2025 District 8 Fall Conference

Building Bridges, Connecting Community

Saturday, November 1, 2025 | 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM | Lee Davis Library, San Jacinto College

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM	**Check-in & Refreshments** (Grand Hall)		
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	**Opening Program** (Grand Hall)		
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	**Keynote Speaker: Lise Olsen** (Grand Hall)		
11:00 AM – 11:30 AM	**Author Meet & Greet, & Visit with Exhibitors** (Grand Hall / Entrance)		
11:30 AM – 12:20 PM	**Breakout 1**		
	Grand Hall Train the Trainers in Cultivating and Planting Library Experiential Learning Engagements: A Library Community Collaborative Approach to Addressing STEM to STEAgM in Agriculture, Foodscaping and Library Partnerships	**Classroom** Look for the Helpers: Programming Outside Your Comfort Zone	**Meeting Room** Instruction as a Bridge: Connecting Students to Resources	**Small Meeting Room** Have I Got A Story For You!
12:20 PM – 1:20 PM	**Lunch & Visit with Exhibitors** (Grand Hall / Entrance)		
1:20 PM – 2:10 PM	**Breakout 2**		
	Grand Hall Archiving the Children's Art Project at MD Anderson Cancer Center	**Classroom** Past as Prologue: Cultivating Community Through Archival Engagement in the High School Library	**Meeting Room** Community Voice: A Needs Assessment Model for Libraries	
2:20 PM – 3:10 PM	**Breakout 3**		
	Grand Hall From Kitchen to Community: Nourishing Youth and Connecting Communities	**Classroom** Collaborative Cleanup of a Collections Budget	**Meeting Room** Your Seat at the Table: Becoming a TLA Leader (Panel)	
3:20 PM – 3:45 PM	**Closing Program & Door Prize Giveaway** (Grand Hall)		

Sponsors

Tour of Texas

Trailblazer

Vendors

District 8 Committee

Virginia Osborne	*Chair*
Rachael Welsh	*Chair-Elect*
Celeste Bleu	*Past-Chair*
Nyla Vela	*Secretary*
Cheryl Loewen	*Treasurer*
Andrea Mion	*Web Administrator*
Katherine Smith	*Councilor*
Jennifer Holland	*Councilor Alternate*

TLA Executive Board

Valerie Prilop	*President*
Melissa Rippy	*President-Elect*
Elizabeth A.M. Howard	*Past-President*
Beatrice Saba	*Treasurer*
Israel Favela	*Representative-at-Large*
Cynthia Y. Rodriguez	*Representative-at-Large*
Emma McDonald	*Representative-at-Large*
Jill Bellomy	*Representative-at-Large*
Brooke King	*Representative-at-Large*
Monica Babaian	*ALA Councilor*
Shirley Robinson	*TLA Executive Director*

Breakout Session Details

Opening Session (Grand Hall) 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Title	Presenters	Audience	Location

11:30 am - 12:20 pm

Train the Trainers in Cultivating and Planting Library Experiential Learning Engagements: A Library Community Collaborative Approach to Addressing STEM to STEAgM in Agriculture, Foodscaping and Library Partnerships	Kimberly Michelle Gay, Prairie View A&M University	Academic, Public, School & Special Libraries, Support Staff	**Grand Hall**
Discover how a Texas A&M University System Academic Reference and Instruction Agriculture Librarian II collaborated with public, school and community centers to address Experiential Education Learning Engagements on their campus through STEM to STEAgM Foodscaping library research initiatives. This session introduces a "train-the-trainers" model that equips all library types with the skills to help their librarians design curriculum based Experiential Education learning projects. Attendees will learn how cross-disciplinary partnerships linking STEM to STEAgM and Libraries help to foster sustainable library communities.			
Look for the Helpers: Programming Outside Your Comfort Zone	Perla Camacho-Cedillo, Brazoria County Library System; Tom West, Brazoria County Library System	Public Libraries	**Classroom**
In our current time when modern technology dominates people's lives to distract, overwhelm, and accelerate isolation, libraries and community partners are the bridges that reconnect people with their communities. This interactive workshop will provide library workers the tools to establish partnerships with local organizations and to create programming outside their comfort zone which best serves their communities.			
Instruction as a Bridge: Connecting Students to Resources	Jesús N. Serrato, University of Houston -Downtown	Academic & Special Libraries	**Meeting Room**
Library instruction isn't just about showing your students how to search: it's about making connections. This presentation looks into how analyzing statistics from instruction sessions and database usage can reveal important trends about how students engage with library resources. This perspective presents instruction as not just a measurable factor but also as a personal link between students, resources, and the wider academic community. The session will focus on practical strategies that libraries can implement to emphasize instruction as a key link within academic communities.			
Have I Got A Story For You!	Toni Simmons, Storyteller and Author	**Small Meeting Room**	
Experience the art of storytelling with storyteller Toni Simmons as she brings stories to life. Discover how storytelling can be used in your libraries for all ages and occasions. Listen to, join in, and enjoy this interactive program.			

Lunch (Grand Hall) 12:20 pm - 1:20 pm

Title	Presenters	Audience	Location

1:20 pm - 2:10 pm

Archiving the Children's Art Project at MD Anderson Cancer Center	Quentin Pace, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center	Public & Special Libraries	**Grand Hall**
This program presents a comprehensive overview of the Children's Art Project, an initiative established at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. It explores the historical significance of the project and the processes by which its artistic output is preserved. The artwork is inventoried, digitized, and archived by the Historical Resources Center (HRC), a specialized unit within the Research Medical Library, ensuring its continued preservation as part of the institution's cultural legacy.			
Past as Prologue: Cultivating Community Through Archival Engagement in the High School Library	Kaitlyn Carpenter, University of St. Thomas	Academic, School & Special Libraries	**Classroom**
This session showcases how a high school library partnered with a sociology class to use historical yearbooks as archival resources for hands-on research. Students learned archival care, data analysis, and qualitative research while exploring school-based case studies on representation and community change.			
Community Voice: A Needs Assessment Model for Libraries	Shekeylia Douglas, Harris County Public Library; Martha Gonzales, Children at Risk; Danielle Brooks, Harris County Department of Economic Equity and Opportunity	Public & Special Libraries, Support Staff	**Meeting Room**
Harris County Public Library's participation in the Early Learning Quality Network grant led to the development of a new model for community-driven decision-making. This session describes the process of using individualized grassroots approaches to prioritize and collect community feedback, informing early learning quality initiatives. The outreach and trust-building strategies implemented through this project can be adapted for any library wanting to model community-led planning and community-directed funding.			

Title	Presenters	Audience	Location

2:20 pm - 3:10 pm

From Kitchen to Community: Nourishing Youth and Connecting Communities	Sarah Anderson, Oldways Nonprofit	Academic, Public, School & Special Libraries, Support Staff	**Grand Hall**
From Kitchen to Community introduces A Children's Taste of African Heritage (ACTOAH), a hands-on food and wellness program developed by Oldways. Through storytelling, food traditions, and simple recipes, ACTOAH engages youth in interactive activities that promote health, pride, and connection. Designed for flexible settings, the program can be adapted for meeting rooms, classrooms, or community spaces, equipping libraries to nourish youth and strengthen community ties.			
Collaborative Cleanup of a Collections Budget	Louise Kidder, University of Houston	Academic, Public, & Support Staff	**Classroom**
In 2024, University of Houston Libraries Acquisitions & Resource Sharing Department embarked on a cleanup project aimed at solving the problem of inaccurate fund encumbrances that have made useful budget projections difficult. This was complicated by long-standing workflow ambiguities and a shared tenant ILS environment. The project relies on collaboration among staff members and has impacts across multiple departments. The program describes steps taken and impacts of the ongoing project through September 2025, as well as future work.			
Your Seat at the Table: Becoming a TLA Leader (Panel)	Kaitlyn Carpenter, University of St. Thomas; Virginia Osborne, Texas City ISD & San Jacinto College; LaTrisha Milton, Houston Public Library; Monica Babaian, Fort Bend ISD; Rachael Welsh, Pearland ISD; Kimberly Michelle Gay, Prairie View A&M University; Meredith Derrick, Klein ISD	Academic, Public, School & Special Libraries, Support Staff	**Meeting Room**
Join officers from various TLA round tables and divisions as they share their unique paths to leadership, insights gained through service, and the impact of professional involvement. This panel offers practical advice, personal stories, and inspiration for those looking to grow within TLA and give back to the library community.			

Closing Session (Grand Hall) 3:20 pm - 3:45 pm