



SRRT

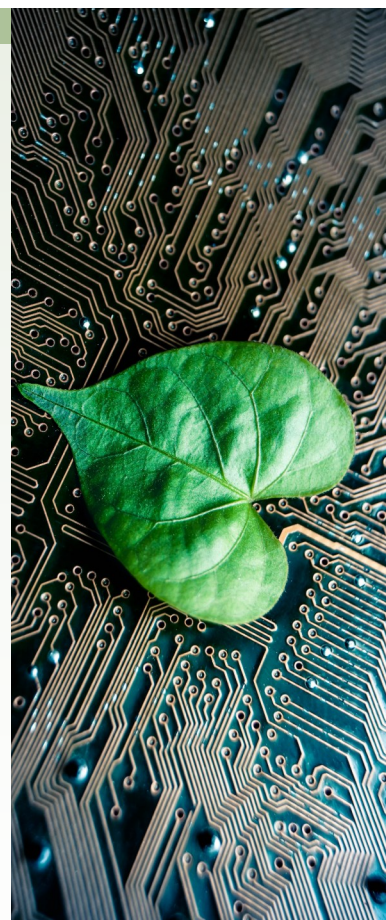
Social Responsibilities Round Table

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Issue 213



The SRRT Newsletter

Librarians on Social Responsibilities

Dear *The SRRT Newsletter* Readers,



It's difficult to even find the words to express what's been going on in the world and in our country. COVID, a riot in Washington DC, unemployment, libraries closed. And then there's the Georgia Senate race!

How do libraries fit into all this? As I see it, we are a constant, as we provide reliable information, connections, resources, public spaces. With so many libraries closed or providing only curbside pickup right now, it's more challenging for us, though. Where are our open public spaces? How do we serve our community members who don't have Internet access or a relevant device or even electricity? As conversations about how the pandemic has exposed deep social inequities continue, I hope we can work with our communities to address those inequities as best we can, even during a pandemic. These are difficult times for all of us and I'm proud to be in a profession that cares so much about their communities and comes up with creative ways of continuing to serve everyone.

Julie Winkelstein
The SRRT Newsletter Co-Editor

During our current period of great strife and upheaval, it is also difficult to think about where one can turn for guidance or what one can do to help and provide respite. Libraries can provide constancy and reliability. While we often think of these as part of "providing quality service," they are also very small ways our libraries fulfill social and civic responsibilities to our communities. In this issue, we asked the question, "How are you exercising your social responsibility?" Many library workers have responded. Thanks to Julie Winkelstein and Mark Winston, our Features Editors, we have a number of stories from the field. Some are stories about libraries, some are about library workers supporting causes and ideals integral to equity, inclusion, and human rights. We hope you find them interesting and inspiring.

Melissa Cardenas-Dow
The SRRT Newsletter Co-Editor



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From the SRRT Coordinator

As I've been in quarantine these last two weeks, I've been granted the opportunity to reflect more about our year and the history of SRRT. In 2020, we have continued to create and migrate pages to the [SRRT website](#), improve communication through SRRT's [ALA Connect pages](#), used virtual meetings to meet more often and to increase who can attend, all while continuing to grow our membership. As of November 2020, SRRT membership has grown 2.92% compared to this time last year and we remain the largest round table. Also seeing growth was the Sustainability Round Table:

Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) 1972, +1.78%
Sustainability Round Table (SUSTRT) 1349, +15.3%

ALA has 53,330, -7%

I have also been greatly enjoying the history of SRRT discussion that has been happening recently on our Connect page. I encourage everyone who has knowledge of our rich history to share with us newer members.

Brief Intro and History of SRRT

The Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) was created in 1969 to help make ALA more democratic and to establish progressive priorities not only for the Association, but also for the entire profession. We were founded out of concern for human and economic rights, which remain urgent concerns today. SRRT believes that libraries and librarians must recognize and help solve social problems and inequities in order to carry out their mandate to work for the common good and bolster democracy. SRRT works to promote a more progressive agenda and in doing so, provides a home within ALA for progressive librarians, library workers, and supporters who agree to promote social responsibility as a core value of librarianship.

SRRT currently has [four task forces](#) for those interested in specific economic and human concerns: Feminist Task Force (FTF); Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force (HHPTF); International Responsibilities Task Force (IRTF); and the Martin Luther King Jr. Holi-

“SRRT...provides a home within ALA for progressive librarians, library workers, and supporters who agree to promote social responsibility as a core value of librarianship.”

ALA Midwinter Virtual 2021



The scheduler for ALA Midwinter Virtual 2021 is [available](#) online.

Please note SRRT meetings and events scheduled:

- [SRRT Membership Meeting](#): Saturday, January 23, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Central
- [22nd MLK Jr Sunrise Celebration](#): Monday, January 25, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Central

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day Task Force (MLKTF). There is also an ad hoc Web Task Force that maintains SRRT's online presence. Many ALA round tables and groups have gotten their start as SRRT round tables, including: Sustainability Round Table (SUSTRT), Rainbow Round Table (RTT), GODORT, Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT), Black Caucus American Library Association (BCALA), REFORMA, American Indian Library Association, LLAMA Women Administrator's Discussion Group, ACRL Women and Gender Studies Section, and Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (an ALA Council Committee (COSWL).

In addition, many SRRT members have gone on to serve important roles within ALA. Our first elected coordinator, **Pat Schuman**, was the first woman to serve as ALA Treasurer while **Herb Biblo** was the first minority to serve as ALA Treasurer. Early SRRT members who later become ALA Presidents include: **Eric Moon**, **EJ Josey**, **Arthur Curley**, **Pat Schuman**, **Clara Jones**, **Mitch Freedman**, **Betty Turock**, **Leslie Burger**, **Regina Minudri**, and **Nancy Kranich**. SRRT members also founded the National Freedom Fund for Librarians, preceding the Freedom to Read Foundation and the Leroi Merritt Humanitarian Fund.

To learn more about our history and advocacy efforts, visit our [Resolution Archive](#) and [News-Letter Archive](#). I'm proud to be a member of such a progressive and influential group and I hope that you feel the same. I would also like to thank **Pat Schuman**, **Diedre Conkling**, **Tom Twiss**, and **Fred Stoss** for their contributions to the Connect discussion, where I blatantly stole much of this information.

Creating New Task Forces

As you can see above, a lot of amazing things have come out of SRRT. That said, I think we have a great deal to contribute still. SRRT members are encouraged to join any task force that they are interested in or to [create their own](#). New task forces just need 10 members to get started. We already have one discussion in Connect seeking those interested in health diversity and libraries. Join the discussion or start your own!

2021 ALA Midwinter Meeting

SRRT will be meeting virtually at ALA Midwinter 2021. You do not need to attend Midwinter to

SRRT Councilor Report

This fall, the ALA Council has been continuing its work on the recommendations of the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE), which was formed several years ago to perform a review of ALA governance and structure and to recommend changes to “vitalize its success, strength, and agility as a 21st-Century association.” There have been several Council sessions over the course of the fall about specific elements of the plan, presented by the Forward Together working group, who is tasked with assessing the SCOE proposals, gathering feedback, and making recommendations to move towards a vote on new bylaws for the Association. All of these were recorded and can be accessed on the [Forward Together website](#).

Some key points:

- *Membership minimums for Round Tables.* SCOE recommends requiring a minimum membership of 1% of total ALA membership for Round Tables, below which they will be disbanded. Many RTs, from the largest - SRRT! - to the smaller round tables most likely to be disbanded under this rule, have expressed concern that this will eliminate interest groups that, while niche, serve an important role in a field as diverse as library work. Some of the groups that risk elimination under this plan include the Government Documents Round Table, LearnRT, the Library History Round Table, the Library Support Staff Interests Round Table and the Map & Geospatial Information Round Table. One concern raised was the seeming lack of a compelling reason to remove these round tables just because they are small, since small round tables already have their ALA footprints reduced. For example, they have reduced ALA staff support and are represented collectively by a single Small Round Tables Councilor. There was discussion regarding what other metrics could be used to judge Round Table impact and effectiveness, and requests for more clarity on what ALA will gain by this change.
- *Single bylaws for all Round Tables.* SCOE proposes instituting a single set of bylaws for all Round Tables. While there are compelling reasons to have a standard template for Round Tables to use as a starting point, to ensure that existing and new round tables all have a framework in place for smooth operation and to minimize staff time spent on helping RT leadership through process questions, there was considerable support in the Council session for including a means for round tables to amend their own bylaws as needed.
- *ALA governance structure and process.* The SCOE plan also includes extensive reworking of ALA governance, including a new, slightly larger Executive Board elected directly by the membership and the elimination of ALA Council. I think it's very fair to say that ALA Council as it is is not representative of the ALA membership, let alone of library workers in general. However, I would also contend that the dramatic change in how Council operates due to the coronavirus pandemic has shown us that something that had been portrayed as impossible and unworkable - virtual council meetings - was not only workable but in many respects much preferable to ones held entirely in-person. I think that we have an opportunity to institute a reformatted Council that will not require twice-a-year out-of-town travel. Removing that barrier could give us an opportunity to include many people who don't get institutional financial support for conference attendance or who aren't able to travel for health or personal reasons.

There are many other recommendations but these are the ones that seem to attract the most discussion. Over the next few weeks, a new committee will be formed to evaluate the feedback that has been received on the plan and construct proposals that will be voted on by ALA Council over the spring and into summer. While this process has been pushed back and delayed before, in the most recently agreed-upon timeline, ALA Council will take a final vote at Midwinter 2022, after which the new bylaws will go to the ALA membership for a final vote.

Voices From the Past



Each issue, *The SRRT Newsletter* will feature relevant article excerpts from past issues, selected by the Editors.

The following is excerpt from the SRRT Newsletter #65 issue ([#65 October 1982](#)).

Please visit the [SRRT Newsletter Archive](#) to peruse past issues.

To: SRRT Members
From: Linda Pierce, SRRT Coordinator

The Philadelphia Conference proved to be exciting, interesting, tiring, and a reminder of how much the American Library Association needs SRRT and its members. The major controversy of the conference was the recommendation of the Executive Director to the Executive Board to eliminate the Office for Library Outreach Services (OLOS) as part of the cutbacks necessary to balance the budget. Approval of this recommendation would have meant elimination of the Office, termination of Jean Coleman's position, and distribution of her responsibilities to other offices.

At the membership meeting on Monday, July 2, overwhelming support was voiced for OLOS and a resolution to continue the Office and its functions was unanimously passed by membership. Council also supported the continuation of the Office and the membership resolution. The Executive Board met Thursday and voted not to discontinue the office.

I feel that this decision was a sign that SRRT can make a

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Voices From the Past

Continued from p. 3

difference in ALA actions and policy and should be seen as encouraging to all SRRT members.

SRRT Task Forces introduced several resolutions to membership. Those which were passed supported the right of the Chicago Public Library to vote on unionizing (Library Union Task Force) and supported the nuclear freeze campaign (Peace Information Exchange Task Force). Another resolution dealt with monitoring and working against bills currently before Congress which would deny funds to agencies which perform, reimburse, or refer people for abortions; such bills would limit the accessibility of information and could conceivably affect libraries and information centers (Feminist Task Force) .

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SRRT Meeting Minutes & Notes

As SRRT has been meeting virtually and more frequently, members of the ad hoc SRRT Web Task Force have created a [meeting minutes webpage](#). Currently under construction, it will house official minutes and notes from SRRT meetings.

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From the SRRT Coordinator

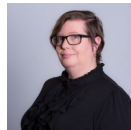
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attend our meeting. Zoom information will be posted in Connect in January.

SRRT Virtual Midwinter Meeting

Saturday, January 23, 1:30pm – 2:30pm

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Submitted by [April Sheppard](#), SRRT Action Council Coordinator

SRRT Councilor Report

Continued from p. 3

If you have feedback about these plans or any other business you think is relevant to SRRT's work, please [contact me](#)! In particular I need to hear ideas from SRRT members about ways to measure the impact of smaller round tables, and on how Council could be reformatted to make it better represent library workers. You can also review the full recommendations, learn about the progress and give feedback to the Forward Together working group at through the [Forward Together website](#).

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Submitted by [Tara Brady](#), SRRT Councilor



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Feminist Task Force (FTF) News

Rise: A Feminist Book Project for Ages 0-18 will be holding open Midwinter meetings as usual, albeit virtually. We will be meeting from *noon-5p EST from January 22-26*. Sit in on [our deliberation of this year's nominations](#). The full list of nominations, as well as our book selection criteria, can be found on our [committee blog](#).

Put your ideas into action! **Feminist Task Force is seeking a Coordinator** (or perhaps Co-Coordinators). Taking on responsibility as FTF Coordinator is an opportunity for real leadership within ALA and the broader library community. The Coordinator facilitates all activities of the task force, including planning activities and meetings, initiating new programs and projects, representing the task force at SRRT Action Council, and collaborating with and supporting project coordinators such as the Rise co-chairs. The SRRT family is incredibly supportive and open. Please call or email **Sherre Harrington** (sharrington@berry.edu, 706-236-2285) to volunteer or to ask questions!

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Submitted by [Sherre Harrington](#), Feminist Task Force Coordinator



“Put your ideas into action!”

Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force (HHPTF) News

The Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force is working on creating a booklist for recommended books that include characters experiencing homelessness. As we say on our [blog](#):

“From picture books onwards, “home” as a predictable, stable and safe place is a central subject despite a significant percentage of people who experience homelessness. These experiences are not often written about and if they are, not positively reflected in literature. To create more equitable literacy learning environments, as well as providing a counterpoint to the negative images so often created, we need opportunities to explore economic diversity and to challenge harmful discourses about people experiencing homelessness.

With this in mind, the Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force of SRRT (HHPTF) is creating a booklist of recommended books for all ages, as well as a guide to help with selecting books that are respectful and supportive of people who are experiencing homelessness.”

Interested? Email us!

[Julie Winkelstein](#) and [Lisa Gieskes](#), SRRT HHPTF co-coordinators

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Submitted by Julie Ann Winkelstein, Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force Coordinator

Call for Additional Editorial Board Members

Are you looking for a way to be more involved in the Social Responsibilities Round Table? Are you passionate about books, media, and their role in social responsibility? Do you have excellent writing and editing skills? Are you good at meeting deadlines and encouraging others to meet them as well? If so, membership in *The SRRT Newsletter* Editorial Board might be just the volunteer position you're looking for!

We are in need of more members who can serve on the Editorial Board after ALA Midwinter Virtual 2021 and beyond. Editorial Board placements are determined by the SRRT Action Council.

The SRRT Newsletter Editorial Board members must be a members of SRRT. The duties of members of *The SRRT Newsletter* Editorial Board are to liaise with groups in the profession to solicit content and to collaborate with *The SRRT Newsletter* Co-Editors to layout, publish, and distribute issues of *The SRRT Newsletter*. If you are interested, please send a copy of your resume/CV and a brief letter of inquiry outlining your qualifications and interest in the position to *The SRRT Newsletter* Co-Editors.

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Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force (MLKTF) News

The Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association are excited to present our first ever virtual Martin Luther King Jr. Sunrise Celebration. The livestream will take place **Monday, January 25, 10 a.m.** (Central) via [ALA's YouTube page](#). The livestream will allow for individuals to participate in this year's event without having to register for Midwinter. We're excited to share this moving, festive event with a larger audience in 2021! This year's theme is "*The Other America*". We will also honor the late **Rep. John Lewis** (D-GA) by incorporating elements of the speech he gave as the 23-year-old leader of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) before Dr. King's *I Have A Dream* speech during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. This year's keynote speaker is **V.P. Franklin**, author of *The Young Crusaders: The Untold Story of the Children and Teenagers Who Galvanized the Civil Rights Movement*. The Call-To-Action will be provided by Librarian of Congress, **Dr. Carla Hayden**. The celebration is sponsored by Beacon Press. This event would not be possible without the

support of the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS). We'd also like to thank YOU for all the support you have shown, as 2021 marks our 22nd year of the Sunrise Celebration!



Image of author [V.P. Franklin](#)

In 2020, my city (Charlotte, NC) was scheduled to host the Republican National Committee Convention where Donald Trump would be renominated as the party's Presidential candidate. My library, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, understood how divisive the convention would be. But we also understood the importance of having the Convention in our city and wanted to provide a perspective that celebrates democracy and the right to vote. Our library developed a slate of programs and events that recognized the centennial of the 19th Amendment passage. The events would have been held during the convention. The Library even made plans to have a booth at the convention. However, the pandemic as well as the civil unrest that followed the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery would significantly shift our plans. When our library re-emerged from the state Stay-At-Home orders to re-open, our media for reaching the public had shifted to virtual, like most other libraries. Our celebration of women and their voting rights, which we called Engage 2020, took on an entirely different meaning. The Engage 2020 initiative, in partnership with the

THE YOUNG CRUSADERS

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS WHO GALVANIZED THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT



V. P. FRANKLIN

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force (MLKTF) News

Continued from p. 6

Digital Public Library Association, engaged audiences with events, exhibits, and programs that focused on:

- Taking the 2020 Census which continues the civic duty to count everyone living in America.
- Celebrating the centennial of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.
- Increasing participation of women (especially women of color) in public and civic leadership.
- Looking at the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals in our community.
- Embracing the emergence of contemporary social movements including women's rights, voting rights and civic activism.

The [Engage HER](#) series focused on teaming up with local universities to get students and the community involved in the political process.

We collected [stories](#) from essential workers. We facilitated various conversations across the region on topics including Art & Activism.

Our Library also started a [Black Lives Matter](#) initiative to support our local community and unequivocally state that Black Lives Matter.

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Submitted by **LaJuan Pringle**, MLK Jr Holiday Task Force Coordinator

"But we also understood the importance of having the Convention in our city and wanted to provide a perspective that celebrates democracy and the right to vote."



Digital Image from [Shutterstock](#)

Features: Acting on My Social Responsibility

The current issue of *The SRRT Newsletter* provides an opportunity for writers to describe how they are putting their social responsibility into practice. In the professional contexts in which they work and in their service and research activities, librarians and library staff are able to address the needs, issues, and concerns that are visible to them in many, varied, and innovative ways. Not only does highlighting these stories of acting on one's social responsibility provide an opportunity to share these ways in which individuals are addressing inequities and proactively supporting human rights, they are also providing insight (and, we hope) inspiration for others. As we consider the range of contexts in which library and other information professionals operate and the social problems and needs that exist, the SRRT Newsletter seems the ideal venue to share these stories of information professionals acting on their convictions within and beyond their organizations for the greater good. We hope to continue to include articles of this type, as the response to this call for submissions continues to go out from the Features Editors.

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Julie Winkelstein and **Mark Winston**, *The SRRT Newsletter* Feature Editors

Essay: How I Exercise My Social Responsibilities

Social responsibilities have been part of life for almost thirty-five years. I became involved in anti-apartheid work through a local group while in high school. That work led me to believe that individuals working towards change could achieve it with time and commitment. In 1990 Nelson Mandela was released from his South African jail and helped to lead his country towards reconciliation. A quote attributed to Nelson Mandela has served as my personal belief for many years, "It always seems impossible until it's done." I learned that actions like protests, boycotts, sanctions, and disinvestment have an effect. One of my favorite memories was sitting across a table from Shell Oil executives in Calgary and they asked, "What does your group want?" It was an acknowledgement that the work of many over decades, was succeeding.

In my LIS program I was incredibly fortunate to have two role models for professional social responsibility as faculty members. Toni Samek and Hope Olson each brought their true selves to their courses and in my last semester I studied social responsibility and intellectual freedom and globalization of information with them. It has coloured how I view my profession and my role within it, and I can not imagine having had a better grounding in how to instill social responsibility within my practice.

I joined the Social Responsibilities Round Table upon becoming a member of ALA and I began working at the University of Houston in September 2001. For several years I was active in organizing, protesting, and working towards peace and social justice in Houston. SRRT was active within ALA trying to promote these same ideals and I felt myself find meaning in my association work as a result. Serving on Action Council and as SRRT Councilor, I was able to help with this work and it has provided me with some of the most rewarding professional accomplishments of my life.

I was hired as a Social Sciences librarian in my hometown in 2008 and one of my subject areas was social work. Working with this set of faculty, staff, and students for twelve years reinforced my desire to bring my true self to my work. I served on the board of a social services agency for several years and between these two experiences I learned much more about my community and saw a need to work locally again. I have involved myself in local politics and I am working to ensure that all voices are heard in the electoral process.

I would never have had the opportunity to align my beliefs and my association work so closely without SRRT. Over the last twenty years I have asked myself if I would remain an ALA member without this group, and the answer is no. Round Tables within this association truly are the grassroots of the organization and have allowed members to find their place within it. In the March 2002 SRRT Newsletter I wrote a short piece on my first professional conference where I had met SRRT members in person for the first time. I stated that I had found my ideological home and truly I have.

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Submitted by **Laura Koltutsky**, University of Calgary, *The SRRT Newsletter* Editorial Board

News Around Libraryland

Rainbow Round Table (RRT)



Mid-Century Reflections

In 2020, the [Rainbow Round Table \(RRT\)](#) of the American Library Association (ALA) celebrated our 50th anniversary. RRT was founded in 1970 as the Task Force on Gay Liberation. We are proudly the nation's first LGBTQIA+ professional organization. In recognition of our half-century milestone, an ad-hoc committee was formed to plan a golden jubilee gala during the Annual Conference in Chicago. Although this group worked diligently to secure a location, recruit speakers, develop a program, and coordinate efforts with members of other RRT committees — Advocacy & Resources, Fund Raising, News & Reviews, Archive Project — alas, the event could not be carried out as planned. In the grand scheme of 2020 fallout, this is not an especially significant concern. That said, many RRT members were disappointed by not being able to gather together with friends and colleagues. Fortunately, the resilience, dedication, and flexibility of our members that has been apparent recently across numerous remote meetings emerged in this context as well. The Golden Jubilee Gala Committee has decided to extend their planning to host the event post-pandemic in conjunction with the ALA Annual Conference 2023. By then we are hopeful our nation, and the broader world, will be stronger and healthier. For now, anticipation continues to build for what will surely be a fabulous event to reflect on 50+ years of RRT progress. Along with renewed enthusiasm, we are looking forward toward new possibilities guided by critical tenets of social justice and equity, diversity, and inclusion. In the meantime, 2021 marks another significant RRT milestone, the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Book Awards!

The **ALA RRT Stonewall Book Awards** recognize books for their exceptional merit relating to the LGBTQIA+ experience. Over time, the RRT and the Stonewall Book Awards have expanded and evolved to reflect emergent understanding based on the needs, interests, and lived realities of LGBTQIA+ librarians and the diverse community members they serve. Currently Stonewall Book Award nominations are considered from English language works published the year prior to the announcement date by dozens of volunteer committee members who make up the **Barbara Gittings Literature Award**, the **Israel Fishman Non-Fiction Award**, and the **Mike Morgan and Larry Romans Children's and Young Adult Literature Award**.

While the books recognized by the Stonewall Awards, as well as those included on **RRT Rainbow Book List** and **Over the Rainbow Lists**, have informed, entertained, and delighted diverse readers for more than half a century, we know there are still many more topics on the horizon in need of consideration. And much more work to do. For example, we continue to see troubling responses around works featuring LGBTQIA+ content reflected in the majority of titles included on the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom's recent most challenged lists and in innovative library programs intended to encourage reading and a love of literature — drag queen storytimes.

Despite all sorts of trying circumstances, RRT members and other librarians and library workers who support our efforts persist. Over the past fifty years, RRT members have demonstrated tremendous dedication to upholding democratic principles across our diverse communities. We look forward to continuing and expanding our work to recognize and celebrate LGBTQIA+ literary achievements embedded in complex histories with curiosity, courage, candor, and creativity. [Join us!](#) To learn more about the RRT, check out our [news online outlet](#).

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Submitted by **Rae-Ann Montague**, RRT Coordinator

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Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of ALA/SRRT. The editors reserve the right to edit submitted material as necessary or as whimsy strikes.

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Call for Submissions

The *SRRT Newsletter* is always looking for good articles, essays, and letters to the editor. The next submission deadline is **March 5, 2021**.

The *SRRT Newsletter* invites submissions from library and information workers, students, educators, and all others who recognize the critical importance of libraries in addressing community and social issues. Submission content should align with the goals of SRRT: matters of social responsibility and values, current social needs, and opportunities and problems as they relate to libraries, library workers, or the communities they serve.

Please send your submissions electronically in one of the following formats: MS Word, RTF, PDF, or plain text pasted into the body of an email. Submissions should be 500 to 1,000 words. Graphics are encouraged and should be sent separately. If using images that are already on the Internet, the URL of the image and a caption or description may be added to the text of the submission.

Please email original submissions and inquiries to The *SRRT Newsletter* Co-Editors [Melissa L. Cardenas-Dow](#) and [Julie Winkelstein](#), indicating "SRRT Newsletter" in the subject line of your email. A confirmation of receipt will be sent in a timely manner.

Submissions for book or media reviews should be sent to [Madeline Veitch](#), The *SRRT Newsletter* Reviews Editor, indicating "SRRT Newsletter Review" in the subject line of your email.

Submissions to The *SRRT Newsletter* Letters to the Editors

The *SRRT Newsletter* invites readers to submit letters to the editors relating to social responsibilities and libraries. The letters should be respectful and thoughtful, either respond to specific content in the newsletter or include suggestions for topics of interest to SRRT members to be addressed in future issues. We will only publish letters of more than 200 words in exceptional circumstances.

Submit your letters to [Laura Koltutsky](#), member of The *SRRT Newsletter* Editorial Board. You may submit your letter as an attachment in one of these formats: .doc, docx; or in the body of your email message.

Letters must include your full name, address, a telephone number and email address if you have one. This is for us only—we don't share this information.

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Essay: Social Responsibilities & Libraries: Effingham Public Library



Effingham Public Library in Effingham, IL

Department of Employment Security, Drivers' License Facilities, Social Security Office, Food/Medical Benefits — all of these organizations closed their doors and some haven't reopened to the public even now.

In March, April, and May 2020, our rural area wasn't hit with COVID-19 infections, but still had its own crisis because many people who had solid work histories and positions in the health field lost their jobs and had to go through the process of applying for unemployment.

"Now we've rolled into unemployment fraud — it has just exploded in our area. I'm grateful that we can assist the businesses in our community as they navigate this with their employees..."

Now we've rolled into unemployment fraud — it has just exploded in our area. I'm grateful that we can assist the businesses in our community as they navigate this with their employees, and I'm really thankful that we can be there for the employees and their families. People are so frightened. With identity theft, in the state of Illinois, people call a number, leave your name and social security number, and wait for a call back that could take two weeks — that's so scary! Thankfully, because of our collaborations, we have the resources to help people navigate this and get real answers.

Throughout this whole year, people have really needed to connect with another person who can reassure them that they are doing everything right. Ironically, although our focus has been on Effingham County and east central Illinois, we've had people reach out from Chicago and even Tennessee looking for help.

The initial project led to grant funding from our local foundation and we've been able to hire two temporary "social workers" (one with a degree and the other pursuing his degree). These contract employees have an "office" in the library and meet clients there.

From the beginning, when our library had to close under Stay-at-Home orders, we've partnered with non-profits (our collaborators) in our area. First, to host computer access and provide assistance, then, as the library re-opened, we continued to share food vouchers and temporary shelter assistance. We've picked up state opportunities that our other local non-profits just didn't have the capacity to share, such as help applying for rental and mortgage assistance.

Rarely have any of these service clients visited our library before. New patrons. We're really excited to have a chance to provide this level of service to our rural neighbors.

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Submitted by **Johnna Schultz**, Assistant Director, Effingham Public Library, Effingham, IL

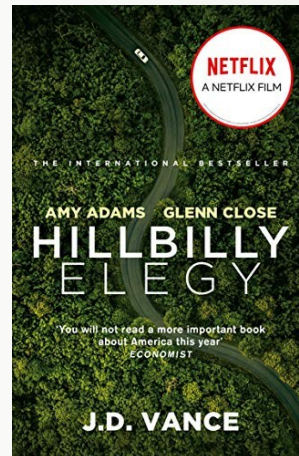
Essay: A.C.E.s and Responsibilities of the Library

I am writing to you with wishful thinking and word vomit because my library is in an extremely infectious area of the country. We have over a 15% positivity rate in our rural, western NC county and are not currently having programming. This is more of an idea than a program finished and tied with a bow.

Adverse Childhood Experiences — commonly referred to as ACEs — are an insidious epidemic and have been for millennia. There are 10 experiences that a child under 18 may be exposed to that adversely affect their life as an adult. Obesity, addiction, cancer, and many other conditions may ensue. Joining Forces For Children, a coalition of community and government human services organizations in the Greater Cincinnati, Ohio area, has put together [information and a list](#) of adult health conditions that can be traced to ACEs. ACEs can be passed on to the next generation.

Mental and physical health crises may have roots in actions that the body remembers even if the brain has compartmentalized them. Safely tucked away and not dealt with, the fallout can be devastating for individuals.

Hillbilly Elegy, a memoir by J.D. Vance, is currently a hot topic in our Appalachian foothill area. The book, published in 2016, is now a movie by Ron Howard. It stars powerhouse actors Glenn Close and Amy Adams and is available on Netflix.



The book and film point to many ACEs in young JD's life. Though he continues to have effects from his childhood, it is invigorating to learn that he has beat the odds. Vance is now a successful attorney and has not followed the lifestyle of his disturbed mother.

In the book, Vance

“Mental and physical health crises may have roots in actions that the body remembers even if the brain has compartmentalized them.”

talks about the ACEs study and knows he was a victim of many adversities. The movie does not use the term, but one can see how J.D.'s adverse childhood experiences play out in the film.

Because I Am Furniture by Thalia Chaltas is a young adult novel written in poetry prose. This book would be easier for a community to imbibe. In this story, a family is terrorized by a successful, psychiatrist father. For the record, ACEs have no socioeconomic/educational boundaries.



Recently passed away, filmmaker James Redford created documentaries **Resilience** and **Paper Tigers** that highlight ACEs and how communities are dealing with the information. These films would be important tools for any library to have in circulation.

Community programs

— faith-based, anonymous additions — in any area of the country (or the world for that matter) — could share this information through books and film to address ACEs in their communities.

California Surgeon General, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, is a



key player featured in the **Resilience** documentary. Dr. Harris has important TED talks and interviews on YouTube about ACEs that are free for viewing as well.

On a final note, during our shutdown to the public with COVID-19, our library team

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Book Review: *Black Lives Matter at School: An Uprising for Educational Justice*

Hagopian, Jesse and Jones, Denisha. *Black Lives Matter at School: An Uprising for Educational Justice*. Haymarket Books, 2020. ISBN-13: 9781642592702 (pbk) \$24.95. [See publisher page for description.](#)

While I was reading this book, the siege on the Capitol occurred. Like many, I found the events that were unfolding before my eyes so disturbing and sad. At first, I felt the fear that only people of color in this country experience. As a woman of color (Black and Native American) in the United States, I am so tired of the injustices. My husband kept pointing out the absence of the National Guard or the policing might that was needed to combat the hatred that was storming the world's citadel of democracy. Yes, the disparity of what this book documents was being telecast throughout the world. White lives, even when they are anarchists and fighting to take down the government, matter more than law-abiding black lives. From the moment black and brown folks breathe their first breath, they are subjected to the notion that they are of little or no value in this society.

Black and brown children from birth are taught in some way shape or form that the color of their skin, texture of their hair, features of their face and bodies, history, among many other things are to be rejected. The contents of this book are timely. The authors offer the reader a history and a current depiction of the treatment of black and brown kids within the school system and its extension into the larger society. The atrocities against black folks that were supposedly eradicated upon the abolishment of slavery have found a new home in many of our schools. Additionally, this book offers concrete solutions to the scourge that has taken hold of our educational system as it pertains to the treatment of our students from underrepresented groups.

The foundation of the work in this book stems from the actions of educators at Seattle's John Muir Elementary School when they sought to combat the ever present racism that permeated its school system by wearing t-shirts that said: "Black Lives Matter/We Stand Together/John Muir Elementary." The expected backlash swiftly followed; however, they were undeterred. Their actions captured and inspired the nation. What grew out of this was the Black Lives Matter at School movement which was a week dedicated to uplifting lessons, community events, and rallies that addressed a wide range of issues as they related to black folks in America. Further, this movement put forth actionable mandates for the American school system.

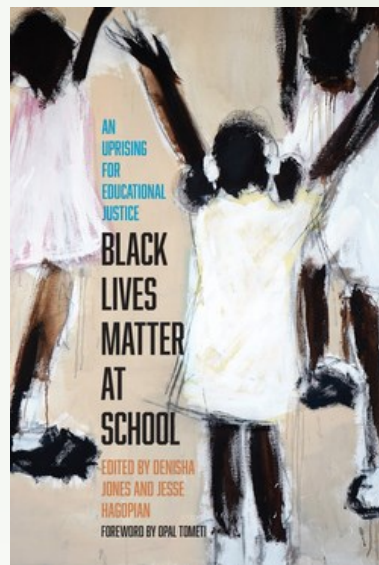
The work detailed in this book provided concrete examples of educators understanding the importance of conversation and advocacy. Additionally, it intimates that it was not work that should fall solely on the shoulders of the black community but be shared by all within American society. There are chapters dedicated to addressing the role that teachers unions play in supporting a revamping of the educational system. Other chapters spoke of the importance of having all the stakeholders at the table such as teachers, teachers unions, community leaders and organizers, school district administrators, parents, caregivers and students. There were many things that are worth mentioning further such as educators from kindergarten all the way up to higher education embracing and implementing a curriculum that is inclusive of all. A curriculum that does not just center on slavery and civil rights but an educational landscape that recognizes and extolls the numerous notable contributions made by many in the black community.

I was pleased to see that notion of the lazy black student and lack of interest in education by black folks challenged in this book. I particularly liked the chapter penned by Brian Jones that addressed this misconception. He points out that of the many groups in this nation of ours, black folks have fought the hardest to gain access to education. The situations documented in this book make it clear that the value of education is recognized and embraced by many in the black communities, otherwise, all the initiatives and movements discussed here add up to naught.

One area where the authors could have spent a little more time is discussion of their position that the large scale execution of the core curriculum in the education system is in contrast to Black Lives Matter at School movement. They specifically do talk about the failure of an approach that favors heavy standardized testing but their point could have been flushed out further. Since this particular point is challenging what is now the norm (Core Curriculum), a more in-depth discussion is warranted.

I was continually reminded while reading this book of the February 14, 1965 Malcolm X speech that celebrated African Descent where he spoke of the negative depiction of all things black in American society. American society, blacks and whites, learned to turn away from anything African. In doing so, self-worth in the Black communities were diminished to the point of non-existence. From birth, Black children are led to believe that their roots are not to be embraced. Without seeing the value in your very

foundation, how can Black children thrive?



While this book is a difficult read in the sense that it is hard to stop the tears from falling when reading about a young girl being tossed down the stairs in her school by a police officer or a kindergartener being called the N-word for tripping over the shoe of her fellow white school mate, it gives hope. The apparent value of this book is that it documents the incivilities and inhuman acts that many non-white children in this country are subjected to on a regular basis, while offering viable solutions. The solutions offered have been already tried and in some cases have had fruitful results. This movement is one that promises a path to remove the devaluation of black children and children from other underrepresented groups from the American school system. Lastly, I especially appreciated ending this book with the voices and works of black students. It reminds us that a lot of reform of our deeply racially divided country can start with our young citizens.

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Reviewed by **Mona Ramonetti**, Head of Scholarly Communication, Stony Brook University

Essay: A.C.E.s and Responsibilities of the Library

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watched *Resilience* for a staff development day. It was the most silent that I have ever seen our group after it finished.

No one is immune to the effects of ACEs. Libraries can be instrumental in healing our communities, ourselves. May the grassroots process continue with us.

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Submitted by **Melissa Hager**, Children's Librarian at Alexander County Library in Taylorsville, NC

Essay: Social Responsibilities & Libraries: Pottsboro Area Library

I'd like to share that I feel a responsibility to fight for internet access for our communities. Rural residents, especially young people, are locked out of opportunities. After a recent city council meeting, I drove by the library and found this young boy sitting outside the closed library in the cold to use our WiFi signal on an iPad he checked out from the library. His family does not have internet at home. If you zoom in, you can see him sitting at the table we have by our back door. How are young people ever going to be competitive when they finish high school if they don't have digital literacy skills?



The light illuminating the parking lot shows the picture of being locked out in the cold.

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Submitted by **Dianne Connery**, Pottsboro (TX) Area Library Director

Pottsboro Area Library.

Essay: LIS Education, Older Adults, and Social Justice: Where Do We Go From Here?

Society is aging. For decades, US Census Bureau projections have shown that people over the age of 65 are the fastest growing age demographic in the United States; much of this growth is concentrated among people 85 and older. Internationally, the story is the same. In 2018, the United Nations noted, people below the age of 6 were outnumbered by those above the age of 64 worldwide for the first time in recorded history. These seismic shifts have and will continue to ripple through every facet of life. In a nod to just how profound the impact of these changes are, information scientist **Noah Lenstra** and others have repeatedly noted that the information society is also an aging society.

But looking out across the Library and Information Science (LIS) landscape, it is clear to see that much of the profession—perhaps with the caveated exception of public libraries—did not receive (or ignored) the memo. Like much of society, there is a youth obsession as it relates to information. Don't believe me? Look at the curriculum of any American Library Association accredited Master of LIS program. Doubtless you will find several classes related to children and teenagers. But beyond a generic adult services class, you will likely find very few examples of classes centered on some aspect of information as it relates to older people. Now doubtlessly, some of the existing trends are results of educational structures (such as the proliferation of school media programs). Stop and ask yourself, though, if we were seeing as profound a trajectory of growth in the number of younger people as we currently see among older individuals, would not LIS education programs respond in a clear and robust manner?

If you are not sure about your answer to that last question, let me ask you a few others. If COVID-19 and the associated pandemic were known to affect children in the way they affect many older adults, do you think society's response would have been different? Would there have been as many politicians clamoring for "sacrifices" in order to "reopen" the economy? Would chants of "my body, my choice" in response to face mask requirements be so loud and widely supported? If the virus cut as deeply through the bodies of those in nurseries as it does those in nursing homes, would public demand for more federal intervention and support been universal? If there has been one silver lining to the past year it has to be that 2020 has laid bare and set apart beyond dispute the raw inequities and injustices that older people are expected to carry—many of which are directly related to information and technology and should be of acute interest to information professionals. Often though they are not.

But for the sake of those joining the profession or waking up to the informational and technological plights of older people, let us furnish more information about these challenges and what we can do about them. The digital divide is one such challenge that has been discussed and researched about ad nauseum, but which continues to persist in the lives of many older people. Perhaps from your own experience you have noticed that while much of the scholarship has moved on to robots and wearable health monitoring devices like apple watches, the average elder continues to lack the skills necessary for engaging with the burgeoning world on the Internet. Countless media stories have described the isolation that many elders have experienced throughout the pandemic as they lacked the skills or interest (read: confidence) to engage with others over information and communication technologies such as smart phone apps, webcams, and iTech. Bridging the digital divide does require additional creativity and evidence-based solutions, but the challenges do not stop at technology. The murders of George Floyd and other Black people (the other pandemic) as well as the noted increased risks that the virus presents to racial minorities such as Black individuals provide just a few examples as to how aging is not a universal experience. It is shaped by many factors including cultural and societal forces often outside of an elder's control. This requires information professionals to think beyond the usual topics to other ways in which their unique combination of knowledge and talent can be applied to issues of intersectionality, elder abuse, and emerging challenges older people face—during this season of pandemics and beyond.

A case example is a recent project I have pursued which seeks to explore how diversity among older people is represented in the information sources of the organizations that specifically serve them. In other words, if an older person visits the website of their local senior center...will they see pictures of people that look like them? Will there be culturally specific resources or mention of the fact that the center's services are available to all seniors? Pursual of this topic brings together information seeking with diversity, equity, and inclusion, and helps develop a better understanding of how information is and can be provided in other community spaces, in addition to libraries. My "We Serve All Seniors" project has helped me obtain funding from the University of Tennessee's Office of Engagement and Outreach as well as the Association for Library and Information Science Education. It has also helped me create and present research at conferences and in peer reviewed journals. Lastly—and most importantly—it has led to the development of a diversity and inclusion audit which I hope to make available to organizations that serve older people with the hope of meeting the information needs of all elders, no matter their backgrounds.



The logo for Joseph's "We Serve All Seniors" project which seeks to increase the inclusion of diverse representation in the information sources produced by organizations that primarily serve older adults. Photo Credit: Kevin Mallary.

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Essay: LIS Education, Older Adults, and Social Justice: Where Do We Go From Here?

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I am under no illusion that my project is prepared to bring about the systematic change we need to fight back against ageism and related injustices in our society. However, I offer it here as one contribution to a much larger effort that is still emerging. In academia one often hears about paradigm shifts as it relates to research and sometimes practice as well. We are in need of a paradigm shift in LIS in order to ensure that all affiliated researchers, practitioners, and students can help the rising elder population age successfully with the information and technology they need to live their lives with dignity and justice—through the current pandemics and beyond.

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Submitted by **Joseph Winberry**, Ph.D. Student, University of Tennessee's College of Communication and Information

Essay: How I Exercise My Social Responsibilities

For many years, I've had this well-known quote from Mother Teresa in my work area: "We can do no great things, only small things with great love." When I think about how I approach my social responsibilities, it's in terms of small things. I try to do them with love, although I find that keeping love centered at the heart of what I do may be my toughest battle (as Mother Teresa also said, "If you judge people, you have no time to love them" which in my judgment is probably the quote I really should be thinking of!). There are lots of small things I do regularly and have done since I was a teenager that are part of my menu of social responsibilities, including signing petitions, writing letters to the editor, boycotting products and companies whose policies I disagree with, providing financial support to organizations I believe in at whatever level I am capable, and of course, voting. I tend to think of these things as so basic that they're almost like brushing your teeth and making your bed—they're just the things you do every day.

I have also come to realize the most authentic and meaningful way I can be socially responsible is by using my gifts in support of the issues I am passionate about. This usually means that I am looking at creative, artistic ways to support literacy issues and work on housing and homelessness. For years, I volunteered leading arts and crafts programs in family homeless shelters for kids and parents. In our current socially-distanced world, I'm a virtual volunteer with a housing and homeless services provider, facilitating a short story discussion group for folks living in temporary housing via Zoom. I'm also up to my elbows in fabric as I sew laundry baskets to donate to a housing community for formerly homeless individuals.

I look at everything I do as a librarian as socially responsible or social justice-oriented. As part of my outreach work in public libraries, I facilitated book clubs and short story discussions in juvenile detention centers, homeless shelters, a minimum-security men's prison, and a residential facility for young men with severe emotional disturbances. In recent weeks, I've really started thinking more and more about literacy

as a social justice issue and what that means in my current role as a community college librarian, and also as a citizen and human being.

Finally, I see the writing and presenting I have done professionally, especially around library services with people experiencing homelessness, as an act of social responsibility. Given how fraught and complex homelessness is as a social issue and as an area of library service, being able to direct the conversations away from "problem patrons" to services, including with children and families, is something I am committed to and hope helps others in direct and direct ways.

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Submitted by **Vikki Terrile**, Queensborough Community College, CUNY; SRRT Newsletter Editorial Board

Essay: Queering Rural Libraries!

There are 2.9 to 3.8 million Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals who call Rural America home, according to the 2019 Movement Advancement Project (MAP) ["Where We Call Home: LGBT People in Rural America,"](#) report. If the over 2.9 million LGBTQ individuals lived in one place, it would be considered the 3rd largest city in America, ranking between Los Angeles and Chicago. Unfortunately, rural queer people are spread out across 97% of the United States landmass in areas of the country that are slow towards change. Often, this leaves the over 2.9 million LGBTQ people without the educational and recreational resources their queer urban counterparts have access to.

Rural libraries must take up the charge to provide the resources their LGBTQ patrons need. Maybe you are thinking, "But I don't have any LGBTQ individuals living in my community." The MAP 2019 report estimates that 4.5% of adults and 10% of youth identify as LGBTQ in America, so yes, you do have LGBTQ individuals in your community. For the past seven years, the Independence Public Library has striven to be a welcoming place for all individuals within our community.



The Independence Public Library (IPL) in Independence, KS, is the county seat of rural Montgomery County. It is the 11th poorest town in Kansas, and the county ranks 101 out of 104 as one of the unhealthiest counties in Kansas. These, along with typical norms of rural living, theoretically create the perfect storm of bigotry. The Independence Public Library has been a leading voice for LGBTQ individuals living in

rural Southeast Kansas. While we push the boundaries with collection development, programming, and partnerships, the Independence Public Library has received very little pushback from the community.

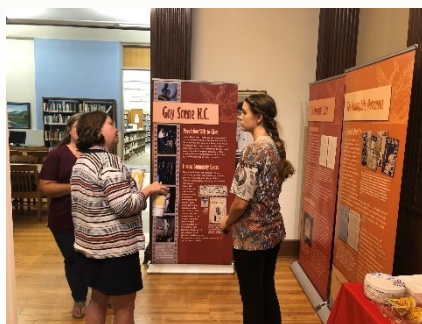
Seven years ago, when you searched IPL's OPAC, you would find a book about HIV/AIDS. Progressive for a town of less than 9,000! However, when you look at the copyright date it was from 1991. Since then, IPL has worked diligently to update and increase our children, youth, and adult collections. In the beginning, we used unrestricted donations and grant funding, not taxpayer funds, to purchase books and movies. Not using taxpayer funds was strategic in the beginning in case of pushback from the community. Now, IPL uses LGBTQ Award lists like the Stonewall Awards and the Lambda Literary Awards to keep our collection current.

Making our collection inclusive is only one step to ensure that IPL is a welcoming place for all. IPL prides itself on providing inclusive classes and events. Whether it's book displays, panel discussions, or film screenings, the Independence Public Library weaves LGBTQ representation throughout classes and events whenever possible.

The Independence Public Library seeks out partnerships to help meet the needs of the community. Partnering with organizations such as the Independence Chamber of Commerce's Diversity Task Force, the library began providing more racial justice themed programs. In 2016 the library started partnering with a new community organization called Project Q&A. Through this partnership, the library helped the organization grow by providing event space and support. Now, almost five years later, Project Q&A is the leading nonprofit organization working to educate, empower, and raise visibility for the 2.9 million LGBTQ individuals living in Rural America. IPL was one of the first sponsors of the first Southeast Kansas Pride celebration in 2017. The library has played a significant role each year for Southeast Kansas Pride. Through this partnership, it has given Project Q&A a seat at the table with major civic organizations within Independence.

While one person theoretically can do all of this by themselves, it takes the entire library team to make it successful. Creating an inclusive workplace culture that promotes and welcomes diversity is the key to creating change in rural communities. Libraries are often lifelines for LGBTQ individuals and youth. According to the Trevor Project, LGBTQ youth who have at least one supportive adult in their life are 40% less likely to attempt suicide. Librarians can and should be that one supportive adult.

Librarians are activists. We connect educational and recreational resources to those who want them. Our job is to ensure that our patrons have the highest quality resources available to them, no matter how they identify. In rural communities, librarians are often the only beacon of hope for queer individuals. Ensuring that our policies and practices are inclusive should be a top priority. Our profession uniquely positions us to create change within our rural communities.



Independence Public Library.

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Submitted by **Brandon West**, Development Coordinator, Independence Public Library in Independence, KS

Essay: "When I go to bed at night, I think about the people I know who are sleeping out in the cold"

Luisa Orozco has been a full-time shelver at the Arlington Central Library for fourteen years. In that time, she's gotten to know not only the rest of the library staff, but many regular patrons. Ed*, who comes to the library to play solitaire on his laptop or watch a DVD, and argue about politics and football. And Carla, who frequently uses the public computers on the second floor and always has a bright smile under her beautiful curls. Or Marsha, who usually keeps to herself, but recognized Luisa whenever they ran into one another at McDonald's or in the neighborhood.

Luisa has long-term experience finding community support for people who need it. In her family's hometown of Tipitapa, Nicaragua, many neighborhoods are full of families who live in extreme poverty. Children do not have access to education due to lack of money for school fees, uniforms, shoes, etc. They have no other choice but to start working at a young age. Jobs are scarce, making it difficult to support the family. Basic necessities like food and clean water are sometimes difficult to get, and housing is less than ideal as well. Most of these families live in small shacks made out of scraps of materials they were able to find. But, as Luisa says, with all of these struggles, they are some of the sweetest and most genuine people you could meet.

She travels back to Tipitapa each year and organizes a holiday party for over one hundred children and their families. Each child leaves with gifts, including clothing and shoes. Her son and daughter (now 23 and 15) have been assisting her all their lives. Her daughter writes, "It really makes me think hard about how lucky I am to have everything I do. From a bed of my own to a bus that picks me up everyday for school without any cost. Even simple things like turning on the faucet every morning. I'm glad I've been able to be a part of it since I was little, I definitely plan on something similar when I'm older."

In the United States, Luisa observes that others can be judgmental of those experiencing poverty and homelessness: "They think, 'They're American, they're in the U.S., why can't they get a job and work hard?' I say, 'You are not the judge.'" For the library patrons she knows, she has bought groceries, toiletries, and work clothes; she has researched how to get housing and what public restrooms are open when the library shut down for COVID-19. For Sandy, who was living in her car in the library parking lot a few years back, Luisa acted as a personal wake-up call: Sandy knew Luisa came in to work early, and Sandy could ask her to knock on the window in the morning to make sure she didn't oversleep when she had an early appointment.

In a public library, we come into contact with unhoused members of our community every day, which means as library staff we have an opportunity to form relationships that other well-meaning, housed people do not. In the past year, our administration has given the greenlight to staff members to form a Homelessness Working Group, to plan services to patrons experiencing homelessness in a programmatic way. The unprecedented effect of COVID-19 has forced us to scale back and re-think our plans, but it has also given us the opportunity to learn from our colleagues like Luisa, who are already doing the groundwork of creating relationships with our most vulnerable patrons.

"I start by saying, 'Hello,'" Luisa explains. "With Ed, I had just gotten a cup of coffee that I hadn't touched, so I asked him if he wanted it. He said,

'No thanks, I'm fine,' but I told him he could tell me if he needed anything." Starting with these small interactions, Luisa has built trust between staff and patrons who often feel overlooked. Patrons experiencing homelessness have been discriminated against, and so they often expect to be treated poorly. It takes time to earn trust. But that trust is critical in making sure that our neighbors are not forgotten.

While our buildings have been closed to COVID-19, we have not seen many of our regular patrons for months, both housed and unhoused. Carla, we know, is in supportive housing: Luisa keeps in touch with her—they have one another's phone numbers—but Marsha was a mystery. Luisa asked the staff at the local McDonalds, and learned that Marsha passed away. We can mourn for her now. That service—that dignity—is only possible because of the relationship Luisa was willing to build.

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Submitted by **Charlotte Malerich, Luisa Orozco, and Vicky McCaffrey**, Arlington Public Libraries, Arlington, VA

*Patron names have been changed to protect privacy.