

# TexasLibraryJournal

VOLUME 91, NUMBER 2 • SUMMER 2015



**TEXAS BOOK  
FESTIVAL**  
October 17-18



**Texas Teen Book Festival** September 26

*In this issue:* Salary Negotiation, Flipped Instruction, Accessible Books, Mold Remediation, TexQuest, and More



*a loss*  
**beyond words.**

Your school library, your community.

School libraries are much more than literacy centers. They serve as a safe environment to explore and learn, access new information technologies, and collaborate with peers. When a school library program is destroyed by a natural disaster, the students and the community feel the immediate loss of a valuable resource that reaches far beyond books. Since 2006, the American Association of School Librarians, with funding from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, has given more than 1.5 million dollars in grants to over 150 school libraries across the country affected by natural disasters.

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**Beyond Words**<sup>SM</sup>

the Dollar General school library relief fund

A collaboration among



An ALA, AASL, NEA program  
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A directory of TLA membership is available in the "Members Only" section of the website.

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## GET INVOLVED: GREAT FOR YOU, GREAT FOR TLA!

### **G**reat things are happening at TLA. Are you involved?

Now is the perfect time to join colleagues to make a difference. We are coming off a wonderful 2015 Annual Conference in Austin and a very successful legislative session. Be a part of the fun, excitement, and the community that gets the job done!

Get involved and help TLA be the best it can be by providing input in the strategic planning process that is currently being launched. Your participation will give direction and help provide a relevant guide for the association's work over the next few years. Our first community input session will be held at Annual Assembly, July 7-10, in Austin. I hope you will join us. We need to hear all voices.

All members are encouraged to attend Annual Assembly. There is no registration fee to attend, and TLA will offer CE opportunities in addition to the various committee and unit meetings taking place. It is a great chance to learn more about the association, its structure, and how to join groups that interest you. There will be several training sessions offered to help members learn the basics of TLA procedures and activities. Then there will be two sessions led by our own parliamentarian who will help us all learn to run more effective meetings. He will also help take the "intimidation" factor out of being a member of council while explaining what council can do and how to do it. These sessions are open to everyone.

Of course, a prime way to get involved is by attending the 2016 Annual Conference in Houston in April. Program and event planning for the conference is well underway, and the event is guaranteed to be a NEON spectacular that no one will want to miss!

Get involved by doing your part to improve library services. Start your grass roots advocacy campaign in support of libraries. The legislative session recently

wrapped up, and the dust is beginning to settle. Congratulations must be given to our TLA Legislative Committee and all those who made phone calls, testified, wrote letters, and advocated on behalf of library issues. We had a great legislative session. Not all requests were realized, but huge strides were made to regain much of the revenue lost in previous sessions. Libraries, librarians, and their supporters still have a long way to go before we are all adequately funded, but this session was a nice start. This means everyone can take a week or two off and then get right back on that advocacy train. Now is the time when you can make a difference. Your first step is to become essential in your own community.

Get involved by understanding and sharing that the core of all issues is funding. Organizations and institutions considered essential get funded. It's that simple. We know we are essential, but that is not enough. We must prove ourselves essential on a regular basis, every day. School libraries must be essential to their students and teachers. Academic libraries must be essential within their campus settings and fulfill institutional learning and research priorities. Public libraries must be essential to the citizens of their community. Special libraries must be essential to their clients.

If we are proven to be essential, there will be no question: we WILL be funded. We must be proactive in sharing the value of the services and opportunities we provide. We must turn outward and



look at the communities we serve to see what is wanted. We must set into motion the actions needed to fulfill the wants and desires of our stakeholders. When we do this, we will all be essential. We must share news about ourselves with our elected officials and administrators. If we do not tell them what great things we are doing, how will they know? Librarians do a very poor job of telling our stories. To be successful in funding, our impact must be heard and seen! We must advocate for ourselves and bring others in to help us. Now is the time! We are all essential, and we must show it!

Invite others in our profession and library supporters to join TLA. The more we can increase our numbers, the more influence we have in our state.

Finally, I ask you to get involved because being a part of such a large library community opens doors for all. I hope you will get involved! This is your personal invitation, please accept! ✪



*Why trying to reinvent the wheel is inefficient, although sometimes helpful, and pretty much necessary for innovation*

None of us likes to waste time, and no one wants to be guilty of inefficiency or worse – creating needless busywork. While strongly adhering to these implied principles of efficacy, I will say that we all benefit from examining how we accomplish our goals to see if there are alternative means that are new, previously unknown to us, or suddenly more promising given changes in the context in which we must operate.

Libraries do this all the time. We only have to turn to our most basic function for an example of the most continuously evolving aspect of our work. While for centuries, society had a pretty darn fine method for producing and distributing information, the world collectively figured out how to create a “new wheel” that allowed us to push information in entirely new ways, traversing distances in previously unimagined ways.

**CHANGE.**

**ADAPTATION.**

**TRANSFORMATION.**

I thought of this notion of re-examination when speaking with a colleague, who seemed to me to want to solve problems I thought I had already solved or determined not worth solving. (*Can you say “set in her ways?”*) After a second, I thought: wait a minute, here I have a great opportunity – an energetic presence, ambition, and fresh eyes. I

don’t know what the outcome will be; but at best, we’ll have a better approach to a problem, and at worst, we will have affirmed our approach while providing ourselves with a learning and assessment opportunity.

I think of this re-examination process, because this is the time for libraries (and TLA) to assess. We have our normal cycles of planning – the end of a state legislative session, the end of the fiscal year, the end of school semesters, the beginning of new budgeting cycles, TLA’s new strategic planning process, etc. These functions are part of our work, and librarians love process. We are so very good at it! By profession (and by DNA to a large extent), we tend to be methodical planners. This professional characteristic is a plus.

I challenge us to add a bit of the look-beyond-the-horizon explorer to our efforts. Settle on something you have not really thought about before, something you have just taken as “a given” either in approach or its mere existence. Can you do something differently? Will that lead to opportunities? Does it open your mind to other possibilities? If not, you’ve lost nothing. If so, you’ve gained insight and made a breakthrough that – either large or small – pushes you and your library forward.

I will abide by my own strictures here. In thinking about my own environment, I wonder how to position libraries for

funding requests next session. (After all, the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature convenes on January 10, 2017 – that’s just two years away!) We have asked for digital content funding (i.e., TexShare and, more recently, TexQuest) for a lot of years now. It has become a given within the library community that we will continue to make this program a funding priority. That may, in fact, be the best course of action. However, we must think about other options – other ways to have the state support our libraries. Are there – in today’s environment – more pressing needs that the state can address? What will be the best fit between what Texas libraries need and what the state can be persuaded to support? Are more electronic resources what you need above all else? What important and productive change can we make on a statewide basis?

As libraries, our mission is simple and steadfast: make available and deliver information. Over the years, we have expanded on this core concept – help kids graduate, promote research and innovation, advance literacy, and develop a competitive workforce, for example. These goals are outstanding. We have many avenues for conducting this work and much more. Are there other possibilities? New partnerships to help us expand (or narrow) what we do?

**LET’S INNOVATE!**

While we may well find that we can jettison many of our ideas and, through trial and error, determine we’re doing quite well, we WILL find exciting new possibilities. These possibilities will energize us, allow us to better serve our stakeholders, and demonstrate the value and currency of libraries. 🌟

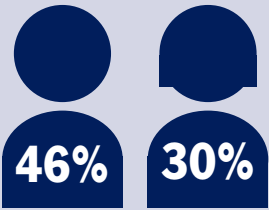
**The Texas Library Association is beginning a strategic planning process that will chart the direction of the association for the next three to five years. We are attempting to identify and forecast future changes and trends that may affect the association. As an association member, you are vital for our process. The first community input session will occur during Annual Assembly in July. Watch the TLA website and member communications for additional opportunities to comment and participate.**

# Salary Negotiation: You Owe It to Yourself

BY APRIL KESSLER

According to Salary.com,

46% of men always negotiate



salary, and

only 30%

of women

negotiate.

## NEGOTIATION BY GENDER

Interestingly, 39% of

men are apprehensive

about negotiation, and a

whopping 55% of women

are apprehensive. Fear is a

common professional enemy.

You should not let your fear

of negotiation keep you from

getting a

good salary.

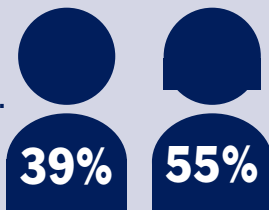
You can

learn to

negotiate,

and you owe it to yourself to

make the effort.



## APPREHENSION BY GENDER

I'll admit: I did not negotiate salary for my first professional librarian position and took the first offer. I learned later that the organization was willing to go up another \$2,000 based on my experience, but I did not even ask. I took the offer because I wanted that job, I thought the salary was close enough, and I did not feel comfortable negotiating. It took me two years to earn what I could have negotiated in less than two minutes. I made a promise to myself then that I would negotiate every salary going forward.

Maybe you do not negotiate because you feel like you are being greedy or demanding, but it helps to consider that salary negotiation is expected. You are usually dealing with an HR professional. You also negotiate all the time with friends, family, and coworkers on things like meeting times, deadlines, and deliverables. Take the stigma out of negotiation, and remember you are two parties coming to a middle ground.

## NEGOTIATION IS NOT CONFRONTATION

Keep in mind that salary negotiation is not confrontation. It is not whiney, and employers do not owe you anything. Above all, it is not personal; it is not about what you need to live, how you are going to pay off your car, or ever buy a house. Compensation is about the job's responsibilities, needed and contributed skills, and the market value for that combination.

This should be a win-win situation for you and the organization. By the time you are negotiating salary, you have been offered the position. You want the job and now you know you are the top candidate and that the organization wants you. If you are negotiating a fair salary, you are not doing anything wrong. It shows your employer that salary is a

consideration for you and that you are a confident professional.

The job offer is your best, if not only, opportunity to negotiate for salary. This is the only time you have any leverage in the negotiation. It is much harder to get a significant bump in salary when you are already working for the organization. It is important to negotiate the best starting salary possible, because any future raise or bonus is based on that starting salary.

Organizations often ask for salary information when you apply. If asked for salary history, you have to provide it, but most organizations ask only for a salary *requirement*. Your salary

requirement should be a separate letter from your cover letter, and you should avoid giving any numbers. Here is a perfect example from a retired librarian from UT Libraries:

*My salary requirement is commensurate with your job posting. I am confident that if I were offered this position we could negotiate a mutually agreeable salary based on my educational background and work experience.*

Not putting numbers in your salary requirement leaves it open for negotiation. You cannot win by giving a number; there is no benefit. You will either be too low, and not get fair market value, or you will be too high, and your requirement will seem unrealistic to the organization.

## AVOID GIVING NUMBERS

At the interview feel free talk to HR about benefits but not salary. When the committee asks if you have questions, yours should be about the management, goals, challenges, and future of the organization, but never about money.

## KNOW YOUR MARKET VALUE

Know your market value. Check association salary surveys (ALA, PLA, SLA, SCIP). Take notice of geographic locations and years of experience so that you are basing your salary requirements realistically. Look for similar job postings on Indeed.com to find current salaries. Check Glassdoor.com to see if employees are posting information about salaries at the organization. If this is a public university or city position, go find the budget online or in print, which is often in the library. You do not have to feel guilty about seeing your colleagues' salaries. If this public information is available, you are preparing by examining the data, and you would be remiss if you did not. Think of it as part of your interview research on the organization.

For successful negotiation you have to understand both the market value and what you bring to the table that will get you a salary at or above that market value. You have to get comfortable selling yourself. Think about three unique qualities that put you at the high end of the salary range and be prepared to talk about those qualities at the negotiation.

Now for the hard part – actually negotiating. When you are offered the position, you will be asked the difficult question of how much money you expect to make. You want them to give the first number so you know where they are starting. This does not always work, but here is a phrase from the Brazen Careerist blog that might help get them to provide the first number: *“I’d appreciate it if you could make me an offer based on what you have budgeted for the position.”* If they ask what you made at your previous job, you can begin by saying: *“This position is very different from my last job...”* and giving them two or three reasons why the current position has a higher market value, or why you are worth more now than when hired at the last position.

If they are really strong negotiators and will not provide the first number, you can give them the salary range based on your

research: *“Based on the current ALA Salary Survey for this position, in this region, I believe the range is \$\$-\$\$.”*

The best negotiation tactic is to listen and not talk. After you give your response, do not say another word. The pause may be awkward but you want them to take the lead and give you the numbers.

Once numbers are on the table, it is time to counter. Show your enthusiasm for the job and tell them you are excited about the organization and the position.

## SHOW YOUR ENTHUSIASM

Remind yourself that this is not a confrontation and that you are their top candidate. Counter phrases you can use include:

- *The salary is less than I was expecting. Do you have any flexibility?*
- *With my skills and experience, I would expect to be at the high end of the range.*
- *That is lower than I have seen for similar positions posted recently.*
- *That is lower than the current ALA Salary Survey for this position.*

Remember to make short statements and then be silent. Sometimes just the simple question, *“Do you have any flexibility in the salary?”* will get them talking. You will learn if they have any room for negotiation or if the salary is fixed.

## MAKE SHORT STATEMENTS

You can negotiate beyond salary, but I do not recommend talking about any benefits until you have negotiated for salary first. If there is no room for salary negotiation, for example, all new librarians are hired at the same rate, then you can ask them about benefits such as:

- Moving expenses
- Professional development
- Time off

- Flextime
- Telecommuting

A friend could not negotiate a higher salary; but she did get additional moving expenses, because that money came out of a different budget.

Once you get the offer, you can ask for a day or two to consider. If you just learned about the benefits, you will want to take some time to do the math. For example, one colleague showed she would have to pay an additional \$500 in insurance to get the same coverage as her previous job. By putting an exact dollar amount on the loss, it was easy for her employer to see what she needed, and they agreed to increase the salary by \$500. Not a huge amount for them, but of great significance to the librarian.

Respect the employer and get back with them as soon as possible, either with a counter offer or your final decision. In the end, you must consider what is most important to you. Do you want the job? Are they paying a fair market rate for your skills? Will you gain the skills and experience you need at this job to move on to an even better job later?

Successful negotiation does not always mean getting a higher salary. Success is stepping up and negotiating. Know that you prepared, negotiated, and did your best. Now get that signed offer and rock your new job!

April Kessler is the chief research analyst for Bizologie.

## AND THEN BE SILENT

### Additional Resource:

*Women Don't Ask: The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation – and Positive Strategies for Change* by Linda Babcock & Sara Laschever ☆

# Tools & Tips for Flipped Lesson Development

BY DANIELLA SMITH

I began my experience with flipped lessons without realizing what I was doing. I was the librarian for a middle school that was underperforming according to the minimum state standards. The school's innovative principal challenged me to provide lessons for the students as part of the morning show that I produced for them. After seeing the lessons, the principal requested that I incorporate information into the library website that would help students with their information literacy skills. Soon, I was taking the lessons that I produced for the morning show and putting them online to help students. By the following year, the school was performing better according to state standards.

Of course, I cannot and do not claim all of the credit for that success. However, because of the positive responses I received from the school community, I do know that I contributed to the school's academic achievement. As the years have passed, I have improved my flipped lesson skills through trial and error to encourage higher order thinking. I have also continued to interact with students in various educational settings. This year, for example, I created flipped lessons for graduate students to teach

Websites offer educational videos that can be embedded in lessons.

technology skills. I also collaborated with an elementary school teacher to develop flipped lessons on research skills for fourth grade students.

Though my skills have come quite far and I am now intimately familiar with resources for flipped learning, when I began my journey, I never could have imagined the plethora of online tools available. There is abundant research that supports the benefits of flipped learning. For example, a Project Tomorrow report (2013) notes that online learning experiences motivate students to learn. Similar study results (Project Tomorrow, 2015) explained that nearly 50% of participating K-12 students stated that they use videos to assist them with their homework. Moreover, students enjoyed learning online, because they were able to control the learning process. According to Picciano, Seaman, Shea, and Swan (2012, p. 127), online learning experiences offer students advantages, such as differentiated instruction and lessons that facilitate transitioning to college.

While keeping the existing research in mind, my own experiences have revealed that regardless of the setting, there are some factors that remain constant. For instance, the flipped learning process is not always intuitive for students, technology can fail, and lesson objectives need to be clear. Here are a few tips based on these factors for developing flipped learning techniques.

## START SLOWLY.

Creating flipped lessons is time consuming, so work on slowly building a library of lessons. This approach will allow your students to become

accustomed to how the lessons work as you continue building them. It typically takes a few weeks for students to complete lessons consistently.

## WRITE SCRIPTS.

Before recording a lesson, take the time to write a script. Writing a script is beneficial because you can easily refer to a script to remember details during recording sessions. Moreover, if a lesson is revised or re-recorded using a different platform, it is easier to update lessons with scripts rather than starting over. Additionally, scripts are helpful for differently-abled students that may need to refer to text.

## RECORD IN INTERVALS.

A slight noise can ruin a recording that took 20 minutes to make. Although small mistakes in recordings are fine, it is easier and faster to replace five minutes rather than 20 minutes when necessary. You can then combine all of the recordings at the end of the project.

## CREATE BACKUPS.

Having a backup plan is an essential component of teaching with technology. Always save a copy of lessons by downloading them or making a screencast so that if the lesson is not available in its original format, it can be posted online in an alternative video format.

## INCLUDE ASSESSMENTS.

It is difficult to measure the impact of lessons without an assessment. Assessments can be as brief as asking students to answer a question on Padlet.com or a quiz made with a Google form. In any case, it is best to document and assess the impact of teaching efforts during this era of accountability.





## FLIP FOR ADULTS.

School librarians are expected to be an integral part of the school community, but time constraints among parents and teachers can limit interaction. Flipped learning, however, can help school librarians reach busy parents and teachers. Offering online sessions via a flipped lesson format gives teachers and parents the opportunity to learn on a schedule that adheres to their needs.

## WORK SMARTER.

Several websites feature videos that can be included in flipped lessons. The key to using these videos is to incorporate a personal message to students with an introduction of the lesson objectives as well as a conclusion to reiterate key points. This approach personalizes the lessons for students, who need to understand that flipped lessons are carefully planned for them. The following websites offer educational videos that can be embedded in lessons: LearnZillion.com, KhanAcademy.org, Watchknowlearn.org, Commonsensemedia.org, TeacherTube.com, and Schmoop.com.

## PROVIDE TUTORIALS.

Offer face-to-face sessions, video tutorials, and print infographics to help students with a variety of learning styles understand how to complete flipped lessons. Technical support can be provided by using ShowMeWhatsWrong.com.

## FIND NEW TOOLS.

There is no shortage of Web 2.0 tools that can be used for creating flipped lessons. The American Association of School Librarians provides a list of vetted websites on the “Best Websites for Teaching and Learning” page: [www.ala.org/aasl/](http://www.ala.org/aasl/)

standards-guidelines/best-websites. EduSurge.com, Freetech4teachers.com, and the Centre for Learning and Performance Technologies (c4lpt.co.uk) are also great websites for discovering new tools. In addition to the tools listed throughout this article, some tools I highly recommend are:

- Adobe Presenter for creating PDFs embedded with interactive lessons containing chapters
- Knovio.com for simultaneously video recording instructors and presentation slides
- Blendspace.com for creating lessons that combine a variety of material formats
- LiveBinder.com for hosting lessons and handouts
- Vimeo.com for password protecting videos
- Zaption.com and EduCanon.com for creating video lessons with assessments

In conclusion, there is a great variety of tools and perspectives on creating flipped learning opportunities, and school librarians can play an important role in the learning revolution by utilizing them. While flipped learning is a great option, remember that no matter how many lessons are created, there will still be students that cannot or will not access lessons at home. Be sure to have options for these students, including enabling students to complete alternative lessons in print format. It is also advantageous to allow students to finish the lessons before or after school, as this will ensure that all students are getting the best opportunities for learning.

Daniella Smith is a former classroom teacher and a former school and public librarian. She is currently an assistant professor in the University of North Texas' Department of Library and Information Sciences.

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Project Tomorrow. (2013). 2013 trends in online learning: Virtual, blended and flipped classrooms. Retrieved from [www.tomorrow.org/speakup/2013\\_OnlineLearningReport.html](http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/2013_OnlineLearningReport.html). ⚡

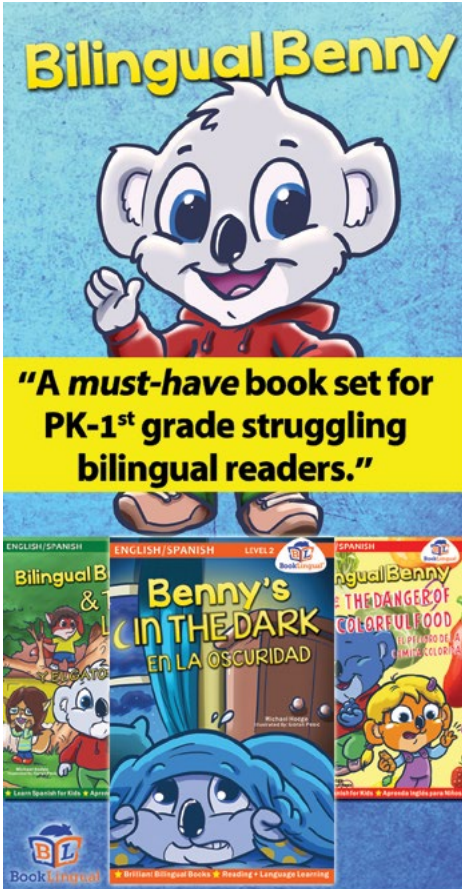


**CHILDREN OF GIANT**

In the summer of 1955, Hollywood descended on the dusty West Texas town of Marfa as production began on the movie *Giant*, starring Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, and James Dean. Explore the dramatic story behind the making of the film and meet the surviving cast, crew, and locals who participated in the production, many of whose lives mirrored the film's controversial themes of racism and segregation, as they celebrate the film that remains as powerful and relevant today as when it was first released.

Item #: CGIA601

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# Come to the Flipping Library: A Librarian's Tale!

BY ANGELA C. HALL

I became intrigued by the “flipped” concept a couple of years ago when I heard a presentation by Jon Bergmann, the co-author of *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day*. As a librarian, I dread the fall semester freshmen orientations in which we often find ourselves repeating the same lesson 20 times in the same week. You hope that your students are understanding the content, but you really have no way of knowing because you’re hurrying through that information and making way for the next class. After reading the Bergmann book, I realized that flipped instruction could possibly work for librarians.

This concept is not new and has been around for a while. For someone not familiar with the term “flip” as it pertains to instruction, you may think initially (like I did) of many types of flipping – a flipped phone or camera, or some other mechanical flipping. It is much more than that, of course; it is about switching up student learning by making them have the means to take ownership of their learning. I like the way Bergmann states it. By providing the information in different, nontraditional formats, we can “infiltrate the video/digital/culture instead of fighting it.” (Bergmann & Sams, p. 21)

For me, flipped instruction has been like wearing my progressive lens eyeglasses. When I wear them and use them correctly, there is a “sweet spot.” In that spot, my vision is perfect for my need at that time whether it is for seeing far off when driving or looking at fine print when I’m reading a book. I do find that I’m constantly adjusting my head/eyes in search of that sweet spot, and it is the same when flipping your library. As you try it, don’t expect perfection, or you will become frustrated. It will not be perfect, but with practice, it becomes perfect for you and your students. You can always fine-tune it or modify the lesson. So, why flip? Is it really feasible? Does it really

work? It is, and it does! According to a 2012 Joyce Valenza article, a recent survey by Techlearning shared its preliminary results of an ongoing survey initiated by the Flipped Learning Network (Valenza, p.22). Of the 453 flipped educators surveyed:

- 88% said flipping improved their own job satisfaction.
- 67% reported improved student test scores.
- 80% reported improved student attitude.
- 99% said they would do it again next year.

In our library world it is absolutely feasible, especially since we have so many repetitive lessons. I have found that some of the pros to flipping are flexibility, pause and rewind, blending, new and improved technologies, better classroom management, increased student interaction, differentiation, and personalization. Our biggest obstacle tends to be buy-in from parents, teachers, and students – especially when considering the assignment of homework from the library.

So, how do we put it all together? We do it slowly and by using very short tutorials/videos. Students learn best in the media formats with which they are already familiar. For a library, some of the best “flipping” resources include:

- Screencast-O-Matic
- Audacity

- WeVideo
- Lendio
- Any QR Code generator/reader (I prefer i-Nigma)
- Google Drive
- MackinVIA

Each teacher librarian has her favorite flipping tools. Rely on your own preferences and skills. Your flipped learning should be a reflection of you and your personality. In addition, make sure your website provides flexibility in how you are able to post video/tutorials. At my campus library, we currently use Weebly. While it is extremely easy to create, it is also a very limiting platform, because of the template restrictions. Those templates do not allow much manipulation. Our library is definitely considering the need for more customization with Weebly or the use of a different website product.

A flipped lesson does not have to be long or complicated. I would strongly suggest keeping the lesson less than three to five minutes. Begin with at a basic level. While we are a tech-rich society, we still need to take it slow. Develop more complicated flipped lessons as you become more comfortable with the concept. Provide enough information to hook ‘em and keep ‘em coming back for more!

Angela C. Hall is a librarian at Cedar Ridge High School at Round Rock ISD.

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# Writing Workshop for Teens Finds Success in a Flood

BY SARA K. JOINER

Librarians are always looking for great teen programs, and Brazoria County Library System stumbled on one that we managed to pull together in less than three months.

At a patron's request, we started writing groups for teens at two of our branches – Alvin and Brazoria. Those two branches were chosen because the children's specialists who would run the groups had writing and editing experience.

The group in Alvin saw small but quick success, while the one in Brazoria struggled.

In an effort to improve attendance at both groups, we decided to host writing workshops for teens at those locations during Spring Break, when our target audience would be most available. We formed a committee consisting of the children's specialists at Alvin and Brazoria, the Manvel branch manager, the children's assistant at Pearland, and myself, the children's coordinator. All of us either write or have an interest in writing.

We modelled the workshops on a traditional writing conference plan. We would offer a keynote speech and several sessions about the craft of writing from which the teens could choose. We would wrap it up with a question and answer session along with door prizes.

Since I have been involved with the Houston chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), I sent out emails to distribution lists in Houston and Austin asking if anyone was interested in teaching teens about writing. I received responses from six authors. One volunteered her daughter as a speaker since she was in college and close to the same age as the participants. After the initial expression of interest, we had four authors provide craft sessions and one keynote speaker. All provided their services at no charge as they were all from the Houston area. We provided transportation to and from the workshop sites.

The authors were encouraged to create their own topics as we had no workshop theme. We had a range of topics that all seemed to fit together somehow. Mary Lindsey, author of three teen paranormal novels, was our keynote speaker. She discussed her own emotions when it came to writing and editing her first novel, *Shattered Souls*. She gave teens ideas and tips on how to deal with difficult situations, whether it be in writing or life in general. Throughout her talk, she encouraged the teens to put on their own version of hot pink boots (a theme of her talk) or a leather jacket or whatever mental or physical "armor" they preferred to project an aura of confidence.

Other speakers included Donna Maloy, author of *Celia and the Wolf*; Trakena Prevost, author of *Cursed: The Guardian Chronicles*; and Russ McAfee and Hayley Gompertz. Maloy provided an exceptional program about different ways to plot a story. It was fascinating, and even the keynote speaker learned something from that session! Prevost described how to craft writing that pops off the page. She encouraged the teens to remember sensory details and gave them all the opportunity to practice with a writing prompt. They had the opportunity to share their writing, as well. McAfee offered ideas for making a living as a writer. He shared samples of his work endeavors, including advertising copy, magazine articles, and editing copy. Gompertz shared her experiences as a teen writer. She encouraged the participants to keep writing and reminded them that hard work and dedication would pay off.

The workshops proved enormously beneficial. Not only did we take the opportunity to teach young adults about research resources at the library; the writing exercise really hit the mark. Our teen audience and authors really enjoyed the event. Despite the early hour and bad weather we had, the teens showed up, learned, and had a great time. The authors who spoke all had great things to say. They had a wonderful time and enjoyed the company of other authors and teens alike! Maloy said, "We don't get the opportunity to do this without libraries."

## How can you host a WRITING WORKSHOP FOR TEENS?

- **Decide how you want to arrange the workshop.**  
Do you want to focus on one aspect of writing? Do you want to offer a variety of opportunities?
- **Contact your regional SCBWI advisor.**  
They are listed on the SCBWI website, <http://www.scbwi.org>, and are happy to share emails with their members. Texas is fortunate to have five chapters of SCBWI. Depending on your location, you may want to contact more than one chapter.
- **Consider selling books.**  
If you're lucky enough to have a bookstore in your area, you could ask them about selling books from your speakers.
- **Arrange door prizes.**  
I went to Half-Price Books and bought a few writing books as prizes. Our authors also provided copies of their books as prizes.
- **Advertise, advertise, advertise.**  
This is usually the hardest part for most of us. We sent out press releases and had signs at all of our branches.
- **Have enough volunteers to assist on the day.**  
Make sure all the rooms are set up and ready for the speakers.
- **Have some questions in mind.**  
Be ready for the Q&A session in case the teens are too shy to ask the first question. ✪

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Library System.



José Alvarez reads a Bookshare book on his iPad.

Photo used by permission of the author.

## *Accessible Books Make Lifelong Learning Possible for Readers with Disabilities*

BY CHRISTINE JONES

**W**hen Texas student José Alvarez was in second grade, he pretended to read. José has dyslexia and didn't want his friends to know about his learning disability. He was frustrated and sad. "It was heartbreaking for us to watch our son struggle to read," says his mother, Lola Alvarez.

This school year, José's dyslexia therapist at Frisco Independent School District introduced the Alvarez family to accessible digital books. She taught nine-year-old José and his parents how to find, download, and read these accessible ebooks on the family's tablet. The change that followed happened quickly. "We saw an immediate improvement in José's comprehension skills," notes his mother.

In San Antonio, Peter and Mary Donahue co-manage a successful business that requires them to read a great deal to remain current and competitive. Peter and Mary are blind and need easy access to a large, affordable collection of contemporary titles in specialized formats they can read, even while on the go. In 2004, they discovered just such a resource,

from which they have since accessed more than 7,500 books.

Another visually impaired San Antonio resident, 32-year-old Sweet Ramos, enjoys improving her cooking skills and learning about the environment and how to live more sustainably. Since 2005, she has downloaded more than 1,200 books in accessible formats from the same resource on which the Donahues depend.

### **Readers with Print Disabilities Need Accessible Materials**

In classrooms and homes throughout Texas, accessible ebooks are helping these individuals and many others who face tremendous barriers of access to information, because they cannot read or process standard print materials. They include people who are blind or have visual impairments, who are affected by a physical disability that hinders reading, or who have a severe learning disability, such as dyslexia. These readers with print disabilities need materials in accessible formats, such as braille, large print, audio, or digital text.

The digital revolution and ongoing advances in technology have made it possible to get more such accessible content, in more ways, to more types of readers. This is because digital books can easily be rendered in many different ways and presented in the format that best suits one's needs. Yet, while digital materials are becoming increasingly popular in schools and libraries, it is important to remember that not all digital content is accessible.

### **Bookshare: Accessible ebooks for Reading Independence**

The primary source of accessible ebooks for José Alvarez, the Donahues, Sweet Ramos, and many others is Bookshare, the world's largest online accessible library of copyrighted ebooks for people with print disabilities. Bookshare now serves more than 353,000 members with a collection of more than 345,000 accessible titles. It is currently the only national provider of free educational materials in all required formats to all students with qualifying print disabilities. Thanks to support from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Bookshare is free for all qualified U.S. students and schools. People with qualifying print disabilities who are not students pay a nominal annual fee for their memberships.

The Bookshare collection includes K-12 textbooks, classroom reading books, college and university research books and textbooks, vocational and career-advancement titles, fiction and nonfiction books, and newspapers and magazines. Bookshare also provides reading technologies that enable members to experience multimodal learning and to read in the format and on the device of their choice. Depending on the device or program they use to read, members can listen to books with high quality text-to-speech voices; hear and see highlighted words on screen; read with digital braille or enlarged fonts; create hardcopy braille or

large print; or read directly in an Internet browser – in the classroom or library, at home, or on the go.

When Bookshare members need books for school, or they simply want to read the same books as their peers without disabilities, they are likely to find accessible versions of those books in Bookshare's rapidly growing collection. For Bookshare members – including José Alvarez – this timely availability of accessible books means staying on top of their schoolwork, which leads to increased self-esteem. Today, in third grade, José reads on a fifth-grade level. "Bookshare gives José reading independence," says Lola Alvarez. "He is much happier now, and a different child and learner. He is better equipped to perform well on reading tests. We believe that he will make a much better transition to middle school."

The Donahues attribute their business success in part to the abundance of books they have accessed affordably through their Bookshare memberships. As Donahue explains, "From Bookshare, we have been able to obtain many titles in accessible formats that we could not find elsewhere. If we bought these titles commercially, they would cost several times an annual Bookshare subscription." Donahue adds, "My wife and I are finally going to enter the smartphone age. I recently downloaded several titles dealing with the iPhone and its use. Bookshare's computer and programming collection run circles around anyone else's."

Similarly, Sweet Ramos exclaims, "Bookshare greatly enhances my life. I've always loved to read and learn new things. Through Bookshare, I have found books related to all of my interests. I haven't been able to find them in an accessible format anywhere else."

Bookshare is an initiative of Benetech, a Silicon Valley nonprofit that provides technology tools and services to address pressing social problems. Bookshare is made legally possible under Section 121 of the U.S. Copyright Act, also known as the Chafee Amendment. Section 121 allows authorized nonprofit entities such as Benetech to create accessible versions of copyrighted books, without the need to request permission from publishers (or pay a royalty), and then to distribute

these versions exclusively to people with qualifying disabilities.

Benetech is one of the four national organizations widely recognized as an "authorized entity" under the Section 121 exception to copyright law. Benetech works directly with the other three national organizations under formal agreements: around Section 121 eligibility with Learning Ally and the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress, and on educational materials with the National Instructional Materials Access Center that is operated by the American Printing House for the Blind.

Bookshare offers two types of memberships: individual memberships, which provide the ability to access Bookshare anywhere, year round; and organizational memberships, with which members can access books that are assigned to them by their Bookshare sponsoring school or teacher. Many Bookshare students choose to have an individual membership while also being on their school's organizational membership roster.

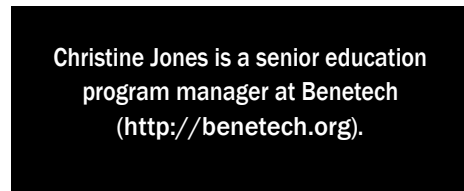
## Accessible Books for Texas: A Benetech Project

In Texas, Benetech operates an educational outreach project serving public and open enrollment charter school students who require reading accommodation. Through this Accessible Books for Texas (ABT) project, which is funded by the Texas Education Agency, Texas-based Outreach Coordinators provide free, on-the-ground training and support on Bookshare and accessible educational materials to schools and libraries serving Texas public K-12 students, as well as to the parents of these students.

Since the launch of the ABT project in April 2011, more than 1,200 public K-12 organizations in Texas have established Bookshare accounts to deliver accessible books to their students who require reading accommodations, and nearly 23,000 Texas students have been added to these accounts and can now receive the accessible educational materials they need in a timely manner.

## Getting Started with Bookshare

Bookshare and the Accessible Books for Texas project ensure that people who require accessible reading accommodations have free or low-cost access to content, delivered quickly, at high quality, and with the necessary assistive technology. To learn more about Bookshare, visit <https://www.bookshare.org> and <http://www.accessiblebooks4tx.org/>. 🌟



# Mold Prevention and Remediation in a Library Environment

BY PRESTON LIVINGSTON

To properly prevent mold growth in a library, three components are necessary: 1) monitoring of humidity and temperature, 2) proactively maintaining the building's heating ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system for proper performance, and 3) good housekeeping. Mold outbreaks in libraries are a common occurrence and never having had one previously does not mean it will not occur. I have seen four mold outbreaks in a library environment, and would like to share my experience.

## Temperature and humidity monitoring and mold prevention

Every library needs to have a monitoring system for building temperature and relative humidity to insure that the collection is in a safe environment. If either building temperature or humidity gets out of acceptable ranges, mold will develop on library materials. Mold spores are always present. When conditions become favorable, mold will grow.

The number of library materials that become contaminated with mold depends on the material type and the severity of the environment rate. If temperature and humidity levels continue to increase, the amount of materials that are contaminated with mold will increase. The secondary result is mold spores becomes aerial and will move to other areas in the collection and start growing.<sup>1</sup> An initial outbreak of mold can be followed by other waves of contamination.

Other factors that contribute to mold growth are poor air circulation, dust, and high humidity in the air outside the building.<sup>2</sup> If ceiling air ducts have a balanced air flow (meaning each vent is pushing about the same amount of air), air is constantly moving and, in equal

proportion, a drying affect is created which helps reduce humidity.<sup>3</sup> Simple cleaning is fundamental to preventing mold. Dust removal from books should be done with a HEPA vacuum cleaner.<sup>4</sup> Vacuuming is more effective than cleaning with a dust cloth.<sup>5</sup> The shelves should be cleaned with Lysol wipes and dried before replacing the books.

If a library's current HVAC system is old or possibly falls under the category of deferred maintenance, the difficulties of controlling the environment are compounded. Monitoring the library's temperature and humidity can be done with a very reasonable investment in a digital thermo/hygrometer and labor. Various thermo/hygrometers (both wall and handheld units) are available for purchase.

I would strongly recommend that at least one handheld unit is purchased that is professional grade, since a proper reading of temperature and humidity and appropriate action is a necessity. A handheld device allows readings in different areas of the stacks since it is very probable that the temperature and humidity readings will be differ relative to HVAC performance at various locations in the library.

A library environment should maintain relative humidity within a range of 35% to 50% with a variance plus or minus 5%. If relative humidity surpasses 60%, then conditions for mold growth are possible.<sup>6</sup> Temperature also plays a factor in controlling the environment. Heat causes evaporation, increasing relative humidity. The amount of moisture air will hold is relative to the temperature. As temperatures increase, the air's capacity to hold more moisture also increases. When the air cools, the moisture is released and could then fall on library materials.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, libraries need to monitor building temperatures as well. Once the temperature surpasses 80 degrees (at any level of humidity) mold growth is possible. The range recommended for temperature is 72 – plus or minus five degrees.<sup>8</sup> Archival departments sometimes have different range requirements, depending on the type materials in the collection. The topic of what is considered proper temperature

and humidity ranges for a library environment is a greatly debated issue. Be prepared to get differing opinions.

## Remediation

As a general rule of thumb, once humidity or temperature is out of range, there is a 48-to-72 hour window to bring the readings back into an acceptable range or risk a mold outbreak. If it is determined that a library has experienced an outbreak of mold, ask for help. There are contractors that specialize in this area. It is best to have already established a relationship with a couple of remediation contractors. Once the outbreak has occurred, questions will need to be answered quickly. Then appropriate quick action must follow.

Normally when an outbreak of mold has occurred, the materials that will be contaminated will run into the thousands. One outbreak that I have experienced totaled 20,000 print items. If the library has not already established a relationship with a remediation contractor, it could possibly take a couple of weeks to get someone on the job, and then there is so much information to go over and possible inspection of the HVAC system. The contractors will generally have several remediation packages for review and consideration. Some offer "turnkey" services, meaning they will handle all remediation from start to finish. Some offer a split package; the library and the contractor share the work as agreed.

How the remediation process and contract is set up depends on the library's managers. Once a mold outbreak has occurred, the library is looking at \$1.00 to \$1.50 per book in cleaning costs depending on quantities and the remediation package that is purchased. The quotes from contractors will usually be by cubic feet of books or by labor and materials. Remediation unit prices for archival materials are considerably higher.

## HVAC systems analysis

The performance of the HVAC system in the library is the most critical mechanism to prevent mold growth. If the HVAC system is not properly maintained, the odds of a mold outbreak are increased enormously. Mold outbreaks typically occur in summer months, when outside

temperatures and humidity start to climb. These type of conditions put a load on the HVAC system performance. The four mold outbreaks that I have personally experienced came in the month of June.

Patches and quick fixes to an old HVAC system are second guesses at best. It is essential that library management, facilities, and administration have a meeting and face the music on HVAC deferred maintenance.

During the interim period, when the HVAC system is being evaluated, the library environment still needs to be controlled. Some libraries have used portable dehumidifiers that can be placed on problem floors.<sup>9</sup> In one scenario I experienced, after numerous mold outbreaks, a school opted to borrow several million dollars to resolve HVAC issues.

## Building Evaluation

Take time to inspect the library building for drafts, faulty automatic doors, and proper weather stripping of doors. Drafts in a building can transport a sizeable amount of moisture into the environment.<sup>10</sup> Sliding glass doors can be troublesome, since typically they are high maintenance and do get stuck open creating a huge draft into the building.

When a maintenance crew is scheduled for work in the library, check to see if doors are left open for access to hookup power cords. When deliveries are being made to the building via truck, ask the vendors to unload as soon as possible and shut the doors promptly. During the course of the day, the properly conditioned air can be pulled out of the building, spiking the humidity level and temperature.

Some commercial buildings have flat roofs, with a tar and gravel system. Flat roofs are more prone to leak since after the rainstorm water will rest in the low spots. Be proactive in reporting roof leaks to facilities, since this can add to a moisture problem in the building. If a new building is being planned, at least

consider a roof system with a pitch, or angled roof. General rule of thumb: a roof system that is built with a slope provides a component for a better roof system. Rain water simply runs off the structure at a faster rate, reducing the chances of a water leak.

## Conclusion

Temperature and humidity monitoring in a library environment are vital to library operations. Environmental systems must be set up accordingly with quality equipment that is current, monitored, and maintained. Implement a plan for inspecting the library building for changing conditions and for following a cleaning regime that supports healthy collections. Preventing a mold outbreak in a library can save the organization thousands of dollars.

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Has your library been hit by the recent severe storms? TLA's Texas Library Disaster Relief Fund exists to assist libraries in recovering from floods, fires, and other calamities. [www.tsla.org/groups/DRC-funds](http://www.tsla.org/groups/DRC-funds)

# TexQuest: New Resources, New Opportunities for School Librarians

BY ANN VYORAL

**On June 14, 2015, TexQuest, the state supported digital resources for K-12 public and open-enrollment school communities, began its transition into Year 2. Evidence of the key role that school librarians successfully played to build the program's identity and sustainability continues to mount. Districts across the state of Texas enthusiastically committed to these state supported resources, administered through the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, with over 94% of the eligible students in the state now attending a TexQuest district. Usage statistics have risen substantially each month, and anecdotal evidence shows that teachers and students are excited about the new resources.**

**School library support was integral to control the challenges inherent in implementing a statewide program of this magnitude, especially in a state the size of Texas. A new program name had to be promoted, multiple resources required multiple access points and different methods of entry, and busy librarians had to find innovative ways to share new resources with their patrons while quickly becoming familiar with those resources themselves. Texas school librarians, however, embraced these challenges, and in the process, they discovered exciting new opportunities – increasing their leadership role as media specialists, curriculum support team members, and professional development providers.**

*TexQuest provides school librarians with an opportunity to update the perception of “databases.”*

Actually, many school librarians have taken this opportunity to transition from the word “database” when they refer to TexQuest resources, opting for more specific terms like online resources, shared digital content, and e-content. The TexQuest program gives librarians a chance to reintroduce library “databases,” as comprehensive collections of print and visual resources, including e-books, full text magazines, digitized primary sources, website links, videos, images, and audio files, along with the magazine, journal, and newspaper articles that students and teachers already expect in the classic database.

*Librarians provide their patrons with opportunities to access TexQuest resources in multiple ways.*

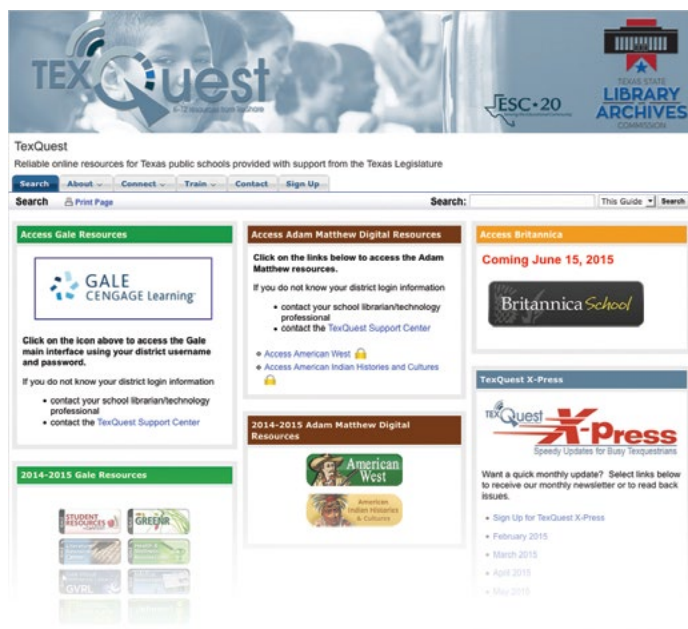
While still providing the traditional access to online resources through the library webpage, librarians utilize creative methods, including social networks, to push access information out to their users. They recognize that limiting access points for online resources, also limits the number of users. Instead, they share direct links to specific TexQuest products on district, school, library, and teacher webpages, along with icons and widgets. They customize consistent access information for all of their resources, and find creative ways to share that access information with their patrons. They create persistent links to TexQuest articles and search results and integrate them into library instruction, and they help teachers integrate these same

links into their classroom presentations and student assignments. Librarians have also added TexQuest searching capabilities to many of their library automation systems, providing students with the opportunity to search for books and online resources simultaneously.

*Librarians see TexQuest as an opportunity to band together as a community to provide Texas students with equal access to quality resources, no matter the size of the district.*

Librarians understand that the affordability of the new cost-share model is dependent on the participation of the entire K-12 community, and they actively ensure that their districts participate. Because the TexQuest program has multiple content providers, and patrons can have different access points and user information for each provider, it is easy for users to mistake the provider for the program. In fact, many TexQuest users do not initially recognize the word TexQuest. Savvy librarians make sure that their patrons, and as a result, their administrators and school board members are aware of the program by displaying TexQuest logos on webpages and handouts, and promoting the program as well as the resources. Many use the connection between TexQuest

<http://texquest.net>





and TexShare to explain the importance of these resources to their community, and all Texas library users. And many Texas librarians reach out to districts with little or no library presence so that those students and educators who do not have the benefit of a school librarian, don't also suffer from the lack of access to quality online resources for research and curriculum integration.

***TexQuest gives school librarians opportunities to promote online resources as supplemental instructional materials.***

In fact, many librarians are able to support overburdened teachers with TexQuest resources by showing those teachers how to use the resource features to lighten their load. Along with searching for classroom presentation and enrichment materials by TEKS, librarians help teachers access the lexile search and read aloud features for RTI and special needs students, translate and download articles for ELL students, access peer-reviewed materials and scholarly journals for GT and advanced placement students, and create assignments using digitized primary sources for STAAR practice. They show students and teachers how to use the topic lists and topic finder features to narrow the focus of research assignments, employ the highlighting and note-taking features to interact with text, and easily create works cited documents at all levels using the source citation features. Educators, students, and their families are able to access the library 24/7 with TexQuest, and instructional materials will still be available for summer school, even if the library has to physically close its doors.

***Librarians take advantage of the opportunity to develop their role as professional development providers in their schools, districts, and communities with the TexQuest resources.***

TexQuest has a resource for almost every academic area or learning level, so librarians not only share the resources with large faculty and student groups, but they also match resources to small

groups of users based on the curriculum. Librarians present teachers with the opportunity to search for content specific resources at the point of need. Parents are thrilled to hear about safe, age-appropriate resources for their students to use at home. Students learn about appropriate resources when they begin an assignment (one group of middle school boys cheered when their librarian showed them how to have TexQuest articles read out loud to them). Working with smaller groups allows librarians to develop their professional development credentials as they exhibit their knowledge of the curriculum and teaching methods. Librarians, library paraprofessionals, and instructional technologists have been proactive in seeking out training opportunities, using their skills as media specialists, as well as the resources provided on TexQuest.net, to enhance the training they provide at their campuses and districts. Some librarians generate ways to go beyond face-to-face training by providing their patrons with links to short videos on how to access and use TexQuest materials – either by creating their own screencasts or linking to Web resources created by the content providers.

***Librarians share their ideas with each other to provide opportunities for all Texas students to benefit from TexQuest.***

Through a program called TexQuest IPAs (Integration Promotion Activities), librarians submit ideas that were effective at their schools and link to resources that

they created to support and promote TexQuest resources. Along with the resources created by the TexQuest Support Team, these IPAs are showcased on the TexQuest website. In addition, librarians demonstrate their commitment to support teachers, as well as their student patrons, by bringing teams of teachers to ESC regional training sessions and actively participating in TLA sessions. This willingness to make resources and ideas available to other busy school librarians (and additional school personnel) shows a true spirit of collaboration in the library and school community.

As TexQuest Year 2 begins, the Texas school library community celebrates the success experienced in TexQuest's initial year. With the addition of the Britannica School Resources on June 15, librarians are once again presented with new resources to explore, share, and integrate into their school's curriculum and culture. Texas librarians, however, recognize the advantages that these resources give their teachers and students and willingly turn any challenges into opportunities to support 21st century skills in their libraries, on their campuses, and in their districts. TexQuest Year 2 means more resources and more opportunities for school librarians! ✪

Ann Vyoral is an educational specialist in Digital Resources & Library Services at Education Service Center Region 20 (San Antonio).

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# Synced Up in 2015!

The 2015 TLA Annual Conference, held April 14–17 in Austin, drew over 8,000 attendees. The convention showcased how libraries are at the forefront of changes in educational technology, digital publishing, and community initiatives for literacy and workforce development. Programs and activities examined innovative strategies libraries are using to advance education, literacy, and robust digital citizenship.

The conference featured a talented array of experts and leaders in all areas of information and library services. Keynote speakers included international best-selling author David Baldacci, journalist and author Cokie Roberts, musician and author Tish Hinojosa, US inaugural poet Richard Blanco, Caldecott Medal-winner Jerry Pinkney, best-selling graphic novelist Jeff Smith, and many others.

Librarians and library supporters attended over 400 sessions and events covering topics such as scholarly communications, ebooks and publishing, learning strategies for physical and digital classrooms, development of cooperative community partnerships, and privacy, as well as the latest in literary materials and books.

## POST-CONFERENCE RESOURCES

- **Program Recordings**  
2015 Conference Recordings may be ordered using the URL below. All orders and payment must be sent to the TLA office. Recordings were made of most sessions when speakers permit. <http://www.txla.org/sites/tla/files/conference/docs/Recordings2015.pdf>
- **Conference Session Handouts**  
While some speakers did not provide handouts, many did. These may be found on the Web version of the conference app at <http://tla2015.quickmobile.com> under “Session Handouts.” They may also be available on the smartphone version.
- **Lost & Found**  
Contact TLA by email (TLA@txla.org) or phone (800-580-2852). You may want to also contact your hotel if the item may have been lost there.
- **Continuing Education Credits**  
The TLA CE system allows users to print out certificates at their convenience. See <http://www.txla.org/conference-CE> for instructions for printing.
- **Relive #TXLA15 with Storify!**  
(<https://storify.com/TXLA/txla15>). Check out tweets, blog posts, photo essays, videos, and more from annual conference. Thank you for sharing your #txla15 stories with us!
- **Housing for TLA 2016**  
[www.txla.org/annual-conference](http://www.txla.org/annual-conference)
- **Visit the Exhibits Archives**  
([www.txla.org/exhibits-archive](http://www.txla.org/exhibits-archive)) for statistics on the 2015 TLA conference.

## Branding Iron Awards

TLA congratulates all of our PR Branding Iron Award recipients for another year of exemplary work promoting library services!

### BEST OF SHOW

**Klein ISD “O.S.C.A.R.” Awards**  
(Category Winner for Special Events)

The O.S.C.A.R. (Our Students Care About Reading) initiative began as an idea from Wunderlich’s principal, who participated in TLA’s Strong Libraries Strong Scores mini-conference in 2012. This innovative approach to campus-wide literacy reinvents the idea of traditional reading incentive programs. Students have the opportunity to select from high-interest books and are given 75 minutes of independent reading time per week in English language arts and math classes to read and discuss. The culminating event in this effort is an Oscar-style awards ceremony where student creations – everything from performances to book trailers and summaries – are nominated for awards and the winners selected. Capturing the imagination and participation of students, teachers, community partners, and administrators, this extraordinary program is now in its second year.

### CATEGORY WINNERS

#### CAMPAIGN

**Zula B. Wylie Public Library –  
*Read Across the World & Get Energized with Summer Reading Programs and Door to Discovery***

The Zula B. Wylie Public Library is being recognized for two outstanding campaigns: its summer reading program and Door to Discovery, a campaign designed to broaden the public’s awareness of library resources. These campaigns involved planning, developing promotional materials, interacting with stakeholders, implementing programs, and using digital media strategies. Broad thinking and creative, the campaigns successfully promoted the library and demonstrate a commitment to engaging stakeholders.

The 2016 Annual Conference will be in Houston, April 19-22.

The theme for next year is  
**OPEN LIBRARIES  
OPEN OPPORTUNITIES.**



**BROADCAST ADVERTISING**

**University of North Texas (UNT) –  
A Day in the Life of UNT: Portal to  
Texas History Video**

The “Day at UNT” program is an exciting partnership with Denton ISD and university departments. The program brings in local 7th graders and introduces them to college life and academics, including library resources. As the program has grown, the staff of UNT libraries has broadened the reach of this event through broadcasts of a fun and informative video highlighting the day’s events and library resources. <http://youtu.be/AEYFsCVPIQk>

**PRINT MEDIA**

**Benbrook Public Library –  
All walks of life. Every step of the way.**

The Benbrook Library purchased an advertisement in the Benbrook Area Chamber of Commerce Directory and determined to use one simple image and tagline that conveyed the breadth of what the library accomplishes. No easy task, library staff came up with a simple yet ingenious image with a message to match. Picture an open book with silhouette figures spanning the cradle to old age. The message: Benbrook Public Library – All walks of life. Every step of the way.

**SPEECHES, SPEAKERS’ BUREAU**

**Zula B. Wylie Public Library –  
Library on the Go**

Expanding on its commitment to reach out to its public, the Zula B. Wylie Public Library offers a speakers’ bureau on its services and resources. The library’s talented staff stepped up to the creative plate by working together to develop

messaging about the library. The staff produced several vignettes – featuring dramatic skits, musical numbers, you name it! – that are humorous and informative about the library’s services. These speeches/presentations have been offered at numerous venues, and the public can request any of these speeches for a local event or activity. And just to help get the word out: the staff has prepared promotional handouts (complete with a QR code) for folks to learn about these presentations and to request one at their next function!

**Honorable Mention**

**Nicole Cruz –  
The Importance of School Libraries**

On October 17, 2014, lead school librarian Nicole Cruz delivered a speech for the dedication of a new school library at Pioneer High School in Sharyland ISD. The facility was named after David Garcia, a noted member of the community. Members of the audience included State Representatives Oscar Longoria and Bobby Guerra, members of the school board, administrators, faculty, parents, and students. The speech not only made the case for libraries and literacy; she went on to make the case for individual, administrative, and legislative support for school libraries and librarians.

**LOGOS AND BRANDS  
University of North Texas (UNT)  
Libraries**

The UNT Libraries brand has grown over the years from a set of visual standards to a diverse but complementary set of targeted logos and brands designed to let stakeholders identify their interests. The “Label Me” brand initiative allows



KLEIN ISD

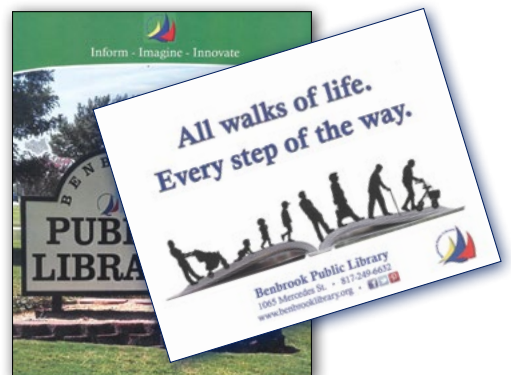


UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS LIBRARIES

ZULA B. WYLIE PUBLIC LIBRARY (Cedar Hill)



BENBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Best of Show PR Branding Iron Award was presented on April 17 during General Session III of the Texas Library Association Annual Conference held in Austin. Bradley Noble (left), librarian at Wunderlich Intermediate School, accepted the plaque from Linda Stevens, who was chair of the TLA Public Relations & Marketing Committee.

individuals to represent their unique perspective. Whether through self-identifying buttons, coffee house style brew flavor tags, or digital portal t-shirts, the UNT Libraries brand is personified through flexible yet interconnected messaging. This winning combination gives students and faculty a chance to establish their own relationship to the library.

*COLLATERAL MATERIALS*

**Zula B. Wylie Public Library's –  
A Summer Reader Lives Here**

Along with fun t-shirts and giveaways, the Zula B. Wylie Public Library offered summer reading program participants a fun way to show off their efforts at home – while providing good PR for the library. “A Summer Reader Lives Here” yard signs allowed kids (and parents) to proudly proclaim reading accomplishments while offering a great means for neighborhoods to learn about and participate in library services.

*Honorable Mention*

**Benbrook Public Library –  
Inform-Imagine-Innovate**

The library created an attractive brochure that could be used in different settings and for different audiences. With its broad approach – listing of all services, no specific dates (to keep it from being dated), and brief descriptions inviting follow-up contact – the publication has proven enormously successful.

**AWARDS ANNOUNCED & PRESENTED AT CONFERENCE**



Larry Justiss is congratulated onstage by TLA President Sharon Amastae and Kathy Hillman of the TLA Awards Committee.

**ASSOCIATION AWARDS**

*Lifetime Achievement*

**Larry Justiss**, retired director of Tom Green County Public Library

*Distinguished Service Award*

**Jeanette Larson**, author, consultant, and librarian (formerly with Austin Public Library and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission)

*Librarian of the Year*

**Lisa Hernandez**, Pharr-San Juan Alamo ISD High School/College Career and Technology Academy

*Libraries Change Communities*

**Lisa Youngblood** and the Stewart C. Meyer Harker Heights Public Library

*Outstanding Services to Libraries:*

**Glenn Dromgoole**, volunteer with the Abilene Public Library and West Texas Book Festival

*Wayne Williams Project of the Year*

**Zula Jo Anne Reed, Cheryl Hensley, Susan F. Carnes, Jennifer Griffin Lengyel, and San Juana Elizondo (Houston ISD)**; the showcased project was *Libraries and Lunch Sync Up*



Lisa Youngblood



Jeanette Larson



Lisa Hernandez (left) with colleague Nora Galvan



TLA President Sharon Amastae presents Glenn Dromgoole with his award medallion.



Wayne Williams Library Project of the Year  
JoAnne Reed Jennifer Griffin Lengyel Cheryl Hensley

**ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND STIPENDS**

JIM & JEANETTE LARSON MYSTERY GRANT  
Kirbyville Public Library

ESCUE CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Cheryl Schneider, *Hutto Middle School*

RAY C. JANEWAY SCHOLARSHIP  
Kimberly Stanford, *Red Oak ISD*

TLA SUMMER SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP  
Angela Piccola, *Randolph Air Force Base Library*

VAN DUSEN-TOBIN-KAISER SCHOLARSHIP  
(to be awarded in 2016)

VIVIAN GREENFIELD AWARD  
Angela Birmingham, *Northside ISD, San Antonio*

WALTER H. ESCUE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP  
Brittney Washington, *Texas Woman's University*

**UPSTART INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING AWARDS:**

Demco's Janet Nelson holds the award she presented onstage to James and Felicia Williamson of SHSU

**CORPORATE PARTNERS**

*Bibliotix / Small Community Libraries*  
*Round Table* CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Toni Davenport, *Universal City Public Library*

*Junior Library Guild / TLA Diversity & Inclusion Committee* STIPENDS  
Innocent Awasom, Juanita Becho Flores, and Tereza R. Merlo

*Upstart* INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING AWARDS  
Jennifer Coleman, *Murchison Elementary School (Pflugerville)*; Felicia Williamson, James Williamson, and Scott Vieira, *Newton Gresham Library, Sam Houston State University*

*Young Adult Round Table / ABC-CLIO* STIPENDS  
Rae Cheney, *Keller Public Library*; Valerie Tagoe, *Woodrow Wilson High School, Dallas ISD*

**UNIT AWARDS & STIPENDS**

*Acquisitions & Collection Development*  
*Round Table* CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Catherine Urban, *Amarillo Public Library*

*Archives, Genealogy, and Local History*  
*Round Table* CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Charles Voellinger, *Denton Public Library*

*Black Caucus Round Table*  
CATHERINE LEE ENCOURAGER AWARD  
Constance Matheny, *Texas Comptroller's Office*

*Children's Round Table*  
SIDDIE JOE JOHNSON AWARD  
Kay Gooch, *Austin ISD*

*Christina B. Woll Memorial Fund (committee)* CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Sherry S. Paul, *Colby Glass Elementary Library (NISD, San Antonio)*

Janet Nelson with Jennifer Coleman of Murchison Elementary School in Pflugerville



**College & University Libraries Division**

MELODY KELLY SUPPORT STAFF  
STIPEND

Mary K. Davis, *M.P. Baker Library,  
Panola College*

**Children's Round Table & Texas  
Association of School Librarians**

LAURA EDWARDS MEMORIAL  
CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Zulema Garza, *Sharyland ISD*

**District 3 CONFERENCE STIPENDS**

Margaret (Maggie) Goodman,  
*Johnson City Library; Liliana Martinez  
Howard, T.A. Brown Elementary School  
Library*

**District 8 CONFERENCE STIPENDS**

Paloma Lenz, *TWU library school  
student; Kristie Munger, Cypress  
Fairbanks ISD*

**Legislative Committee PRECONFERENCE  
STIPENDS**

Ann Conlon (*Spring Branch ISD*),  
Roslyn Grant (*Aldine ISD*), Lucille  
Barnes (*Aldine ISD*), Carolina Castillo  
(*PSJA ISD*), Danna Wilson (*Brazoria  
County Library System*), Elizabeth  
Howard (*Texas Wesleyan University*),  
and Angela Hartman (*Hutto ISD*).

**New Members Round Table Student**

CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Raquel Williams, *Texas Woman's  
University Student*



Small Community Librarian of the  
Year Pat McNabb (left) with SCLRT  
Chair Phyllis McMillan and Darryl  
Tocker of the Tocker Foundation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT  
Zachary Richardson, *El Centro College*

**Reference and Information Services Round  
Table CONFERENCE STIPEND**  
Catherine Urban, *Amarillo Public  
Library*

TEXAS REFERENCE SOURCE AWARD –  
Glenn Hegar (*It's Your Money series*),  
*Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts*

**Small Community Libraries Round Table**  
2015 SMALL COMMUNITY LIBRARIAN  
OF THE YEAR  
Pat McNabb, *Yoakum County  
Libraries, Plains and Denver City*

**Supervision, Management, and  
Administration Round Table**

CONFERENCE STIPEND  
Curren McLane, *Azle Memorial  
Library*

**Tall Texans Round Table**

STANDING TALL AWARD  
Kerry McGeath, *DeSoto Public Library*

**Young Adult Round Table**

YARI AWARD  
Liz Friend, *Wester Middle School,  
Frisco ISD*

## TLA'S 2015 CORPORATE SPONSORS

**DIAMOND**

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Brodart

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Ebsco

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Pengion Young Readers

Random House

TechLogic

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Gumdrop Books

Infobase Learning

Innové

OverDrive

Perma-Bound

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Rosen Digital

Scholastic

Texserve

Tutor.com

UNT DLIS

**TOCKER FOUNDATION STIPENDS**

- Melissa Day, *Kaufman County Library*
- Debra Bashaw, *McMullen Memorial Library*
- Carla Meador, *Motley County Library*
- Carol Vorel, *Olney Community Library*
- Veronica Clark, *River Oaks Public Library*
- Jana Gaston, *Saint Jo Public Library*
- Tina Nance, *Silverton Public Library*
- Taylor Acevedo, *City of Wolfforth Library*

**TOCKER LIBRARY GRANTS**

- Archer Public Library
- B.J. Hill Library
- Bertha Voyer Memorial Library
- Bicentennial City-County Library
- Bonham Public Library
- Bowie Public Library
- Breckenridge Library
- Coleman Public Library
- Cuero Public Library
- East Parker County Library
- Floyd County Library
- G. Miller Hitchcock Public Library
- Hansford County Library
- Jeff Davis County Library
- Lake Whitney Public Library
- Llano County Library
- McMullen Memorial Library
- Motley County Library
- Nellie Pederson Civic Library
- Rains County Public Library
- Real County Public Library
- Silverton Public Library
- Swisher County Library
- Taft Public Library
- Tom Burnett Memorial Library

**J. FRANK DOBIE AWARDS**

- Blanco County South Library District
- Crowley Public Library
- McMullen Memorial Library (*Huntington*)
- Lake Whitney Public Library
- Mae S. Bruce Library (*Santa Fe*)
- Carl and Mary Welhausen Library (*Yoakum*)

**JAMES A. LOVE AWARDS**

- Kountze Public Library

*It's not too early. . .* to start compiling documentation to showcase those stand-out projects and events at your library and to identify colleagues who deserve recognition for their leadership, commitment, and service to the profession. The TLA Award nomination process opens again on September 15.

For a full listing of association, unit, and corporate-sponsored awards, scholarships, grants, and stipends, visit [www.txla.org/awards](http://www.txla.org/awards).



**GRANTS**

- East Branch Library (*Arlington Public Library System*)
- Farmers Branch Manske Library
- Pilot Point Community Library
- Hillsboro City Library
- Larry J Ringer Library (*Bryan & College Station Public Library System*)
- Real County Public Library Leakey
- Maribelle M. Davis Library (*Plano Public Library System*)
- Nesbitt Memorial Library
- Main Library (*El Paso Public Library*)
- Jennie Trent Dew Library
- Breckenridge Library
- Ennis Public Library
- River Oaks Public Library
- Ysleta Branch Library (*El Paso Public Library*)
- J. Erik Jonsson Central Library
- White Rock Hills Branch Library
- Lena Armstrong Public Library
- Livingston Municipal Library
- Marshall Public Library
- Prosper Community Library
- Bertha Voyer Memorial Library
- Coleman Public Library
- Abilene Public Library South Branch
- Friench Simpson Memorial Library
- Lancaster Veterans Memorial Library
- Southeast Branch Library (*Arlington Public Library System*)
- D Brown Memorial Library
- Juanita Hargraves Memorial Branch Library (*Winnie Chambers County Library System*)
- Hondo Public Library
- Blanco County South Library District – Blanco Library, Inc.
- Armijo Branch Library (*El Paso Public Library*)
- R.B. Tullis Branch (*Montgomery County Memorial Library System*)
- Hutchinson County Library
- Judy B. McDonald Public Library (*formerly Nacogdoches Public Library*)



## Children's Book Diversity Summit

BY SARA ORTIZ

**B**ack in 1998 TLA hosted a wildly successful summit on diversity in publishing. Bringing authors and publishers from across Latin America, TLA provided a forum for a groundbreaking exploration of issues both librarians and publishers face in bringing increased diversity to readers. This past conference in Austin, TLA once again hosted such an event. Focused on diversity in children's literature, the three-hour summit allowed authors, illustrators, librarians, editors, vendors, publishers, reviewers, and vendors to delve into the topic (and scarcity) of diversity in books.

Thom Barthelmess, youth services manager with the Whatcom County Library System, facilitated the summit by asking participants to introduce themselves. As they did so, diversity was largely defined as an all-encompassing term for heritage, race, social class, religion, orientation, language, beliefs, inclusion and multiculturalism. The conversation examined tolerance versus acceptance. Participants raised issues such as pigeonholing readers, targeting audiences (both good and bad approaches), understanding the inherent great capacity in young readers, and improving the use of BISAC codes (subject headings assigned by the Book Industry Study Group). Naturally, with a large Texas librarian representation, the issues were translated down to the local level: "What diversity fills Texas?" and "Our readers have limited English language skills."

The summit both energized participants and opened the door for much greater emphasis and action in this area. Just weeks after the diversity summit, Jason Low, summit participant and publisher of Lee & Low Books launched a diversity survey to gather data on book publishing staff and reviewers. *School Library Journal*, also in attendance at the summit, revealed the demographic information of their reviewers soon after Jason Low's request.

Participants agreed that three hours at TLA was just the beginning. Much more time, deliberation, and discussion were needed. As a way to share the ideas surfaced at the summit, attendees have submitted some of their reflections about the event and the many ideas and challenges presented. "We were just getting warmed up," says author Cindy Pon. As is the case when so many complex issues abound, there are no simple one-size-fits-all solutions.

"I was impressed with the diversity at the TLA Diversity Summit, not just racial and ethnic diversity but the diversity of roles in the creation, evaluation, distribution, and promotion of books for young people. I was also impressed by the fact that so many were willing to be open about the subject. There were, of course, many of us who have been working in this area for a long time and who feel a sense of urgency and some frustration about the fact that more progress has not been made in the field. However, I felt a degree of optimism, because we were speaking about the issues in a holistic way. There was strong recognition that this is not just a problem that can be solved by focusing on one segment of the field of young people's literature. I was struck by the spirit of cooperation and collaboration in the room and the sense that the field needs to get this right for all children, not just young people of color." - **Deborah Taylor**, coordinator, School and Student Services, Enoch Pratt Free Library

"This was my second diversity summit in the last few months, and I particularly

appreciated the inclusion of reviewers. DIA for Diversity in Action is sometimes used to describe the literacy initiative Children's Day, Book Day, El día de los niños, El día de los libros (Día). One suggestion I have to move us beyond the discussion phase as a group is to agree on two [or] three **actions** that we could take individually or collectively between now and September 1 to share what we learned. What can we DO to create a National Diverse Book Community?" - **Pat Mora**, author, presenter, literacy advocate

"...[P]ublishing representatives said, 'They would love to publish diverse books, but diverse authors are not the ones querying them.' I think diverse authors are writing, but they do not have the mindset that the privileged class does which assumes that everyone is naturally waiting with bated breath for their pearls of wisdom. Publishers who are waiting for authors to come to them are only going to get white men, because that's who has the self-confidence to try. If publishers were truly interested in publishing diverse books they would open and advertise direct channels for diverse manuscripts." - **Jenny Brewer**, interim city librarian, Helen Hall Library

"...The lack of representation in our books is reflected in the current system itself, in publishing, in agenting, in the acquisitions board, in the booksellers, and in the reviewers. The challenges that we face are entrenched and systemic. I do believe in effecting change beginning with individuals, who connect with other





passionate and like-minded people to collaborate and discuss, brainstorm and implement. These movements inevitably start small, and then grow. I feel we are growing right now in our awareness as well as what we are doing as individuals to make a difference... - **Cindy Pon**, *author*

“Perhaps we can develop lists, like the Tejas Star, to connect with other groups. All too often our book lists are based on stories that identify one culture and ethnic group. I would like to see more diversity in authors from various groups, ethnic and gender. We are a melting pot of cultures, yet we seem to have large numbers of only one or two groups. Publishing companies need to consider these for future publications. We need authors that write about things students can relate to in different parts of our nation and world.” - **Nora Galvan**, *library coordinator, Pharr-San Juan Alamo ISD*

“What I think was crucial was the small-table discussions between people of various roles, because we so often lack information

about the viewpoint and practices of other players in the field. Small intimate groups make us feel like a team working together; we’re investing in the concerns of the other people in our group as well as learning about their professional and personal experiences, which encourages good faith and trust in what can be a challenging conversation. I would love to see a version of the summit where, say, the morning followed the model we used, and the afternoon goal was to generate ideas for action, or even plans or partnerships, that could be shared more broadly or have broader implementation. The confluence of people in different positions, with a combination of practical knowledge and idealism, offers an opportunity to go beyond the usual ways of taking action. I’d like to see what we, or groups like us, could come up with.” - **Deborah Stevenson**, *director, Center for Children’s Books, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

I greatly enjoyed the many voices represented at the summit, ranging from rural to urban library systems, as

well as major New York publishers and independent publishers across the country. I was also pleased that the discussion of diversity included not only race, but also gender, economics, and much more. As a publisher, I was surprised to learn metadata’s impact on book search and therefore the availability of books on inclusion. The *BISAC Subject Codes* are determined by New York publishers and those outside have little say. I hope this subject will continue to be explored in the future. As I mentioned at the meeting, I hope we would consider using ‘inclusion’ rather than ‘diversity’ at future meetings. While the latter is familiar, the former seem to reflect more accurately the broader goal of the group. I would also suggest asking participants to give successful examples of inclusion so we can learn from best practices. They range from library events to promote diversity to publishers, efforts in promoting inclusive hiring practice, or marketing campaigns.” - **Philip Lee**, *co-founder and publisher of Readers to Eaters, co-founder of Lee & Low Books*

## So how can a table with a couple of publishers, an author, a cataloging librarian, a vendor, and a book-review editor solve the problem of discoverability?

I was excited and honored to be invited to participate in the Texas Library Association’s diversity summit. It’s quite a privilege to be thought of as part of a solution to a problem I’ve been experiencing professionally for decades. I have been acutely aware of the paucity of children’s books with characters of color since my first job as a professional librarian, in the Memphis-Shelby County public library system 20 years ago. If we learned of a new title with a black character in it, we bought it, however tepid the review. When I moved north to the almost-all-white state of Maine, I didn’t change my policy much. White children in Maine needed windows with different views as much as the children of Memphis did.

The gathering in Austin was itself diverse, carefully so, with faces ranging from pasty (like mine) to dark brown with a variety of accents. All voices were passionate and from dedicated individuals from many segments of the industry. It was this approach that I appreciated most. We’ve wrung our hands individually and collectively for so long

that I suspect everyone knows what the problem is – but never have I sat down at a table with so many different types of professionals to address possible solutions.

My table talked about BISAC, the subject headings assigned by the Book Industry Study Group that form the basis for, among other things, bookstore shelving schemes. BISAC is a blunt instrument at best; compared to it, Library of Congress subject headings operate with scalpel-like precision. “It’s all about discoverability,” said Jason Low, publisher of Lee & Low Books, a multicultural publisher since its inception. The publisher has been making books with diverse characters for years; folks there *know* the books exist. But it’s hard for purchasers to find them. Another participant expressed her frustration with BISAC: there’s a subject heading for African-American history, but nothing for a chapter book about a little black boy living in America today.

So how can a table with a couple of publishers, an author, a cataloging librarian, a vendor, and a book-review editor solve

the problem of discoverability? Nothing directly, but this book-review editor came away knowing that although BISAC is grossly inadequate (and let’s face it; LCSH has its limitations too, especially with regard to fiction), there is something I can do. Since vendor databases license book-review content, they are searchable not only by BISAC, but by key words, so if we book reviewers are careful to use commonly searched keywords in our reviews, we can do our part to compensate for the inadequacy of controlled language and help purchasers – librarians and consumers alike – discover the books that can act as windows and mirrors for all out children.

It’s not exactly revelatory, but it’s something concrete I can do systematically that I might not have been conscious of had I not participated in the summit. It brings me back to that first library job, when I bought every book about a black child I came across. I’m just on the other side of the journal page now.

**Vicky Smith**, *Kirkus Reviews, Children’s Book Editor* 🌟

# In-Conversation

## with ANDREA DAVIS PINKNEY

BY SARA ORTIZ

Andrea Davis Pinkney first performed the May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture on May 3, 2014 at the University of Minnesota. Sponsored by the Association for Library Services for Children, the lecture recognized Pinkney for significant contributions in literature for young people through a body of work that brings a deeper understanding of African American heritage. Pinkney induced chills through her performance as she stepped into the shoes and the attire of Zora Neale Hurston, Trayvon Martin, and Emmett Till.

Pinkney has led a rich career that encompasses both writing and many areas of publishing. She helped launch Disney Publishing's Jump at the Sun imprint, the first African-American children's book imprint at a major house, and edited influential authors, such as Christopher Paul Curtis (*Elijah of Buxton*), Toni Morrison (*Remember: The Journey of School Integration*), and Sharon Flake (*The Skin I'm In*) among others.

Her own 30 plus titles include *The Red Pencil*, a novel about a 12-year-old Sudanese girl with hopes of fleeing Darfur; *Hand in Hand: 10 Black Men who Changed America*, includes figures from Barack Obama to Benjamin Banneker; and *Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride*, a picture book about a freed slave. A highly praised and award-winning author – with recognitions including the Coretta Scott King Book Award, Jane Addams Children's Literature Honors, and an NAACP Image Award – Pinkney offers a powerful and eloquent voice on the topic of diversity in children's literature.

Over a career in literature that spans 30 years, Pinkney is no stranger to talking about deep issues and real issues. Pinkney participated at TLA's Children's Book Diversity Summit and shared many insights with attendees. As a follow up, she agreed to sit down for an interview with *TLJ* on this most critical topic of diversity.

**SARA ORTIZ:** *What do you remember about your first conversation concerning a need for diversity in children's books?*

**ANDREA DAVIS PINKNEY:** The need for diversity has always been my primary purpose. It's a conversation that's been front-and-center for the 30 years I've worked in publishing, both as an editor and author. So there's not a first time that I can pinpoint. As an African American writer, parent, and publisher, I live and breathe the importance of diverse perspectives.

**SO:** *Can you shed some light on how you shared your "primary purpose" earlier in your career?*

**ADP:** I started my editorial work in magazines. I was as senior editor at *Essence* magazine, the premier publication for black women and families. I oversaw the Lifestyle section of the magazine, and was responsible for producing children's book reviews, as well as articles and product roundups for the magazine's Parenting department. To build these sections of the magazine, I would call publishers and say, "Send me your best African American children's titles." This was the mid-1980s, and there was not a lot to choose from. It was discouraging, though it prodded me to make a change. The lack of diversity in children's literature was one of the reasons I shifted careers from magazine publishing to book publishing.

**SO:** *You saw a need. What steps did you take to fill it?*

**ADP:** I'm under five-feet tall, but have been told that I have a big mouth for such a short person! I guess that got me somewhere, because I was constantly spouting off to people about the need for more books, across genres that featured characters of color. I would walk about, asking, "Why don't these publishers create more books for kids of color?" Or, I would say, "Where are board books featuring



Andrea Davis Pinkney

black babies?" Or, "Why isn't there a popular middle grade series for black girls, ages eight to fourteen?" Coming from *Essence*, it all seemed so obvious to me that there was a vibrant, robust market for these books. One of the gifts of working in magazines is that you have to be thinking of new ideas constantly. So I started to jot down ideas for books and series. And I started to think about which writers could be paired with illustrators to bring these ideas to life.

**SO:** *What came next? Did you seek out a job in children's publishing, or did someone approach you?*

**ADP:** On a chance meeting, I met Willa Perlman, who was the publisher at Simon & Schuster Children's Division at that time. We were both standing in the Simon & Schuster booth at the Book Expo America convention. I explained to Willa that I was an editor at *Essence*. And then I started up with my big question: "Why aren't publishers creating more diverse content – series, board books, narrative nonfiction?" Willa invited me to lunch. I offered her some of the ideas from my notebook. And she offered me a job!

*SO: You mention that you can't pinpoint the first time or exact conversation you had with someone else concerning the need for diversity in children's books. Do you remember a moment, beside the one with the S&S publisher, where you spouted off, if not to a colleague, but to a friend?*

*ADP:* (Laughs) Oh, yes! The brunt of my enthusiasm was my boyfriend at the time, and is now my husband, Brian Pinkney. Brian's a children's book illustrator, and he was in touch with publishers constantly. Poor Brian. I was always nagging him, showing him my notebook filled with ideas, saying things like, "Here's an idea for a series! Call up your publisher!" Brian explained that the pairing of talent with ideas is what book editors do, and that I'd better take that job at S&S. And, Brian also encouraged me by saying, "Why don't you write some of these books?" That's when I had to stop spouting off, and turn my yapping into action!

*SO: So much has happened since then. How are you an advocate for diversity in children's books today?*

*ADP:* I feel so fortunate to now be among a community of like-minded people. There's such a robust dialogue happening today. In 2012 the Children's Book Council founded CBC Diversity, an initiative that advocates for an inclusive and representative children's publishing industry. As a member of the Children's Book Council Diversity Committee, I've enjoyed working with my publishing colleagues to create diversity programming, weekly blogs, curated resources for librarians, teachers, parents, writers, and publishing professionals, inclusive children's and YA book lists, and more. To learn more, visit [cbcdiversity.com](http://cbcdiversity.com).

*SO: We're in 2015 now. And you recently attended the Children's Book Diversity Summit in Austin, during the TLA Conference, how do you think the conversation has changed in the 30 years you've been in publishing?*

*ADP:* The major change is that the conversation is happening widely. And it's a dialogue that's being sustained by voices from many sectors: publishers, authors, librarians, educators, parents. Also, we're finally coming out of our silos and having these discussions together, with a unified purpose. Now it's time to take these conversations further. We need to step it

up. We need to pursue concrete, practical actions to back up our passion about this issue. This is something that we're doing at CBC Diversity. But that's not a panacea. We've all got to keep at it. In the words of the late Walter Dean Myers, "There's work to be done."

*SO: I really enjoy the contrast you just made between spouting off at home to one individual, versus publicly sharing your thoughts with 50 people in one room, if not the hundreds or thousands reading this conversation.*

*ADP:* Yes, we've got to break out of our own little corners and come together as a unified front. It's time to share what's working. What successes are helping to move the needle?

*SO: As you know, there are trends in publishing and trends with library patrons which don't always mirror each other. Nevertheless, the need for diversity in literature affects both. What steps should librarians or educators or publishers take to improve the diversity gap?*

*ADP:* We need to be intentional. Publishers can pledge to increase the percentages of diverse books on each list, and stick to that commitment. It's important to stay connected by coming together at regular intervals to talk strategy and best practices. Social media is a great way to share our wealth of knowledge. Also, let's remember that in each of our sectors, we have the unique ability to set the tone. Librarians can ensure that book displays, signage, recommended reading lists, and guest authors reflect a multicultural society.

*SO: You and I had a brief conversation after the Diversity Summit, and we agreed that there was a need for a call-to-action. With so much going on around diversity now, is there anything we are missing? Any blind spots that could, as you suggest, help us to further "set the tone?"*

*ADP:* Young people are the answer to this. It's vital that we remember that we're here to serve kids. Students – ranging from preschoolers to undergrads – are the thought-leaders and influencers of tomorrow. We adults have a big impact on children. Everyone's talking about "gatekeepers" who have a stake in what kids read. But to me, "gatekeeping" implies denying access. I wonder if we can

shift the paradigm and think of ourselves as "servers" versus "gatekeepers." How are we serving young readers the content that will enhance their perspectives and encourage them to think broadly about books featuring people of color? We need to show emerging leaders that they, too, need to be intentional about diversity. This is done through the examples we set rather than preaching. That's what "setting the tone" means – showing, not telling. And we need to listen. When kids tell me that they love or hate a book cover, or a depiction, I need to pay close attention. That's why God gave me two ears and one mouth.

*SO: Did you walk away with a particular learning moment after the summit?*

*ADP:* There were many "ah-ha" moments, but one issue that struck an immediate chord was the importance of searchability as a tool for accessing diverse titles. People ask questions like, "Where are the books featuring gay Latino characters or fantasy titles with Asian girl characters?" There's a good chance these books exist but aren't catalogued to reflect these aspects of a story. At the summit, there was a discussion of BISAC codes and their importance. This is something we've been focusing on in our CBC Diversity work.

*SO: You're talking about the metadata.*

*ADP:* Exactly. Metadata is our friend (laughs)! People are searching. Before readers even walk into a library, or put their hands on a book, they're searching for electronically for specifics. We have to analyze and enhance the metadata. As we move forward, society is going to need more of that. That's how younger people are getting information, and we have a responsibility to make that information available. 🌟

Andrea Davis Pinkney is the New York Times bestselling and award-winning author of more than 30 books for children and young adults, including picture books, novels, works of historical fiction and nonfiction. *Rhythm Ride: A Road Trip through the Motown Sound* (Roaring Brook) comes out this fall. Website: <http://andreadavispinkney.com>

## The 84th Session in Summary

The 84th regular session ended on June 1 and resulted in great news for libraries! The Legislature approved additional funding for State Library programs, including Shared Digital Content, e-archives, staff salary (at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission), and other items. At the time of printing, the Governor must still sign the Appropriations Bill, but we anticipate no changes to library funding.

### Brief overview of some State Library funding requests

- Base budget (i.e., money for current program and services) – Fully Funded
- Request for Shared Digital Content (i.e., additional funds for TexShare/ TexQuest) – \$6 million (of \$6.9 m requested)
- Request for new funds for e-archives program – \$707k funded (out of \$900K requested)
- Request for library workforce training support (\$500k) – not funded
- Request for agency salary increases – \$400k funded (of \$900k requested)
- Request for records management FTEs – not funded

We are very pleased that so many requests for additional funding were approved. This additional state funding will position the State Library and libraries throughout Texas to deepen their support of the educational and economic needs of the people of our state.

**We thank all of the library supporters of Texas who spoke up for libraries. This victory is yours!**

In other news, few legislative measures monitored by the library community survived the session.

- **HB 1475** (Author: Aycock | et al.): Relating to telecommunications service discounts for educational institutions, libraries, hospitals, and telemedicine centers. *This bill died in committee.*
- **HB 1799** (Author: Thompson, Senfronia): Relating to the adoption

of the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act. *This bill died in committee.*

- **SB 1188** (Author: Seliger): Relating to a study on the feasibility of requiring certain researchers to make research papers available to the public. *This bill did not make it to the full House for final approval by the Legislature.*
- **SB 1668** (Author: Zaffirini): Relating to an online searchable central grant database. *This bill died in committee.*
- **SB 20 / HB 3241** (Author: Nelson | et al.): Relating to state agency contracting; authorizing fees; creating an offense. *Passed.*
- **SB 1609** (Author: Huffines): Relating to a study on relocating the Legislative Reference Library. *This bill died in committee.*
- **HB 3127** (Author: King, Ken): Relating to the authority of certain telecommunications providers to commit to making infrastructure and improvements in exchange for support from the universal service fund. *This bill died in committee.*
- **HB 2796** (Author: King, Ken): Relating to the authority of certain telecommunications providers to commit to making infrastructure and network improvements. *This bill died in committee.*
- **HB 100 / SB 21** (Author: Zerwas | et al.): Relating to authorizing the issuance of revenue bonds to fund capital projects at public institutions of higher education. *Approved.*
- **HB 3492** (Author: Muñoz, Jr.): Relating to a permanent endowment to support the construction, acquisition, improvement, and equipping of buildings, facilities, and other improvements at public junior colleges. *This bill died in committee.*
- **HB 245** (Author: Longoria): Relating to a classroom teacher's lunch period. *This bill died in committee.*
- **HB 810** (Author: White, James | et al.): Relating to employment of persons with professional qualifications as public school teachers. *This bill died in committee.*
- **HB 2543** (Author: Farney): Relating to public school teacher performance appraisals, continuing education, professional development, career advancement, and compensation. *This bill died in committee.*
- **SB 893** (Identical to HB 2543; Author: Seliger | et al.): Relating to public school teacher performance appraisals, continuing education, professional development, career advancement, and compensation. *This bill died in committee.*

## TBA Coordinator Named

Sharon M. Lawler of San Antonio will serve as the Texas Bluebonnet Award (TBA) coordinator for the term running from 2016 to 2019 coordinator. As one of the largest TLA-affiliated awards, the TBA is a unique program that encourages reading for pleasure and is aimed at students in grades three through six.

After serving a one-year internship term, Lawler will assume the role of coordinator at the close of the TLA conference in April 2016. Lawler's responsibilities as coordinator will include guiding and directing the educational focus of the Texas Bluebonnet Award program. MaryJo Humphreys is the current 2015-2016 TBA coordinator and will oversee Lawler's internship.





TLA is pleased to offer GrantStation at a discount to help our institutional members find the right funding opportunities.

**What is GrantStation?** GrantStation offers nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies the opportunity to identify potential funding sources for their programs or projects, and provides resources to mentor these organizations through the grantseeking process.

**Full membership with GrantStation:** GrantStation is a premiere suite of online grant research resources. With a full membership, you can log into GrantStation.com to gain access to their member benefits:

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- Grantmaker databases of charitable, federal and state government opportunities
- Search interfaces organized by geography and search terms to help members quickly find the right grantmakers.
- Write better proposals with in-depth articles on each element of a full grant request.
- Learn from tutorials on the entire grant process in order to develop a powerful grants strategy.
- Read the *GrantStation Insider*, a weekly email newsletter delivered to your inbox each week.

**How much does full membership cost?**

TLA members can purchase access to GrantStation.com for the rest of 2015 for only \$79. That’s almost 89% off the regular price of \$699 – less than any of their promotional rates throughout the year.

**Can I see GrantStation before purchasing?**

Yes! You can watch a tour of GrantStation on their website, along with focused tutorials on the areas of their website. GrantStation also holds a free live webinar each month to demonstrate the website. Check out their Online Education to see when the next tour is being held.

**How do I best use GrantStation?**

Its Advanced Search capabilities include selecting “Libraries” when searching for funders. However, you can use their other search terms to broaden your search, such as Literacy, Adult Education, After School Programs, etc.

You can even find great donors that give books, computers, assistive technologies, etc., by searching for Education: General, and selecting a “Type of Support” of Product Donations or Equipment.

**How do we enroll?** Become an institutional member of TLA and you can join at a discounted rate.

**Questions?** Contact GrantStation’s Member Services line at 877-784-7268. For more about how the member benefit works, contact TLA.

**For members of GrantStation:**

- To retrieve your password, visit GrantStation at <http://grantstation.com/PasswordRecovery.asp>
- To find out your membership status, contact TLA.
- To change your account information, first log in at [grantstation.com](http://grantstation.com), and visit their Change Contact Information page.
- For help using GrantStation, contact them at [info@grantstation.com](mailto:info@grantstation.com) or 1-877-784-7268.



TLA wants to know what’s cool (and hot!) at your library! TLA’s Cool Stuff promotes your most successful services, favorite displays, and any special projects and events at your library that you want the world to see. What ideas did you take away from annual conference and have implemented in your library? What are your summer reading programs? Any parties coming up? We want to know!

Check out TLA’s Cool Stuff board on Pinterest for ideas and inspiration from other great libraries. Want to see yours on the board? Send your photos or videos with a brief description to [coolstuff@txla.org](mailto:coolstuff@txla.org). If your library has a Twitter account, include it in the email so we can give you a shout-out when we post your photos.

*We know cool stuff happens in libraries every day, so this project is open year-round!*

Please note that if you are submitting a photograph, you assume responsibility for having the authority to post the photo. This means that any photograph that includes children has been taken with the expressed permission of their parents and gives TLA permission to post.

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All webinars will be recorded. A link to the recording will be sent to all registrants (i.e. you may want to register even if you know you cannot attend the live event).

All webinars will carry continuing education credit and some also have CE credit available for viewing the recording. See individual descriptions for details. All listed presentatoin times are Central Daylight Time unless otherwise noted.

## July 2015

JULY 16, 11:00 AM AND 2:00 PM

**Maximizing the Life of Resources: Books, Discs, Flash Drives, and More** – Dr. Julie Todaro (*A to Z Series for Support Staff*)

The instructor discusses the “care and feeding” of physical materials including basic book repair and caring for media (DVD’s and CDRoms) as well as USB drives and other hardware peripherals.

## August 2015

AUGUST 13, 2:00 PM

**Asset Based Community Development** – Dr. Ling hwey Jeng

Asset-Based Community Development is a model for civic improvement which builds stronger, more sustainable communities by building on the skills of local residents and the services of local institutions. Dr. Ling hwey Jeng, Director of the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman’s University, will introduce the concepts in ABCD and describe how libraries can play major active roles in community development by partnering with local nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders.

[www.txla.org/CE](http://www.txla.org/CE)

AUGUST 25, 2:00PM

**Building Strategic Partnerships for Your Library** – Mary Beth Harrington, CVA

Libraries can no longer exist in a vacuum. In order for our libraries to remain sustainable, we need to start building partnerships with individuals and organizations in our community. By first identifying our own self-interests and understanding and acknowledging the interests of others, we will be better able to build and sustain strategic partnerships. Following this webinar, participants will understand partnerships better and be able to engage in them more effectively. Participants will also learn techniques to use when forming a collaboration with another organization, how to maintain these relationships and the steps for developing an easy memo of understanding or agreement that will (hopefully) keep everyone happy. The session explores the questions: Why form collaborations and partnerships? How can we minimize the risks that come with partnerships? How can we organize an effective partnership? Participation in the previous webinar *Identifying the Community Assets Your Library Needs* (June 10) is helpful but not necessary.

## New Advocacy Resources for Texas Public Libraries

The Texas State Library & Archives Commission has purchased a statewide membership with United for Libraries for Texas public libraries with trustees, advisory boards, foundations, and/or friends groups. United for Libraries is the division of the American Library Association that works with groups who govern, support, and advocate for libraries.

United for Libraries provides information, resources, and training that is available only to members. Public libraries in Texas receive:

- A subscription to the United for Libraries newsletter, *The Voice for America’s Libraries* – Newsletters are mailed directly to the library. However, if you would like to update the address(es), please contact United for Libraries at [united@ala.org](mailto:united@ala.org) or (800) 545-2433, ext. 2161. Current

and archived newsletters are available online in the members-only areas of the United for Libraries website.

- **Short Takes for Trustees** – a series of 10 short videos (8-10 minutes each) that can be shown during Trustee meetings to stimulate discussion about the important role that Trustees play in the governance of their libraries.
- **Trustee Academy** – online courses for trustees and advisory board members.
- **Engaging Today’s Volunteers for Libraries and Friends** – a three-part series of webcasts about working with the new generation of volunteers, and how libraries and Friends can attract them.
- **Friends & Foundations Zone** – providing members-only access to toolkits, *The Voice* newsletter, publications, webinars, and more.

- **Trustee Zone** – providing members-only access for advisory boards and trustees, with access to toolkits, *The Voice* newsletter, publications, practical guides, webinars, and more.
- **Eligibility for United for Libraries-sponsored awards** – Libraries, trustees, and friends groups are also eligible for some member discounts with sponsored vendors.

If you have any trouble logging in or accessing the Texas resources, or need your login and password, contact United for Libraries at (800-545-2433, ext. 2161 or [united@ala.org](mailto:united@ala.org)). For questions about the Texas statewide membership in United for Libraries, contact the State Library at [ld@tsl.texas.gov](mailto:ld@tsl.texas.gov), or call (800) 252-9386.





#TTBF15

[texasteenbookfestival.org/](http://texasteenbookfestival.org/)

Photo used by permission of the Texas Teen Book Festival.

Jill Bailey, Penguin Young Readers sales representative, with teens visiting the PYR table

## 4,000-plus YA Fans and Authors Anticipated at Teen Book Festival

The Texas Teen Book Festival is one of the largest of its kind in the nation. This year, the event will be held Saturday, September 26, at St. Edward's University. In 2014 more than 4,000 YA enthusiasts attended the Teen Book Festival to hear a lineup of 29 authors, the first year that the gathering was held at St. Edward's University.

The Texas Teen Book Festival is produced and sponsored by the Texas Book Festival and BookPeople, with support from St. Edward's University and Humanities Texas, and in partnership with the Austin Public Library Friends Foundation. It is

free and open to the public, thanks to sponsors and volunteers.

A new component for this year's gathering is the Texas Teen Book Festival Writing Contest, sponsored by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books. Also this year, the Austin Public Library Friends Foundation's Badgerdog creative writing program will host their annual reading and celebration at the Festival. Follow the Festival on Facebook and Twitter, and check out the website for the latest announcements and news.

## Houston Public Library Honors 21 Families at 2nd Annual Toyota Family Learning Program Graduation Ceremony

The Houston Public Library, National Center for Families Learning, Toyota and Collaborative for Children recognized 21 families for completing the Toyota Family Learning 13 week program at a special graduation ceremony. Each family received a certificate of completion and an HP tablet for continued learning. The families were grateful for the program and the impact that it made on their lives and also for the recognition that they received.



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## DONATING TO TLA

You can make a donation (which is completely tax deductible) to any of TLA's funds. Visit [www.txla.org/donate](http://www.txla.org/donate) for additional information.



You may also wish to consider perpetuating your legacy in TLA through planned giving. Members can consider an outright financial gift, a bequest in their wills or trusts; or designating TLA as a beneficiary in their retirement plan or a life insurance policy.

Gifts and bequests can be earmarked for a special passion or need. For example, Jim and Jeanette Larson recently fulfilled one of their passions by giving TLA \$25,000 for an annual grant to a public library for mystery genre. Planned giving can be designated for a TLA unit (e.g., division, round table, district, interest group) or activity such as leadership development or advocacy. Gifts can also be undesignated and assigned to the area of special need.

TLA can work with you to ensure that your interests and goals are achieved. Please contact Executive Director Patricia Smith ([pats@txla.org](mailto:pats@txla.org)) with any questions. ★

## Donate to TLA through Amazon

Getting some summer shopping done? Go to <https://smile.amazon.com> and select Texas Library Association as your charity of choice! Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to TLA, which promotes literacy and education by supporting the tireless work of Texas educators and librarians.

Look for the "Shop TLA" QUICK LINK at [WWW.TXLA.ORG](http://WWW.TXLA.ORG)

## Visit the TLA Store Online

– or in person during Annual Assembly  
in Austin in July (*tax-free days onsite!*)

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