OLA Quarterly

DAILY NEWS

No. 49,725 THE BEST SELLING NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD Today's Edition

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Librarian and storyteller Augusta Braxton Baker

YOUTH SERVICES TAKE OVER OLA QUARTERLY!

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Misenti: Play With Purpose at the Hillsboro Public Library

Chunn: The Library Squad: Tweens in the Public Library

and so much more!

Winter 2019 Vol 25 • No 4

OLAQ

OLA Quarterly
Winter 2019
Vol 25 • No 4

Oregon Library Association
http://www.olaweb.org
ISSN 1093-7374

The *OLA Quarterly* is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association. Please refer questions and input regarding the *Quarterly* to:

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Upcoming Issue

Spring 2020

Connecting to Community Through Collections

Cover Image: Photo of librarian and storyteller Augusta Braxton Baker used with permission of The Horn Book, Inc., www.hbook.com

From the Guest Editor

April Spisak

The Albany Public Library has an incredible staff, a fabulous collection, and summer reading stats that will knock your socks off. April Spisak is quite happy to be part of it all as Head of Youth Services. Given that her only skills are all word related, it is quite fortunate indeed that her dream job uses so many of them in myriad ways.

I learned to read from Mrs. Augusta Baker, the children's librarian.… If that was the only good deed that lady ever did in her life, may she rest in peace. Because that deed saved my life, if not sooner, then later, when sometimes the only thing I had to hold on to was knowing I could read.

—Audre Lorde

First, a tip of the hat to the extraordinary storyteller, educator, and librarian, Augusta Baker, who is shown captivating an audience on the cover of this issue. I love listening to and telling stories, and my well-worn copy of her remarkable book *Storytelling: Art and Technique* sits proudly on my professional development shelf. She was a tireless advocate for positive representation and inclusion of diverse literature in libraries, even to the point of pushing authors, illustrators, and publishers to do better in addition to curating the collection in her library. For me, though, it all comes down to her unwavering confidence that children can be inspired and spell-bound without a single prop other than a voice. A story well-told with energy, enthusiasm, passion, and dramatic control can reach any child in any situation. I've found myself in countless moments as a librarian, parent, or even just community member where I didn't have a book, puppet, screen, or any of the usual tricks, but I certainly had a dozen memorized stories and a well-trained voice. Every single time, I think of Augusta Baker.

The convergence of all good things happened when I finally realized, after getting a relatively unusable BA, that I should be a youth services librarian. Working with librarians, parents, literature, and, of course, young people themselves has been the core of my life for over 20 years now. I am inspired daily by youth services librarians and what we are each doing in our own little corners of the world, and I've been a participant as a librarian, educator, reviewer, researcher, and even as a parent so I've seen the work from diverse perspectives.

This issue fulfills a goal to highlight youth services librarianship in Oregon, and to dedicate one full volume to celebrating what we are doing now, what we hope to do in the future, and ways that we are changing the emotional, intellectual, and literary landscape of the lives of children and teens. It's a great mix of articles, and I'm proud of each of the authors. I appreciate their time and efforts, both in their daily work and in their contribution to the written field of librarianship practices and philosophy.

We are practicing all the good stuff of librarianship: programming, collection development, readers' advisory, activism, reference assistance, and engagement that is all combined into the important work every librarian does. Add in the elements of intellectual freedom (which are, of course, also of note for non-youth services librarians), privacy rights for patrons under the age of 18, the programming fun and challenges of working with youth, and code-switching to connect with kids, tweens, parents, educators, and our own non-youth oriented librarian peers, and you've got the quintessential youth services librarian. You'll find each of those features represented in this issue.

Even within the drastically limited scope of eight articles written by Oregon librarians, there is a remarkable range of representation of our work and roles.

Theresa Misenti and Alec Chunn explore what is happening with library space, participation, and programming. Finding the gaps in what we offer and exploring ways to fill those gaps is hard to do when our schedules are full with the populations we already actively serve, and we are sometimes unable to see our own physical spaces and how they can be updated and improved to meet the needs of our patrons. Taking a step back to reflect and enact change is represented in each of these pieces.

Outreach and meeting folks where we find them are explored in the articles by Jaime Thoreson and Amy Wyckoff. In some cases, this involves seeing our regulars in different places and locations other than your library. In others, this can mean reaching potential patrons who either don't know what we have to offer or don't have a way to get to the library. Embracing the idea of beyond four walls librarianship is key to the mission of libraries.

In two contemplative pieces, Brystan Strong and April Witteveen examine how we view ourselves independently and within a larger whole (a library system, for example, or the wider field of youth services librarianship). These articles represent more of that big picture consideration that feels like a luxury, but is, in fact, a key element in remaining relevant and engaged.

Finally, Sabrina Tusing and Barratt Miller, in their joyful and informative co-written article about an LGBTQ Collection, and Jen Ferro in a fiery piece are all exploring activism. This is sometimes as simple as the radical act of making sure that representation is happening, and other times requires courage and direct action that may be outside of our own comfort zones. Jen's article takes an unorthodox approach in that it seems to bury the lead of libraries and youth services; as a foundational piece on climate change and youth involvement, however, it is deeply relevant. I admit freely I'm one of those people that thinks if we can move worlds, why wouldn't we? I am passionate about librarianship and libraries and I am inspired by their articles. "Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity," the remarkable quote by Horace Mann, hangs on my office door and it's how I move through story times, programming, collection development, and readers' advisory services.

I believe that expressed gratitude is vital, and I request your indulgence in this brief paragraph. I also encourage readers to make their own lists and let those folks know. We see librarians lament about feeling isolated, underappreciated, misunderstood, or limited by forces out of their control. Let's at least tell some of them thank you! First, I thank my parents for a strong literacy core, the late Joseph J. Cali who was my personal patron saint of librarians, the hilarious and talented Sally Rizer who was my first supervisor as a librarian, the incomparably brilliant editor and mentor Deborah Stevenson, Amy Thomson who lets me keep talking about libraries and who was a better librarian than I fear I ever will be, the Albany Public Library staff who are, bar none, incredible stewards of the library, and OLAQ Coordinator Charles Wood, who helped me shepherd this issue from a germ of an idea to a polished presentation.

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Play With Purpose at the Hillsboro Public Library

by Theresa Misenti
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Photo by Jennifer Ferguson.

Theresa Misenti has a background in design. She currently runs the Collaboratory makerspaces at both Hillsboro Public Library branches in Washington County. Theresa enjoys paper crafting, fiber arts, and looks forward to dipping her toe into circuitry. Her job is never boring: her favorite days involve taking the 3D printer apart to troubleshoot an issue. The best part of her job is helping people use equipment they would not have access to if the library didn't provide it.

The Hillsboro Public Library (HPL) has two very active branches that serve the robust youth population of Hillsboro. Our Vision Statement is "Welcoming and inclusive, the Hillsboro Public Library is a world-class system where our entire community gathers, connects, and explores." Our mission is simply: "For Everyone/Para Todos." We were ready to live up to our vision of a world-class system for our community.

In the spring of 2018, I worked as a practicum student at the HPL-Brookwood main branch as a requirement for my library science degree. I was issued the challenge to create a more playful, engaging experience in the library for the children we serve in the community. *The Power of Play* states "As libraries continue to compete with television, technology, and commercial endeavors, staying focused on a library's purpose to develop human potential is our best response. Transforming underutilized public spaces into dynamic early learning places is a great starting point" (Stoltz, Conner & Bradberry, 2015). While we deliver stellar programming that is well-attended, the children's collection area was ready for an update.

Research

There is no shortage of research on the importance of play in human development. In my own experience, I've seen my children with fewer and fewer opportunities for unstructured play due to after-school commitments. Unfortunately, recess in school is often used as a bartering chip to be exchanged for good behavior in the classroom, and is not always provided.

Every Child Ready to Read is a campaign to teach parents and caregivers how to increase opportunities for literacy readiness. This initiative presents five actions for caregivers to develop early literacy skills in their children. These actions are talking, reading, writing, singing, and playing. "Play is one of the best ways for children to learn language and literacy skills. They learn about language through playing as the activities help them put thoughts into words and talk about what they are doing" (Talking Points). Integrating play into the library would provide more opportunities for these early literacy experiences for children and their caregivers.

Photo by Kim Dreher

The light table adds a new dimension to building with Magna-Tiles.

I looked to early education models for inspiration. I researched the "Montessori Method" in which children are offered an environment of choice. For example, a Montessori classroom might have various stations, each rich with natural materials that are appropriately sized for the students. A child can decide on which work she is interested in and can use the provided materials to explore the subject at her own pace, in her own way. Maria Montessori was an Italian physician, educator, and innovator, and her methods have been practiced in early education classrooms since she began teaching in the early 1900s. Montessori called play the work of a child.

I also investigated the Reggio Emilia approach. This method sees children as "individuals who are curious about their world and have the powerful potential to learn from all that surrounds them" (Stoudt). Edwards notes, "Educators in Reggio Emilia speak of space as a 'container' that favors social interaction, exploration and learning, but they also see space as having educational 'content,' that is, as containing educational messages and being charged with stimuli toward interactive experience and constructive learning" (p. 70).

I appreciated the Montessori Method and Reggio Emilia approaches for their child-directed learning philosophies. Both systems acknowledge the importance of learning through the senses, utilizing natural materials that are sized for the user, and providing various opportunities for self-expression. Both models value a child's experience over the output of material. I integrated these ideas when planning the space for our library audience.

Considering the way in which children play can help inform how we support each type of play within the library. Sociologist and researcher Mildred Parten of the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development categorized six types of play, and five more that fall under "cooperative play." Amanda Rock lists them in her article "11 Types of Play Important to Your Child's Development: Why Having fun Isn't Just a Game for Your Preschooler":

Unoccupied Play: Setting the stage for future exploration
Solitary Play: Promotes future self-sufficiency; ages 2–3
Onlooker Play: Observing other children play
Parallel Play: Important bridge to later stages of play
Associative Play: Socialization, cooperation, language development, and problem-solving
Cooperative Play: Children begin to play together

Within cooperative play, we see:

Dramatic/Fantasy Play: Role-play helps kids see their place within the community
Competitive Play: Rules and taking turns, winning and losing
Physical Play: Gross and fine motor skills
Constructive Play: Manipulation, building, fitting things together
Symbolic Play: Exploring ideas, emotions, expression

Practical considerations were as important as philosophical ones. In my previous career as a graphic designer, I had learned about universal design. Ronald Mace and a team of architects, designers, and engineers developed the seven principles of universal design which consider users of all ages, abilities, and sizes, and makes sure the space can be used by everyone (The 7 Principles). Universal design principles were a guiding force for the implementation of elements of play in the library. I wanted to create a library space in which my own children (and others with varying needs) would be successful. Designing spaces that consider different needs and abilities helps to create a more inclusive atmosphere and embodies the library's mission of "For Everyone."

Photo by Kim Dreher

Gross motor skills get a work out when children move and stack the log pillows in the sensory forest.

Universal design Principles from *The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design*:

1. Equitable Use (e.g., a wheelchair ramp that anyone can use)
2. Flexibility in Use (e.g., library checkout stations offered at different heights)
3. Simple and Intuitive Use (e.g., picture books organized by color-coded subject stickers)
4. Perceptible Information (e.g., closed-captioning on a publicly viewed screen)
5. Tolerance for Error (e.g., car keys only work when inserted a certain way)
6. Low Physical Effort (e.g., automatic doors)
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use (e.g., work area designed for people who are left- or right-handed)

I was also inspired by *Library Journal's* article "How to Design Library Space with Kids in Mind." Lesneski suggests: "Offer a variety of areas—active and quiet, social and private—that encourage a range of experiences with multiple levels of challenge for different ages and abilities." My goal was to use universal design principles as the foundation for the children's area, making sure each new toy or piece of furniture considered those guidelines. Instead of creating zones based on ages (baby, toddler, preschooler, elementary), I wanted to develop those four spaces for children: active, quiet, social, and private. This would allow users to have access to the whole of the area, rather than limiting sections based on age and perceived ability.

Observations

With research in hand, the next step was to observe how the space was being used. I routinely visited the area to get a sense of what worked and where we could improve. There seemed to be more shelving than was necessary, and it made it difficult to see the entire children's area. The popular marketplace play structure was in the back corner. This area was crowded with kids and caregivers while the rest of the area was sparsely populated. The children's area has a lovely Storytime Room that for years has been too small to accommodate the throngs of families that attend library programming. We had worked around this problem long ago by moving storytimes and other programs into larger meeting rooms around

Photo by Kim Dreher

These squishy gel tiles are visually engaging especially when touching and jumping!

the library. We would then use the Storytime Room for large building blocks or puzzles, but the provided offerings were not consistent, which caused frustration and confusion when the room was empty. We had large wooden tables that sometimes had passive programming such as coloring pages, but these were also inconsistently offered. In assessing the current space, it was clear that we had a very active social area for play, but were lacking quiet and private spaces for children who wanted and needed a more sensory-friendly space.

To elicit community input, we held a design thinking workshop. We invited patrons that used the space with their children as well as library staff and members of the city's innovation team. During the workshop, I presented research on play, the importance of play for children's development, the different types of play, philosophies on child-directed learning, and introduced the concept of universal design. We invited our guests to break up into small groups and brainstorm ideas about the perfect library experience. Each group had an opportunity to present their ideas and prototypes. Most designs included a variety of seating options for both adults and children. Some ideas included offering access to adult materials in the children's section. One idea was to add an aquarium wall!

Several participants pointed out how cluttered the space felt. Shelving needed to come down to provide better sight lines and more open areas. The large staff area needed to be replaced with comfortable adult-sized seating and adult workspaces that would be close to the children's play areas.

I also asked library staff to report on what they believed was working and where improvements could be made. Several staffers noted the inadequacy of the current seating arrangement in the space. The scant offerings amounted to eight child-sized wooden chairs which were popular with no one and no seating at all for adults. With nowhere to sit near their children, the adults would either stand, perch on a low and narrow windowsill, or sit on the floor.

I witnessed many kids waiting to play at the marketplace but there were not enough activities for everyone to participate (only one register, and it was often monopolized causing a lot of upset for those wanting a turn). The board book display was too tall for the audience; toddlers were climbing up the structure in order to browse board books.

Photo by Kim Dreher

It's easy to make friends when you are astride one of our elephant chairs!

I also observed things that were working well. While the marketplace was busy, it was a popular space for imaginative play. Kids were happy to color at the big tables when we put out coloring pages and crayons. Our weekly scavenger hunts were a highlight for patrons.

I proposed a few things that should be addressed. We needed more interactive design features. The Storytime Room was too small for its intended purpose and should be redefined and used differently. We needed to create enough comfortable seating for families and more space for free play. The back corner by the marketplace was too congested; the children's area should lead kids into playing in a variety of different zones. Caregivers didn't have access to any adult materials near where the children were playing. And finally, we needed to communicate to caregivers that there was no expectation of silence in the children's area.

With the help of our collection manager, we analyzed the children's collections to determine where circulation indicated a need to weed materials and which collections needed room to grow. It became clear that we did not need to reduce the collection size. We were able to achieve our space goals with regularly scheduled weeding. This allowed us to remove five banks of shelving in the children's room and two from the elementary space. We created more space for the Early Reader and Elementary Graphic Novel collections.

Defining Spaces by Ability

Prior to my practicum, the library hired an architectural firm to consult on the best way to improve the space. They suggested creating different age-specific areas of play for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. I incorporated these ideas into my proposal by focusing instead on types of space that Lesneski defined: Active, Quiet, Social, and Private, while also considering other developmental needs (fine and gross motor skills, social skills, and pretend play).

Active Space

Active Space allows for jumping, swinging, and climbing; all of these are important for gross motor development in children. These are also activities that are generally not experienced in your typical library setting. Our "pie in the sky" idea was to include a play treehouse that had some climbing and swinging opportunities, but our budget wouldn't allow for that in this first iteration. We added a large tumbling mat with a gentle slope, which has proven very popular. We also added a few wall-mounted, interactive sensory boards for play and a mirror with railing to practice pulling up to standing. Children can be onlookers or play in parallel with others here.

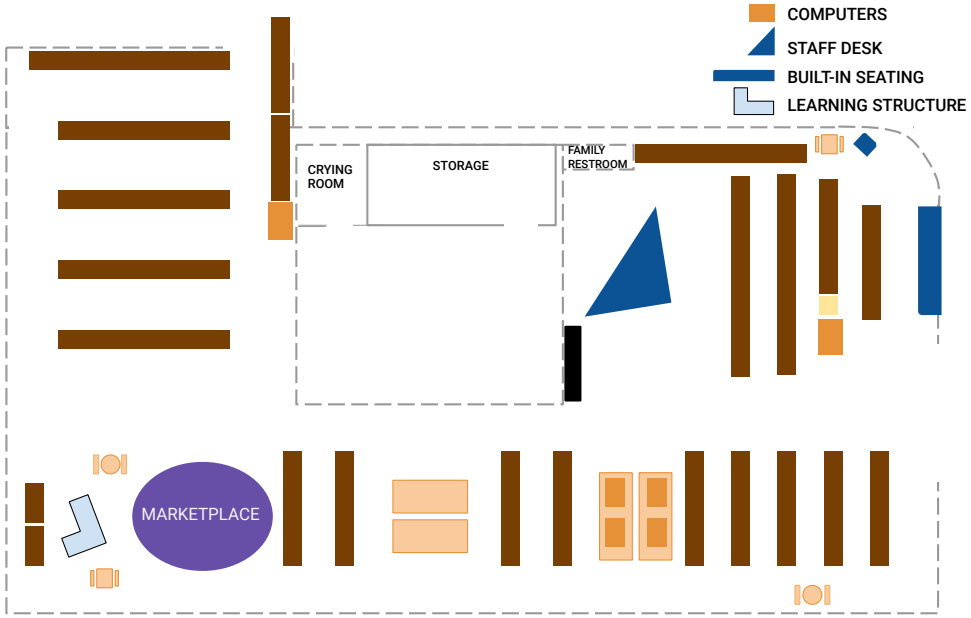
Quiet Space

Quiet Zones are important for decompressing and calming down, especially after a particularly exciting storytime or library event. We changed the Storytime Room into a sensory forest, designing around the large tree sculpture, and adding soft log-shaped pillows, engaging elephant chairs, and dimmed overhead lighting. The soft glow of the light table completes this space and allows opportunities for quiet, solitary play.

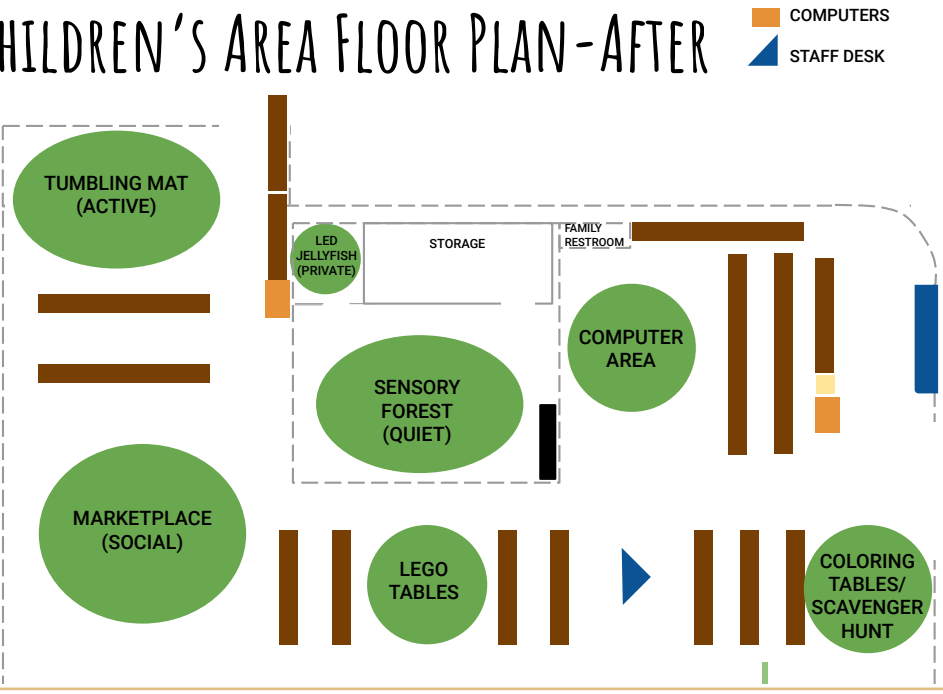
Social Space

Social spaces allow for the development of social/emotional skills, improve speech and language development through role-playing, and give children opportunities for associa-

Children's Area Floor Plan-Before



Children's Area Floor Plan-After



tive and cooperative play. The marketplace already served as this social hot spot. We added a Lego table and coloring table (both great for fine motor skill development) in two different areas. Now there are more social spaces to choose from and one spot does not get overwhelmed.

Photo by Kim Dreher

Brick building develops fine motor skills.

Private Space

Finally, a private space is another necessary space for our children. In our public libraries, it's important that no one gets lost or is in an unsafe situation. We introduced a small tent into the space that ended up being so popular, it broke! When we have an opportunity to expand our play area, we would like to see a couple of soft tunnels and perhaps a sturdier tent for our young patrons.

Currently, within our sensory forest, there is a small, doorless room. It is dimmer than the sensory forest, and is lit with the help of a wall-mounted LED jellyfish. It is a very calming space, and great for people who need time to decompress and self-regulate.

Training Staff/Library Expectations

Educating parents on library expectations is important. There are many parents and caregivers who were brought up in the silent library and think those same expectations apply today. We need to continuously reinforce the new ways so people become more comfortable in the library, particularly in the children's section. Having library staff model play and behavior helps lead parents into the new age of library use. One interaction can simply be observing a child playing Legos and saying, "Did you know your child is developing fine motor skills while she tries to connect those Lego bricks?"

I had a great interaction with a patron recently. I noticed she was shushing her children while they played with the large legos in the Sensory Forest. They were not particularly loud, just making joyful, playful noises that were totally appropriate for their activity. I went up to her and explained that we welcome this type of noise in the children's area, and that, in fact, we are planning to encourage more opportunities for play. She was visibly relieved,

and told me that she has been shushed by a librarian in the past. I told her that we have all been trained with these new expectations. I shared that we are fortunate to have the leadership of an innovative director, and we want to serve all of the community, especially the children, in the ways they are best served. And for children, I believe that is play.

Expected and Unexpected Challenges

We implemented the changes late last year. Our goal of incorporating play throughout the space has been met. It is a louder, busier, and more engaging space with more distributed play throughout the area.

The tumbling mat in the active space has been met with some confusion for patrons. Typically, shoes should be off when using those kinds of mats, but in the library, shoes must stay on. We ended up creating a sign reminding patrons to keep shoes on their little ones' feet, even on the mat. Since signage can often be ignored, library staff has had to remind patrons to keep shoes on in the library.

The Sensory Forest is perhaps the most popular space, with kids enjoying playing Magna-Tiles on the light table, stacking log-shaped pillows, and creating delightful scenes with the elephant-shaped seats. While this quiet space was designed to be a soothing environment with its dimmed lights and soft seating, it can get pretty rowdy with all the pillow and elephant rearranging! We have experimented with closing the sliding doors halfway to further enclose the space and it seems to help sometimes. Having a staff member pop in and hang out can also help stabilize the energy.

Library staff has had to become a little more flexible and adjust their own expectations of the volume (and tidiness) of the space. Sometimes Lego bricks can be found on the floor and fresh crayons are peeled and left on the coloring table. It is a little extra work for library staff to tidy up multiple stations throughout the day; it has been helpful to model expectations for both children and their parents.

We've gotten positive feedback from parents, grandparents, and children themselves about the redesign. Post-storytime hangouts are more popular than ever, thanks to a variety of play spaces and seating options. It has become a playdate destination for friends and caregivers to connect with each other. It is rewarding to see the children interacting with the library in new ways.

I look forward to the next iteration of the children's area, as this process of evaluation and improvement will continue. I would love to see some sensory swings hanging from the ceiling, and am still holding out for an indoor treehouse!

A Note of Thanks

We are very fortunate to have a prosperous Friends of the Library organization. With their generosity, we were able to implement most of our initial ideas.

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The Library Squad:
Tweens in the Public Library

by Alec Chunn
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Alec Chunn is a Youth Services Librarian at the downtown Eugene Public Library, where he coordinates school-age programming. His favorite part about librarianship was doing storytime—until he started working with tweens. Storytime still goes on at home, where Alec reads aloud to his partner or his cats (they're pretty good listeners). When he's not reading at all, Alec likes to try new hobbies and quickly abandon them.

Introduction

Though tween services in libraries are far from new, there is surprisingly very little written about them. Unlike early literacy, which is undoubtedly the most common priority amongst librarians serving youth, tween services might seem like the newest passing trend. Some libraries have dedicated tween librarians who not only offer tween-specific programs but curate tween collections. Other libraries offer combination tween and teen programs. At the downtown Eugene Public Library, tween programs fall under the umbrella of school-age programming for youth ages six to twelve. Trend or not, youth services staff have excitedly begun to delve more deeply into this often forgotten stage.

What is a Tween?

The definition of tween varies from organization to organization, ranging from as young as six to as old as fourteen (Faris, 2009, p. 43). The common thread: tweens are not quite children and not quite adolescents. They change from childlike to adultlike from moment to moment (Lyttle & Walsh, 2017, p. 7).

Developmentally, tweens fall into the period of middle childhood (ages 6–12). This age range encompasses a wide range of needs and differences. Per Banks & Thomas (2019, p.182), middle childhood has historically been seen "as a time of plateau, where children capitalized on the gains they had made in early childhood and before the teen years." During middle childhood, youth are typically entering into formal education, participating in social and recreational activities, and enjoying more independence (Banks & Thomas, p. 182).

At the downtown Eugene Public Library, we define tweens as ages 9 to 12. Our tweens, especially those over 10, begin to develop a different sort of relationship with the library: the library is one of the first safe places they can go without an adult. Our tweens primarily use our children's section and materials, though some dare to venture across the rotunda to the teen section. Most staff who deliver tween programming work in both sections, giving tweens a familiar face wherever they hang out or browse the collection.

Planning Tween Programs

Since there is no space specifically for tweens in our building, some tweens don't feel they belong in either the children's section or the teen section. Programming is our bridge, creating a temporary space that's just for them. Programming also helps foster a "continuum of services" (Lyttle & Walsh, 2017, p. 147), retaining tweens who've aged out of programs for the early elementary crowd.

Borrowing from the "pillars" of Toronto Public Library's Middle Childhood Framework (2014), our approach to school-age programming encompasses three priorities: (1) the joy of reading, (2) literacies and learning, and (3) play. While arguably the best library programs touch on all three, it's helpful in terms of holistic programming to target each priority individually. Our programs are intended to be patron-focused, interest-driven, and participatory. Beyond experiences being fun for our patrons, our second most important outcome is relationship-building—be it with people, with ideas, or with our collections. The following sections will highlight these priorities as well as specific programs that have been successful in accomplishing Eugene Public Library's goals.

The Joy of Reading

Book Clubs

Scholastic's Kids and Family Reading Report (2019, p. 11) finds that third grade is a turning point for reading enjoyment (the "decline by nine"): only 35 percent of nine-year-olds report reading five to seven days a week compared to 57 percent of eight-year-olds. A tween book club, then, is a natural support for a library to help bridge these gaps. Eugene Public Library has hosted its Tween Scene book group downtown for over a decade. During the hour-long program, participants spend about half of the time with discussion and snacks and half doing an extension activity. Extension activities have ranged from virtual reality to playing $10,000 Pyramid to zine-making and are typically the strongest motivator for participants to return each month. Attendance ebbs and flows but, generally, selecting a really popular title (such as *Wings of Fire: The Dragonet Prophecy* by Tui Sutherland or *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling) has boosted the program when we've needed to attract new participants.

Pop Culture Programming

Tweens are not only aware of pop-culture but strongly influenced by it. It might seem unconventional to view pop culture programming as something that promotes the joy of reading, but the shoe fits when "reading" is expanded to include any engagement with library collections. Moreover, media tie-ins offer an appeal that potentially bridges into reading broadly. Pop culture programming can be that similar tie-in to the rest of the tween programming menu.

Our pop culture programs—loosely termed "tween fandom" programs—grew out of a failed experiment with a series of comics programs. The most successful comics programs focused on a single series—for example, Steven Universe or Cucumber Quest—and were less about making comics and more about comics appreciation. We decided to rename the comics programs and open them up to other popular series and formats. Typical fandom programs involve trivia, crafts, snacks, or games. In addition to Steven Universe and Cucumber Quest, we've highlighted the Wings of Fire series and The Tea Dragon Society books. Our next program will celebrate the Legend of Zelda video game series.

Literacies and Learning

Sewing Classes

Our Downtown Library has a Maker Hub that is only open during select hours (and only to those with library cards), so we like to take as many opportunities as we can to bring equipment out of the Hub and into public spaces. One of the in-house favorites is our tween sewing series. A staff member leads participants through a project—for example, making a cape or a lunch bag. Since we only have ten machines, space is always limited and registration fills up quickly. Tweens are always proud to show off what they created and many return each month for the next project.

Minecraft

Per McGrath (2018), "At libraries, tweens can experiment with tech without the pressure of grades and still develop important habits of collaboration and discovery—all while having fun." No program for school-aged kids draws as much enthusiasm, collaboration, and fun as our Minecraft meetups. These weekly hour-long programs (which are open to ages 6-12, rather than just tweens) involve a group build challenge and, at the end, a brief show-and-tell. We have ten computers available for the program so participants must pre-register. The spaces almost always fill up so, as an alternative, Minecraft is also available in our computer lab outside the program during all open hours.

Play

Unlock the Box

As my colleague Puetz (2018, p. 8) puts it, Unlock the Box programs cultivate critical thinking skills, build teamwork, encourage creativity, and exercise good communication. In these programs, a team works together to solve a series of puzzles in a given time frame. Most programs utilize the same locks so, after the initial startup costs, they're a fun, low-impact way to add gamification into library programming. We've written our own—such as Escape the Space Station—or used the pre-created ones from Breakout EDU—such as Trapped in the Upside Down. Since the programs generally work best in smaller groups of four to six, we run the puzzles two to four times in a single day to accommodate as many participants as we can.

Dungeons & Dragons

Because of the new line of middle-grade Young Adventurer's Guides and an overwhelming number of tweens trying to sign up for our teen-only Dungeons and Dragons program, we tried hosting a group for the younger audience. Eight tweens met for four weeks on Wednesday afternoons in September. Since there aren't currently official campaigns for this age group, a teen volunteered to be the dungeon master and wrote the campaign. The teen used simplified character sheets so participants of all levels would feel comfortable playing. A small subgroup of those tweens that met in our program now meet regularly in the library to continue playing together on their own—that's a win!

Tweens practice their Dewey knowledge in a library-themed Unlock the Box challenge.

Conclusion

As youth services librarians, we are in service to youth—all youth. Scheduling, funding, and staffing may pose barriers, but tweens deserve dedicated programming as much as any age group. The best way to create successful tween programming is to get to know tween interests, to get their input on ideas, and to tell them to bring their friends. Tween programs might look a little different than crowded storytime rooms or big summer reading assemblies, but it can't just be about the numbers. With tweens, as with teens, it's about the relationships. Not every tween program will be successful, but every relationship built—such as two Wings of Fire fans connecting and exchanging emails to share fanfiction—makes it all worth it.

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¡Bienvenidos! Cuentos en el Parque:
Taking Library and Other Community Services on Location

by Jaime Thoreson
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Jaime Thoreson holds an MLS from Emporia State University School of Information Management. Currently, she works as a Youth Services Librarian II at Sherwood Public Library, but has been working in the libraries of Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) since 1996 and youth services since 2006. The best part of her job is getting to work in her hometown community. Her passion is providing readers' advisory to youth, especially reluctant readers. When she is not at work she is knitting, biking, reading, gardening, and discouraging rebellious chickens from crossing the road at her small farm in the country.

During the middle of the summer in Sherwood, Oregon, if you are walking through the grounds of one of the largest parks in town, you will see tables set up for lunch for a crowd, other tables with free books and community information, bubbles filling the air, and about 100 kids and their grown-ups enjoying a camp-like experience. You will see families of all demographics enjoying stories and songs in Spanish and English. You will see happy faces lined up for lunch, and a riotous enthusiasm that only kids exude during a fun craft or outdoor game activity. You might wonder what is going on. Is it a school gathering? Is it a city event? Is it a community fair? The answer is all of the above. It's Bilingual Storytime in the Park/Hora de cuentos en el parque, an annual storytime session that runs once a week for six weeks during the summer, now in its fourth year.

Bilingual Storytime in the Park is an outreach program run by Sherwood Public Library, Sherwood School District's Sherwood Helping All Reach Excellence (S.H.A.R.E.) Center, and Sherwood YMCA. Community partners also include Helping Hands, Mud-Puddles Toys and Books, Sherwood Center for the Arts, Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, and the City of Sherwood, all of which come together to reach Spanish-speaking families. This article will describe how our library partnered with other city organizations to create a successful outreach program for families and how you can do the same.

How It Began

The idea for the program began in early 2016 at a meeting with representatives from Sherwood YMCA, Sherwood School District (SSD), and Sherwood Public Library. David Parker, then YMCA Teen Center and Youth Sports Director, was looking for ways to increase attendance at their summer Hop the Gap program, a prevention program for grade-school kids. Beccah Wagner, then SSD Early Learning Resource Manager, and I, were looking for

Whether in Spanish or English, everyone listens attentively.

ways to work together to reach Sherwood's underserved population. We had tried other outreach programs to reach our Spanish-speaking population without much luck. The question at the table for all of us was this: Could we create a program together that would offer the strengths in services we each had without expending any funds other than our time? All of us had tight budget restrictions. Judging by our mission and vision statements and our strong desire to build and strengthen community ties, the answer was yes! From that meeting, Bilingual Storytime in the Park was born. Though partnerships and budgets have evolved over the years, our original vision remains the same.

We knew our project was a huge undertaking and each of us needed to take on a major piece of the event. After that original meeting, with six months lead time, each of us listed what we could bring to the event, much like how a potluck works. Instead of bringing food, we were bringing services. I brought the storytime expertise and volunteers to help out at the event, secured the city park and rain/sun canopies, and created the promotional pieces for the event. David brought his physical fitness expertise. Each week he got the kids moving with activities that worked their gross motor skills. He also contacted a local tutoring business to bring brain-game activities. Beccah brought strong community networking expertise. She contacted Helping Hands, a local food bank, to provide a free sack lunch for attendees. She contacted local businesses to find out which ones would be interested in participating in a camp-like community services program. Thanks to a grant generously provided through Early Learning Washington County, she also brought free books in English and Spanish. All of us brought our respective resources to the event: flyers, event calendars, free books for kids, and anything else that would promote the services we offer to our community.

Planning, Adjusting, Evolving

For our program to succeed, bilingual skills were a must. The only trouble was, none of us had Spanish language skills. Undeterred, we looked for creative solutions. In our first

Making a craft together builds community.

year, we were able to ask another S.H.A.R.E. Center staff member, Maria Quinones, to step in and help with storytime. In the second year, we recruited Spanish-speaking student volunteers from the high school to facilitate the Spanish portion of the storytime. The third year we relied on a combination of high school student volunteers and bilingual Latter-day Saints (LDS) missionary volunteers. This year, we began a new level of commitment. We contracted with a bilingual storytime presenter, Sunny Yepez, to create a more seamless experience for attendees. This new enhancement has been our only major budget expense so far.

In the beginning stages of planning, we needed to determine where our event would take place. We wanted to be out in the community, centrally located, and within walking distance for our target population. Though we have many parks in Sherwood, we chose Stella Olsen Memorial Park because it had a bathroom and it was in a central location to our target audience. To determine the best location when planning your event, ask your team what is most important about the venue. How will location impact attendance? Does it need to have a bathroom? Parking? Does it need to be on a flat space or could the space be hilly? Though Stella Olsen Memorial Park isn't perfect (the bathroom is up a steep hill and parking is across the street), it does satisfy most of the needs on our list.

If your library wants to create a similar program with several partners, don't be afraid to cold-call potential community partners by phone or email. Once your community partners have been found, set up an in-person meeting with the key communicators from those organizations. Provide them with a clear idea of what your goals are for your program and ask if they are interested in reaching a similar goal. Develop objectives as a team and divide the work up equally among the group.

Shaking the parachute together helps build coordination and teamwork.

The planning phase is a good time to decide what elements will be most effective for the event. Is a storytime what your community needs, or would a grade-school aged STEM activity draw attendees? Could you do both? Do you need to serve lunch for the program to fulfill your goals? If you determine that an outdoor activity is important, but you don't have a local YMCA, what local fitness agencies do you have that could bring the same healthy living message? You might have a local Taekwondo business or dance studio that would be willing to donate their time to your event. In addition to a YMCA, Sherwood is lucky enough to have its own locally owned toy store, Center for the Arts, and a National Wildlife Refuge; all have been dedicated partners to Bilingual Storytime in the Park by providing a weekly craft at the program. Above all, you will want to reach out to a variety of community partners.

Our team was able to create, plan and execute the program on a six-month timeline. If your first step is to find partners, you might need three to six months to contact and make connections with other organizations. If you are starting from the beginning, brainstorm community partners who have a similar mission and vision. One final detail to consider is to create a partnership agreement. While we did not use a partnership agreement for the first four years of our program, we now have one and will use it going forward. The partnership agreement will ensure all partners know their responsibilities and will make planning easier.

Impact and Assessment

To understand our impact better, we provided paper surveys in English and Spanish to attendees in the final week. We asked attendees questions such as "How did you hear about the event?" and "What did you and your child learn at this program?" and more. People show

Options for recruiting Spanish-speaking volunteers for your program might include reaching out to your agency's volunteer coordinator, a local high school's Spanish-language instructors for student volunteers, and your library's teen volunteer club. Another recruitment opportunity might reside in community colleges with strong ties with the Latinx/Spanish-speaking community. Additionally, LDS missionaries in your area might also be bilingual and looking for volunteer hours.

up year-after-year, community partners have continued to partner with us, and the number of Spanish-speaking families in attendance has grown. When we began in 2016, 10 percent of our attendees were Spanish-speaking. In our fourth year, 30 percent of our attendees are Spanish-speaking. Families tell us Bilingual Storytime has helped them connect with community resources they didn't know existed and has been a place to strengthen community ties.

The event has become a place to shrink the equity gap. Our local food pantry, Helping Hands, serves a sack lunch to every participant. This means we can normalize a meal. Lunch is for everyone, not just for families experiencing food scarcity. This has strengthened camaraderie among attendees. We have also normalized the idea that there are families in Sherwood whose first language isn't English. We are celebrating the idea that learning a few words in another language, whether in English or Spanish, can be a way to build community.

Bilingual Storytime in the Park will continue to evolve. We know we will have setbacks, changes and improvements as the years go by, but our commitment to bringing this event to our community will endure. Our three organizations united to create a meaningful experience for our community. If we can do it, you can too!

Summer Outreach Crew:
An Experiment

by Amy Wyckoff
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Amy enthusiastically serves as a Youth Services Senior Librarian at Beaverton City Library in Beaverton, OR where she works with a team of creative librarians to plan and facilitate unique programs for the amazing children, teens, and families in the community. Before landing in beautiful Oregon, she worked as the Teen Services Manager at ImaginOn in Charlotte, NC. Amy especially loves offering STEM programs and hosts an annual Science Geek Out Festival where families come to dig deep into all sorts of science topics. She co-authored a book called *Career Programming for Today's Teens: Exploring Non-traditional and Vocational Alternatives*, which was published by ALA in 2018; it is a terrific resource for any library staff looking to increase workforce development programming for young adults.

In an effort to bring engaging and interactive programming to families around our city and to promote summer reading, the Beaverton City Library formed a Summer Outreach Crew (SOX) of six staff members that visited parks, apartment complexes, free lunch sites, camps, and summer school sites from June to August 2019. Each member of SOX visited an outreach location in the community for approximately one hour once a week where they interacted with lots of children, teens, and caregivers who in some cases were not regular library users. We brought science experiments, games, trivia, robots, art activities, and much more and left families excited about what the library has to offer! Regardless of the size of your staff or the funding available, we believe there are aspects of our outreach plan that would work for any library.

When we set out to start planning our summer outreach efforts, we wanted to ensure we visited some areas of our city that were not close to either of our two library branches and were not already receiving services from the library. We also wanted to be sure to visit locations where families were already present, rather than asking families to come to us. We put together a team of staff who were especially excited about bringing library services outside our four walls and programming in non-traditional spaces. So where did we end up going?

Apartment Complexes

Apartments were a natural fit for SOX because children are already present, and during the summer they often have a lot of free time. We selected two large apartment complexes that also served as free lunch sites where youth could receive a lunch on weekdays during the summer months. Lunch is provided by the Beaverton School District's Nutrition Services department. We contacted the apartment managers and Nutrition Services and they were supportive of our plan. When we visited, kids and teens ate lunch while we read stories or played games with them. Visiting apartment complexes was one of our greatest successes because

many of the families we met there had never been to the library or rarely visited, and therefore had never heard of our summer reading program. Many families did not have transportation to visit or have a caregiver available to take them to the library during the summer. If the staff at your library have limited time for outreach during the summer, we think visiting an apartment complex in your area for a weekly or monthly program would be a great use of your efforts. A supportive apartment manager can help to market your visits to families by word-of-mouth or by posting a flyer in the lobby.

City Parks

We selected several city parks with playgrounds that are popular with families. We had varying levels of success bringing activities to the local parks; sometimes we found a good number of people present, but at other times, the park would be completely empty. At one park, a sports camp was always on site during our visits with about 18–25 kids participating. The counselors and campers were excited that we brought activities and technology for them to test out. For next summer, we plan to contact local camps to coordinate a time for visits that works with their schedule. We may also test out visiting other parks in the area to see if another location would be busier.

Summer Program Sites and Camps

Before the start of the summer, we reached out to local camps and program sites. The administrators of Club K (an afterschool and summer childcare site for elementary school students) were really excited to have us visit two of their sites on a weekly basis. This was a great fit because the facilitators of the program were always looking for educational activities to keep their students engaged. We also visited a number of camps for one or two visits each, bringing activities but also information about our summer reading program so we could reach a broader range of students in our area.

What Did We Bring

Initially we were not sure what to bring along, but after a visit or two, we were able to design our activities to best suit the age of the children present and to respond to any requests from the program facilitators. In addition, the sites all had their own constraints; for example, visiting a park in a sunny location meant we could not bring any activities that required screens because of glare. Some sites with younger children were more conducive to a traditional storytime with books and songs. When older kids, tweens, or teens were present, we often brought STEM activities, such as Dash, Ozobots, supplies to make giant bubbles, Roli blocks, Keva planks or slime-making materials. This older group also enjoyed trivia and quiz books, as well as art supplies. Some favorite interactive books included, *Ripley's Believe it or Not*, optical illusion books, *Looking Closely* series by Serafini, *Weird But True, Quiz Whiz*, *This or That,* and really any of the other National Geographic Kids record books. Board games were popular everywhere, including Uno, Apples to Apples, Jenga, giant checkers, and Yeti in My Spaghetti.

In order to promote the summer reading program at outreach sites, we created special logs for summer 2019 that allowed youth to begin reading and tracking their hours without needing to visit the library to sign up for the program, which deviated from our standard practice for all prior summers. We handed out outreach logs (printed on green paper so we could track that these had been distributed outside the library) to all youth at the sites. We

encouraged participants to read and then return the completed logs to the library. Unfortunately, the return rate for the outreach logs was very low. We do believe the logs encouraged kids to read; however, as I mentioned above, some of the children we met at these sites lacked transportation to the library so they may not have been able to return the finished log to collect their finisher incentives. We are considering options for allowing kids to finish the program remotely next summer.

The Future of SOX

The work of the Summer Outreach Crew was hugely successful in that we extended the reach of our library programming and the summer reading program to new members of our community, many of whom were not regular library users. At apartment complexes, we met a number of families who had just moved to our area, some of whom were recent immigrants or refugees. We were able to make a connection with families in a location that was comfortable for them and share information about the free services available from the library. Conversations at our outreach sites often drifted from the activities on hand to other valuable services that parents could utilize such as English conversation classes or free homework help for their children. Next summer our library plans to continue these outreach efforts, utilizing the information we gained about our community to inform the selection of locations we visit, as well as what we bring out to those sites. The staff members that were able to be a part of the Summer Outreach Crew overwhelmingly enjoyed the opportunity to make meaningful, and we hope lasting, connections within our community.

SOX member Brenda shares trivia with a group of tweens and teens at a free lunch site.

Consistency, Not Cookie-Cutter:
Maintaining Individuality Within a Library System

by Brystan Strong
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Brystan Strong just celebrated her one year anniversary as Youth Services Coordinator for Jackson County Library Services and is coming up on her fifth year anniversary with the system (having been hired as a shelver in 2015). When she isn't immersed in storytime, tutus, and toddler aerobics, she writes dark speculative fiction (because balance is key). She lives in Southern Oregon with her partner, and their pets: a cat, a bird, and several fish. She loves floral prints, dinosaurs, true crime podcasts, and reading (she is a librarian after all).

Jackson County Library Services (JCLS) is celebrating its centennial this year, and in 2020, we will be transitioning away from a contract with Library Systems and Services, and moving into our own library district. With this transition comes a lot of discussion about where we have come from, and how we want to represent ourselves as a system for the next 100 years.

Jackson County is 2,802 square miles and has 15 libraries to serve its 11 incorporated cities and 34 unincorporated communities. That is a lot of kids and families wanting quality library programming. However, what the kids and families want in our Applegate branch could be very different from what the kids and families an hour south at our Ashland branch would want. It's also important, though, that no matter which of the 15 branches is closest to you, you can walk in there and find not only relevant materials, but also experience a variety of fun, educational, and meaningful programming. This is why I look for "consistency, not cookie-cutter" when coordinating library services at our many branches.

So the question for me, as the district youth services coordinator, was "how do I make sure that all 15 branches are providing the same level of service, that they are all working towards the JCLS mission, but also not take away from their individuality?"

Contrary to what I thought the first step *should* be, in reality, my first step was to be more hands-on. When I stepped into this position, I thought it would be best if I just focused my energy on making sure system-wide programming was consistent in its execution (Summer Reading, 1,000 Books before Kindergarten, etc.) and left everything else to the branch staff. But this plan had a couple of problems:

1. **I was missing many great programs:** Because I didn't have to know about programs ahead of time, I missed some great opportunities to have performers who were visiting one of our branches to be able to visit multiple branches. I was also missing some possibilities to turn single-branch programs or ideas into system-wide programs or ideas. One of my own personal goals is to create more collaboration between branches—to connect our system together a little more. The knowledge that I was missing those opportunities was disappointing to me.

2. **Quality control:** Don't get me wrong, part of the reason I became a children's librarian is that it is fun. I don't want to devalue the importance of fun for the sake of fun–but youth librarianship is "serious fun." It's fun for the sake of learning and experience and growth. Fun still has to fall under the library's mission of connecting everyone to information, ideas, and each other.

The obvious solution to these problems was to create a program request form. That way, staff could write out their program idea, and tell me how it ties into our mission. I could easily approve programs that are completely developed, and schedule a time to chat about the programs that needed a little more thought. I could also keep track of which branches were turning in forms and which weren't. This is not an invitation for a lecture, but rather an opportunity for me to reach out and see what kind of help or support I can offer them when designing youth and family programming. With this form, I can offer feedback, and when I do see an idea that's great, I can work with that person to see how I can turn it into a multi-branch program. It was an obvious and easy solution to these problems. But there was still a third problem.

3. **Creative blocks:** Going into fall, I noticed something; the creative spark wasn't there. If we were approaching a holiday (like Halloween) or given a theme (e.g., space), the staff had so many ideas! Zombie parties, costume contests, slime making, and spooky movies were filling our October calendars, our summer was full of stargazing, space origami, performers, educators, and a plethora of STEM-based learning activities. However, during other months, our youth and family programming fell flat. We were having librarian's block. As a writer, I knew how to tackle this one.

If any of you remember having to write essays in school, it was a lot easier when you were given a prompt when you just couldn't think of something to write. I decided to give the branches a prompt—borrowing the line from next year's Summer Reading Program, but working from the feeling of having celebrated our 100 years as a system and the excitement of being our own district soon, I asked the branches to "Imagine Their Story." I wanted them to think about the kind of branch that *they* want to be. I want them to think about the types of kids and families who visit their branch, what businesses or organizations they can partner with, and what their individual communities need. I also let the branches know that I would be giving a prompt every year. This is to make sure we keep a revolving selection of programming throughout the district. I also added a new line to the program

request form. Following the question "How does this support the JCLS mission of connecting everyone to information, ideas, and each other?" is the question "How does this fit the current theme of "Imagine Your Story?"

Now, this would normally be the part of the article where I would give the results, where I would talk about how many branches turned in forms, how many new programs and partnerships are popping up, etc. I don't have any of that yet. This process is still too new to show any "real" results. However, I am excited about the types of programming proposals I'm seeing. I'm seeing programs that show the love of animals by having teens make toys for shelter animals, I'm seeing celebrations of historical figures who have lived in Southern Oregon, I'm seeing programs that are less about "beating the other team" but focusing more on working *with* your teammates, and most of all I'm seeing a lot of "serious fun."

My Life in Teen Services:
Then and Now

by April Witteveen
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April Witteveen is a Community Librarian at the downtown Bend location of Deschutes Public Library. A native Michigander, you'll catch her Midwestern accent in passionate conversation. April is an explorer, a maker, a mother, and a retired roller derby skater. She is also a freelance writer for *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal*, where she reports on trends and best practices in the greater library field.

Fourteen years into my career as a teen services librarian, I thought it would be interesting to reflect on my early years as a fresh-faced librarian and compare those experiences to where I am now, mid-career. I can both laugh a bit at my early naiveté, and feel concerned that I've grown too old to connect with my intended audience. Regardless, my dedication to serving the teens in my community has only grown stronger as I move further into my second decade of being "that librarian who came to my school and talked about books!"

School Visits

Then: I was blindsided by the fact that I'd be required to speak to large crowds of teenaged students. I was not prepared for public speaking in library school! I had never heard of booktalking and certainly didn't know what to do when forty sixth-graders were busy chatting with their classmates while I was trying my best to impart Very Valuable Library Information.

Now: I don't want to toot my own horn (too loudly), but I'm an old pro. Forty sixth-graders? Give me 150! I know all your school's quieting techniques and besides, I'm such a raging book nerd up there on stage, it's hard to look away. I've also learned classroom instruction and management skills, and as a result, my confidence as a de facto teacher has helped me form valuable relationships and a strong rapport with local educators.

Programs

Then: It may be hard to believe, but Bend really was a lot smaller when I first moved here. There weren't quite as many recreational options for teens, personal technology was still a few years off, and my library had been putting a very concerted, strategic effort into reaching teens. Looking back, I really had it made, averaging 15+ teens per program. I was also a lot younger and had no problem with after-hours lock-ins with a hundred-plus teens … or with really committing to multiple hours of Dance Dance Revolution.

Now: I work hard to keep the cynicism at bay. I have weathered changes in both my work schedule and the schedules of area schools that have severely impacted what I can offer as far as programming. I have a young family and my work-life balance needs more attention than in my early years. Our local teens have a multitude of options for both recreational and educational opportunities; I don't want to duplicate offerings too much in what still feels like a small town, and our older students are scheduled within an inch of their lives. My library building hasn't magically moved closer to any middle or high schools, so the barrier of transportation to my events still exists. We've also seen a loss in dedicated teen-serving librarians in my system over the past 10 years which has impacted our amount of programming for this age group. Despite these obstacles and limitations, every time a college student says hi to me in the grocery store during winter break and shares a library memory, I know I've made an impact.

Staying on Trend

Then: I was 27. I was naturally closer to the age of the customers I serve, and it was easier to know "what kids these days" were up to.

Now: I'm 40. Enough said on that topic …

April shares book love with a large middle school audience at Pilot Butte Middle School in Bend.

While I believe that library services for teens don't need to be completely trend-based, it does help to know a little about where teens are online, what pop culture interests are strong in a given year, and what your teen community is generally into. Now, I just claim my age and ask them to explain things to me. My teen library council is really great at letting me know when I'm trying too hard!

Summer Reading

Then: IT'S RAINING BOOKS AND PRIZES, OMG!!! Big events, big spending, always tweaking our approach. Every year felt like a challenge to see what would bring in more students to the library.

Now: Our teen summer reading participation statistics have found a median over the past decade, and none of the adjustments to the program's format or prizes have resulted in a significant jump in our numbers, or, to be fair, dropped us too far down (except for the one year we tanked doing a strictly online program … interesting.) I still love to give away books, and I enjoy putting together a slate of summer programs that have been better serving our tween community, hopefully building up a stronger teen presence in the following years. However, I know we're not reaching out much beyond our standard summer library users; the number of students I speak to during promotional visits at schools leading up to summer break in no way matches the actual statistics I record. I'm ready for a SRP revolution, who's with me?

Readers Advisory

Then: Read all the teen books! Recommends *The Hunger Games* to high school students only; waits in line at the bookstore for the midnight release of the next book in the *Twilight Saga*.

Now: Read all the teen books! No real change here, I still find reading predominantly in our teen collection to be thoroughly enjoyable. I love to see real live grownups discover the teen collection, and I will never shame a new adult from keeping up with their favorite teen series. I've served on the Printz Committee and have honed my critical reading mind, especially in light of #weneeddiversebooks. Now I'm looking for those titles that serve up literary appeal as well as relatable teen content—but you'll never take those midnight release *Twilight* feelings away from me!

Professional Development

Then: Conferences are big and overwhelming. I'm exhausted every day. I'm sad I can't do/see/hear everything I starred in my (print, of course) program.

Now: Webinar archives will always be there when I have a spare hour. Conferences are special events where my energy should be carefully parsed out with thoughtful planning and attention to what matters most to me and my library in a given year. Networking has paid off and I have library friends from around the country to share a meal with, to vent with, and to scheme with. I've served on multiple committees and offer my skills and knowledge back to the profession. My advice as a conference veteran? It's OK to skip a session and take

a nap. Always be considerate on the exhibit floor. Take a risk and say hi to someone new, or someone you consider a "library celebrity." We're all just a bunch of nerds, working together for our communities.

In conclusion, serving the ever-shifting target that is a teen audience has given me more professional joy and accomplishment than I could have thought possible when I walked off the graduation stage with my MLS. This isn't a job for every librarian, and those of us who find our calling with teens form a special community. I'm thankful for the progressive work of the Young Adult Library Association (YALSA,) including their release of *The Future of Library Services for and With Teens: a Call to Action* (https://tinyurl.com/n4hveuv) and the significant work done on *Teen Services Competencies for Library Staff,* (https://tinyurl.com/yacnd3ga) both of which offer new paradigms and approaches that should inform our field moving forward. As youth services in the libraries of Oregon continue the good work of helping our middle and high school-aged students become career, college, and adulthood-ready, give a special high-five to your local teen services librarian!

Baby, I Was Born This Way!

How Local Teens Helped a Library Deliver an LGBTQ Collection

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Introduction

While the organization We Need Diverse Books has increased the number of high-quality LGBTQ books being published by mainstream publishers, it hasn't gotten easier for teens to find them on library shelves. They often don't know the books exist and aren't comfortable asking for assistance from library staff. In order to bridge this gap, librarians working with teens need to be more proactive in designing collections and spaces that improve access to LGBTQ resources.

In this article, we outline how Oregon City Public Library worked with a local group of LGBTQ teens to develop a Teen LGBTQ collection. By sharing our experiences and the resources we utilized, we hope to provide other libraries with a process they can use to meet

the unique needs of teens in their communities. While a dedicated LGBTQ collection was the best choice for us, something different might work better for you.

A note about terminology: For the sake of brevity, we use the word "teen" to describe LGBTQ youth throughout this article.

Our Teen LGBTQ section, adorned with unicorns for the article photoshoot, fills two shelves in the center of the library's Teen Area.

Oregon City Public Library

Oregon City Public Library serves a city of just over 37,000 residents as well as approximately 23,000 residents in the unincorporated area of Clackamas County. Our community is predominantly (90 percent) white and middle-class, with a median income of almost $70,000 and just under 10 percent living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Oregon City is located, both geographically and culturally, on the boundary between the liberal, urban landscape of Portland and the conservative, rural communities of the Willamette Valley. While many teens come from families who embrace their gender identities and sexuality, this is not the case for everyone.

Regardless of their family's attitude towards LGBTQ individuals, all teens in Oregon City are exposed to both positive and negative views of LGBTQ individuals from members of the community. As an example of negative views, three of our four challenges to library materials and displays in FY2018–19 were parental objections to LGBTQ resources offered by the library. Two challenges objected to the Pride Month book display in Adult Fiction and one objected to the inclusion of books with LGBTQ content in the Children's Room.

LGBTQ Book Club

Oregon City Public Library first became involved with The Living Room: A Safe Haven for GLBTQQ Youth (TLR) in Clackamas County in 2015. TLR offers a weekly drop-in program for teens aged 14 to 20 every Wednesday evening at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation building across the street from the library. They also host a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) summit for all Clackamas County schools, an annual Alternative Prom, and other activities for LGBTQ youth throughout the county.

Library staff launched an LGBTQ book club in partnership with TLR in 2017. TLR youth selected *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera for the first meeting. The library provided copies of the book to ten TLR members, but only two very enthusiastic teens attended the discussion. TLR's program coordinator reported that not everyone who wanted to read the book was available on the date of the book club, and some of the teens just wanted to read the book without participating in the discussion.

After we completed our discussion, the book club attendees—who included our Youth Services Librarian and TLR's Program Coordinator—discussed whether to schedule another book club meeting in the future. Teens reported that the discussion, while enjoyable, was less important than getting to read more LGBTQ fiction.

What Else Could We Try?

Over the next year, the library and TLR staff met several times to discuss alternative ways to connect teens with books that reflected their lives.

Simply providing a link to all LGBTQ YA fiction in the online catalog wasn't feasible, since there was no single subject heading being used to identify all LGBTQ fiction. Books were listed under a variety of headings—homosexuality, bisexuality, gay teenagers, lesbians, transgender people, etc.—that weren't always applied consistently.

Since #weneeddiversebooks and #ownvoices had begun to reshape the publishing industry by 2017, library staff doing materials selection anticipated an increase in high-quality LGBTQ YA books. Any book list the library created would become outdated almost instantly and there was no easy way to share the frequent updates with TLR youth.

Finally, we discussed the option of creating a Little Free Library. These books would be stored in the TLR meeting space for easy access. Library staff would maintain an Amazon wish list, which donors could use to purchase copies of books for the group. The Little Free Library was deemed unworkable—especially since the logistics of setting up the donation process would have been time-consuming and difficult to promote.

Solution: Create A Collection

By the time we'd ruled out the Little Free Library option, however, the library had hired a Youth Services Library Assistant who was passionate about working with teens. Our Library Foundation, which had met its commitments for the recently completed building renovation, indicated that they would be willing to accept funding proposals for additional library projects—including seed money to create a new LGBTQ collection.

Library staff brought their final proposal to TLR and asked what they thought of us creating a separate LGBTQ collection in our Teen Area. After all, we were right across the street from TLR's weekly meeting site and all TLR attendees were eligible to sign up for their own library card as long as they had a school ID. The response was a resounding "YES!"

What Do Teens Want?

The goal of any library is to be relevant to the community it serves and developing our LGBTQ collection was no different. In order for us to reach our goal, we needed to have meaningful conversations with teens in the community who identified as LGBTQ. TLR was instrumental in this conversation and the development of our collection.

When asked what type of books they'd like to see in the collection, TLR responded with enthusiasm! Some requests were broad, reflecting the teens' eagerness to read anything and everything LGBTQ. Others were very specific, such as space opera lesbian romance books. At the core of their requests was the desire to have easy access to books featuring teens that represented their community. That led nicely into our second question: how did they envision the collection within the teen section of our library?

We were moved by the teens' thoughtful approach to this question. Without prompting, they considered not just their own wishes but the needs of youth who may not have a safe space, be out of the closet, or be comfortable browsing a special collection in a public place. Together we determined that for easy access we would create a custom spine label for easy identification and a dedicated space for convenient browsing.

Naturally, it was of utmost importance that we utilize the majestic rainbow unicorn as our LGBTQ collection label. Keeping in mind the teens who may not be comfortable with those options, we then decided to add duplicate copies of each book interfiled in fiction, graphic novels, or manga without the rainbow unicorn sticker. Once the collection was complete, we created a small flyer letting browsers know there were duplicate copies elsewhere.

Finding the Books

Looking for LGBTQ YA books in 2019 should be easy! It's not. While there has been an increase of LGBTQ YA publications in recent years, the numbers are still very low. In 2018, mainstream publishers published 108 LGBTQ YA books. This is a significant increase from statistics gathered for years 2003–13 (collectively), which concluded that roughly 15 titles were published per year (Lo, 2013; Lo, 2019).

Knowing the challenges of finding LGBTQ books, we began by looking at lists and reviews from sources such as The Stonewall Awards, LAMBDA, *School Library Journal*, and Rainbow Book List. These reviews and booklists regularly featured books from mainstream publishers.

We would need to dig deep to find lesser-known but equally important titles for our collection. With many sources mostly highlighting the Big Five publishers, we turned to lists and reviews from alternative sources such as Bookriot, Goodreads, and occasionally Amazon.

Another challenge we encountered was books described as LGBTQ literature that did not feature a primary LGBTQ character. While it's okay to include some of these books in the collection, our goal was to try and feature books with LGBTQ primary characters. Kirkus Reviews does a good job of highlighting the character diversity, which is helpful in collection development.

The exquisite rainbow unicorn balloon poses by the window during the Teen LGBTQ collection launch party.

None of these challenges address the lack of nonfiction books available for teens regarding LGBTQ issues or biographies. Our nonfiction section is small but it does include titles that celebrate, advocate, inform, and guide young people who are facing a myriad of emotions as they traverse their own journey.

Launch Party

As with any great achievement, one must celebrate! TLR expressed interest in having a party to unveil our new collection to the community. We invited members of their group, the Library Foundation, and library staff to attend on an evening in late February.

One can never have too many rainbow items. Therefore, we hid the books on the shelf behind a large rainbow flag and set up a photo booth with a spectacular rainbow backdrop. We included prize giveaways such as LGBTQ paperback books, bookmarks, buttons, candy, and the most exquisite rainbow unicorn balloon.

This event gave teens from TLR first dibs on the collection. While looking through the materials we overheard teens recommending books that they enjoyed and discussing new discoveries with each other. The event also provided the opportunity to express our gratitude for TLR's involvement and the $1,200 seed money donated from the Library Foundation. The small, intimate celebration was a success!

Creating this collection would not have been possible without support at every level: feedback from the teens at TLR, a staff member who was passionate and knowledgeable about developing the collection, enthusiastic encouragement from library management, and

funding from our Library Foundation. If any one of these stakeholders hadn't been invested, we might have encountered significant roadblocks or a less successful result.

Circulation Statistics

Between February 28th and October 20th, 2019, our 192 Teen LGBTQ titles circulated 674 times for an average of four checkouts per item. (This does not include titles interfiled in general fiction, graphic novels, and manga.) 6 percent of the items were not checked out at all, 15.5 percent of the items were checked out once, and 78.5 percent of the items were checked out 2 times or more during this time period.

Conclusion

We know that there are more diverse books being published than ever before, but connecting teens to these books can still be a challenge for many libraries. Adding more LGBTQ books and making them easier for teens to find has helped Oregon City Public Library bridge this gap. We hope our story has helped you identify the questions you need to ask in order to connect teens with LGBTQ literature in your own libraries and communities.

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Our House is on Fire:
How Librarians can Help Young Climate Activists

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Many librarians are inspired by Greta Thunberg and the millions of young people who have begun mobilizing to pressure government and corporate entities to address the climate crisis. During the Global Climate Strike week from September 20 to 27, 2019, it is estimated that over 7.5 million people worldwide joined Thunberg in agitating for change (Global Climate Strike, 2019). Our situation is dire. In June of 2019, scientists at the Permafrost Laboratory at the University of Alaska Fairbanks reported that permafrost melting in the

Greta Thunberg

Children are protesting in the streets.

Canadian High Arctic had already exceeded estimates of melting not previously expected to occur until the year 2090 (Farquharson et al., 2019). In response, Jennifer Morgan, executive director of Greenpeace International, stated that "thawing permafrost is one of the tipping points for climate breakdown and it's happening before our very eyes" (Reuters, 2019). Rapid permafrost thawing would suddenly release enormous quantities of carbon dioxide and methane, initiating a feedback loop that could cause global temperature to rise even more catastrophically (Reuters, 2019). Recently, 400 scientists from 20 different countries released a statement urging mass actions of civil disobedience as the only way to pressure policy makers to act quickly enough in order to avert the worst consequences of climate change (Green, 2019).

Although many environmental activist groups, including the Sunrise Movement, Fridays for Future, and 350.org, have worked together to organize previous and future climate strikes, the group that has received the most media attention worldwide is Extinction Rebellion. Extinction Rebellion activists have staged numerous actions all over the world, including a "die-in" on Wall Street wherein activists splashed the iconic Charging Bull bronze statue with fake blood, during which 93 activists were arrested (Associated Press, 2019). Students affiliated with Extinction Rebellion recently staged a sit-in at the Low Memorial Library at Columbia University, demanding that the University become carbon-neutral within six years (O'Connell-Domenech, 2019). In London, Extinction Rebellion has engaged in repeated and disruptive actions for months, blocking streets (Snaith & Mitib, 2019) and bridges ("Extinction Rebellion Protests," 2018) and obstructing access to banks (Davies, 2019), weapons manufacturers, and train stations near financial districts (Gayle & Quinn, 2019). There are large worldwide climate protests planned for Earth Day, April 22, 2020.

As actions of civil disobedience continue and build worldwide, police have responded with mass arrests, which have been welcomed by protesters. As noted by Alleen Brown of *The Intercept*, "By getting arrested in visually compelling acts of civil disobedience inspired by Gandhi, the civil rights movement, and ACT UP, Extinction Rebellion hopes to jolt world leaders into taking action on the climate emergency" (2019). But law enforcement agencies have also carried out more controversial actions. In London, the Metropolitan Police declared a total ban on protests in London ("Extinction Rebellion: Police," 2019), a ban which was later overturned in court (Dodd & Matthew, 2019). In Australia, the Queensland Parliament designed legislation specifically for members of Extinction Rebellion so that activists possessing lock-down devices risk a possible two years' imprisonment (Brown, 2019). In Paris this past June, police officers sprayed peaceful climate activists with teargas at point-blank range during a sit-in on the Pont de Sully ("French Police," 2019). On the 11th of October, Plan B, a United Kingdom-based group formed to "support strategic legal action against climate change," wrote a letter to the Metropolitan Police Service documenting many human rights violations in the policing of protests sponsored by Extinction Rebellion, including "treading on protestors and dragging protestors," "cyber attacks on social media assets . . . including its website and crowd-funding platform," and "a plain clothes police officer attempting to incite violence in the crowd" (Crosland, 2019). Recently, one of the co-founders of Extinction Rebellion, Roger Hallam, was jailed for six weeks and his electronic equipment was confiscated (Extinction Rebellion, 2019).

In the United States, there is a long history of law enforcement efforts to silence, infiltrate, surveil, and imprison activists. In 1971, a group of activists known as the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI burglarized an FBI field office in Pennsylvania and stole documents proving the existence of a program called COINTELPRO, or the "COunter INTELligence PROgram." From 1956 to 1971, the FBI carried out a series of covert, and at times illegal, operations targeting a wide range of activists and organizations, including Martin Luther King, Jr. and others in the civil rights movement, anti-war organizations, the American Indian Movement, the Black Power movement, and the Communist Party USA. Under COINTELPRO, the FBI used the same techniques used against foreign espionage agents against domestic "perceived threats to the existing social and political order" (Select Committee, 1976, p. 3). Scholars have widely acknowledged that in 1969, Black Panther Fred Hampton was assassinated by members of the Chicago Police Department in collusion with the FBI (Williams, 2015).

More recently, additional disturbing information about intelligence activities has surfaced. In 2013, CIA whistleblower Edward Snowden released to the media secret documents that revealed that the National Security Agency had been collecting Americans' phone records, text messages, and Internet activity (Franceschi-Bicchierai, 2014). In the wake of publishing his autobiography, *Permanent Record*, Snowden has given interviews to many media outlets describing the current state of cell phone surveillance. Smartphones are in constant communication with nearby towers, not only reporting users' physical location and movements, but also allowing users' various applications to continuously report their data and behaviors to advertisers, analytics servers, and other third-party vendors (PowerfulJRE, 2019). And it turns out that these third parties not only do not have users' best interests in mind, but regularly report users' information to U.S. intelligence agencies. Amazon, for example, is a major defense contractor and works closely with ICE, the CIA, the Department

of Defense, domestic local police forces, and the data mining company Palantir (Scheer, 2018). Police departments target particular neighborhoods and individuals based on algorithms developed by data mining companies like Palantir. Any government or government agency can now utilize information supplied by Facebook, Google, and Amazon marketing services to compile an extensive trove of details about everything a person does using those applications (Scheer, 2018). These companies can do so without fear of violating the Fourth Amendment because the data shared is legally not the customer's property. It is considered to be the property of the corporations that collect it (PowerfulJRE,2019).

In 2015, Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum admitted that an investigator with the Oregon Department of Justice had digitally surveilled Oregonians who mentioned the social justice group Black Lives Matter in messages on social media platforms (Theriault, 2015). In August, the British newspaper *The Guardian* obtained emails showing that the Southwestern Oregon Joint Task Force (SWOJTF), a group led by the Coos County Sheriff's Office, had been monitoring activists who oppose the Jordan Cove liquefied natural gas plant project. The Task Force shared intelligence to an email list that included a anti-environmental public relations operative as well as the FBI, the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Justice, the National Forest Service, Oregon State Police, and a number of local sheriffs and police departments (Parrish & Wilson, "Revealed: FBI," 2019). More recently, *The Guardian* reported that the Oregon Titan Fusion Center, which describes itself as "a collaborative effort of state and federal law enforcement agencies" focused on "terrorism, organized crime and gang-related criminal activity," disseminated information gathered by the SWOJTF and by a private security firm attached to the gas project. In a letter to Oregon legislators advocating for an increase in funding for the Fusion Center, Coos County Sheriff Craig Zanni stated that the task force would "be instrumental in combating the extremist agenda in Southern Oregon." In response, Lauren Regan, the executive director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, stated that "the use of the term 'extremism' is a government calling card when it intends to use repressive criminalization against a social movement" (Parrish & Wilson, "Revealed: Anti-terror," 2019).

Librarians can and should begin more aggressively collecting materials in the areas of community organizing, environmental activism, nonviolent direct action philosophies and strategies, mass surveillance, and the history of law enforcement efforts to repress social movements in the United States. We should begin producing finding aids devoted to similar topics, including what civil liberties Americans are guaranteed under the United States Constitution (for an example, see the "Climate Activist Toolkit" LibGuide developed by this author for students and staff at Lane Community College [LCC] [Ferro, 2019]). Libraries can also begin offering programming aimed at young people who have already become activists or who wish to begin. For example, libraries can invite lawyers or experienced activists to offer trainings on climate activism, direct action methods, and/or how to interact with police officers, whether young activists intend to get arrested or not. Here at LCC, librarians have begun forming ties with a local organization, the Civil Liberties Defense Center, hoping to begin offering "Know Your Rights" and "Digital Security" trainings for students and staff. LCC librarians have also been at the forefront of recent efforts to organize staff and students to form a new Climate Action Team on campus, LaneCAT, which would serve as a means to more aggressively pressure decision-makers to take action to accelerate LCC's plans to become carbon-neutral sooner than our current goal of 2050.

Of course, libraries have long been considered bastions of democracy, and librarians the staunch defenders of civil liberties, the Bill of Rights, the freedom to read, the right to privacy, and intellectual freedom. Nancy Kranichin focused on the function of libraries in democracies during her tenure as ALA President from 2000 to 2001. She advocated that libraries play an active role in civic education, including acting as "civic information centers," gathering difficult-to-locate materials, but also that they serve as active educators, teaching "youth to participate in community problem solving" (2012, p. 81). In the well-known radical collection of essays *Revolting Librarians*, Celeste West contended that "true professionalism implies evolution, if not revolution; those who 'profess' a calling have certain goals and standards for improving existence, which necessarily means moving, shaking, transforming it" (1972, p. [i]). It is not all that revolutionary to call for librarians to begin providing young activists with the information they need to preserve their own freedom and safety as they attempt to save the very civilization that makes our profession possible.

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Editorial Response to OLAQ 25(2)

Dear OLA Colleagues and OLA Quarterly Readers,

I am writing in response to the conversation surrounding the Oregon Library Association Quarterly (OLAQ) Summer issue, 25(2). I understand the concerns many readers have expressed about the final article in the issue, "Yes, but . . . One Librarian's Thoughts About Doing It Right" and agree with the valid criticism that the OLAQ editorial standards need to be strengthened.

As the guest editor of this issue, I take responsibility for choosing the theme, reviewing proposals, selecting contributors, and reading the first draft of the authors' submissions before passing them on to the editorial team. My goal is to provide a forum for a variety of voices on the topic of equity, diversity and inclusion in Oregon libraries, including library type, career experience, and geographic location within the state. I missed my responsibility to more critically reflect on the final article and engage the author in an editorial conversation, particularly in relation to commentary on Dr. Debbie Reese's 2019 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture, *An Indigenous Critique of Whiteness in Children's Literature*. I am sorry for the impact and distress it has caused.

The conversations we are having surrounding equity, diversity, inclusion, racism and white privilege are challenging and necessary. These include our conversations surrounding intellectual freedom and how this intersects with the development of inclusive and equitable libraries and communities. The Oregon Library Association has much to learn as an organization and understands open dialogue and constructive criticism help OLA grow as an association. I look forward to continuing dialogue and education about equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Sincerely,
Elaine Hirsch
OLAQ 25(2) *Guest Editor*
OLA President, 2019–2020

OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2020

The *OLA Quarterly (OLAQ)* is the official publication of the Oregon Library Association. The *OLAQ* is indexed by *Library Literature & Information Science* and *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts.* To view PDFs of issues, visit the OLAQ Archive on the OLA website. Full text is also available through HW Wilson's *Library Literature and Information Science Full Text* and EBSCO Publishing's *Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) with Full Text.*

Each issue is developed around a theme determined by the Communications Committee and Guest Editor(s). To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact the OLAQ Coordinator.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 26 • No 1 Spring 2020	*Connecting to Community Through Collections*	May 1, 2020	July 31, 2020	Karen Clay *Library Director,* *Eastern Oregon University*

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