wes Moore, an opinion piece in the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), a [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) article on the William C. Morris Award. Midwinter previews from [Library Journal](#), [Publishers Weekly](#), [Against the Grain](#), a [Sentinel Tribune](#) article on a mock Caldecott election, a post on [the ACRL Insider blog](#) about the PLA and ACRL boards responding to SCOE recommendations and a [Fox Nebraska](#) article on the winner of an I Love My Librarian Award.

A full detailed report will be coming in the next couple of weeks from the CMO.