

# TEXAS LIBRARY JOURNAL

Volume 96, Number 2, Summer 2020



## LIBRARIES RESPOND TO COVID-19

Innovation Leads to  
Virtual Success

Assisting First  
Responders

Summer Reading  
Programs

# YOU'LL FALL FOR THESE NEW TITLES

from HarperCollins Children's Books

Greenwillow Books

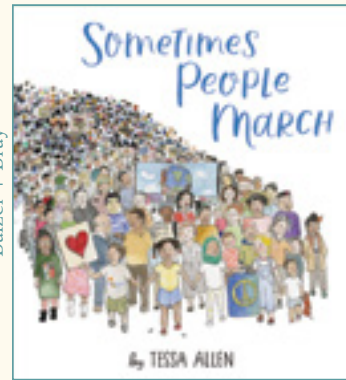


**Sun Flower Lion**  
Kevin Henkes  
September



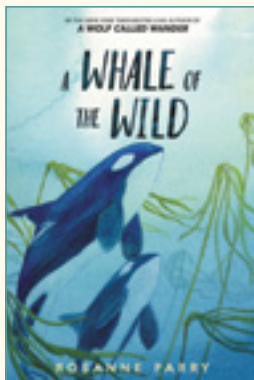
**A Girl Named Rosita**  
Anika Aldamuy Denise  
Illus. Leo Espinosa  
November

Balzer + Bray



**Sometimes People March**  
Tessa Allen  
September

Greenwillow Books



**A Whale of the Wild**  
Rosanne Parry  
Illus. Lindsay Moore  
September

Joanna Cotler Books



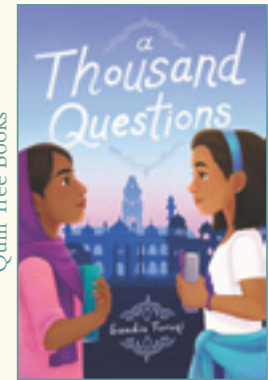
**One Time**  
Sharon Creech  
September

Quill Tree Books



**Class Act**  
Jerry Craft  
October

Quill Tree Books



**A Thousand Questions**  
Saadia Faruqi  
October

Balzer + Bray



**Punching the Air**  
Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam  
September

Katherine Tegen Books



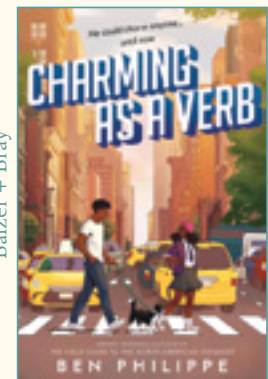
**The Left-Handed Booksellers of London**  
Garth Nix  
September

Katherine Tegen Books



**Grown**  
Tiffany D. Jackson  
September

Balzer + Bray



**Charming as a Verb**  
Ben Philippe  
September

# TEXAS LIBRARY JOURNAL

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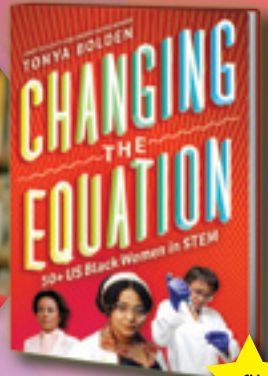
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# President's Perspective

By Christina Gola



When I stood for election for TLA President, my statement of concern started with the following paragraph:

“Our communities are struggling with inequities, polarizing views, and giving voice to marginalized groups. All types of libraries have an opportunity to rise up to these challenges by promoting literacy and equitable access to information. I want to ensure that TLA provides the most

relevant resources and network so that you have agency to help lead this effort.”

Never would I have imagined these words would become so pressing during the first few months of my presidency. In the short few months since I took office, we have seen the onset of a pandemic that has intensified inequities in our communities, and several racial killings that brought to the fore the violence and inequities that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color face every day. These events have brought us to a moment of reckoning.

Why does this moment matter to libraries and TLA? TLA's mission is to empower library personnel and supporters to develop library excellence for the people of Texas. We cannot accomplish this mission if we do not acknowledge that not all Texans are treated equally and equitably, and that libraries and TLA have barriers and biases that contribute to the systemic inequity that has been so clearly identified during the last few months. We cannot live our core values of equity of access, ethical responsibility, social responsibility for the public good and continuous improvement if we do not acknowledge our responsibility to end systemic inequities. We must look more closely at what contributes to and prevents equitable engagement and the empowerment all of members of our communities.

When the pandemic hit, and we were forced to work and attend school from home, suddenly millions of Texans experienced new or elevated disadvantages because of their inability to access resources, technology, and information necessary for remote work and learning. Had any of these people done anything to deserve this disadvantage? No, it is a result of a long history of systemic inequities.

Every day Black, Indigenous, and People of Color face disadvantages in our communities because of systemic racism. Systemic racism exists because white privilege, bias and racism

are built into our structures; we don't even recognize that they are learned or that they exist.

I ask all of you to commit to recognizing inequities and practice anti-racism in librarianship. We can begin incrementally by listening, educating ourselves, and engaging differently.

I call on you to listen. Listen to the voices in your community that you have never listened to before or that you haven't listened to closely enough. Are you fully aware of the inequities that exist in your communities and your libraries? Did the pandemic reveal an inequity in your community you didn't know existed, or was worse than you thought? Listen to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color when they speak up, when they share their experiences, when they say something is unjust. Recognize that while it may not be your lived experience, it is some else's, it matters, and you should care. Be an ally. Amplify these voices and these lived experiences; draw attention to these inequities.

I call on you to educate yourself. Libraries are organizations where we value equitable access to information. We have access to materials about race, racism and its history, white privilege, anti-racism, equity and more. Read! I encourage you to take advantage of trainings on allyship, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive practice, and put them into practice as you engage with TLA members and your communities.

I call on you to engage with diverse groups within TLA. TLA is strong in that we benefit from a community of diverse members. We have round tables that represent and serve as a voice for marginalized groups. We are a collection of librarians from different types of libraries and geographic areas. Just because you don't share someone else's specific identity, doesn't mean you can't join and engage with those groups. Connect with the Black Caucus, the Latino Caucus, the Queers & Allies Round Table, a district far from yours, or a division that you don't know much about. Engage, listen, and learn about their interests, experiences, and contributions. Attend their programs at conference, or partner with them on developing programs. When we engage through and embrace our differences, we find connections and build bridges.

I pledge to do this myself, and I pledge to find ways to bring listening, education, and engagement opportunities to TLA members throughout this year, so that you can rise up to these challenges and help lead change. I thank all of you for being members of TLA, and I appreciate each and every one of you for who you are and what you bring to this effort.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christina H. Gola".

Christina H. Gola  
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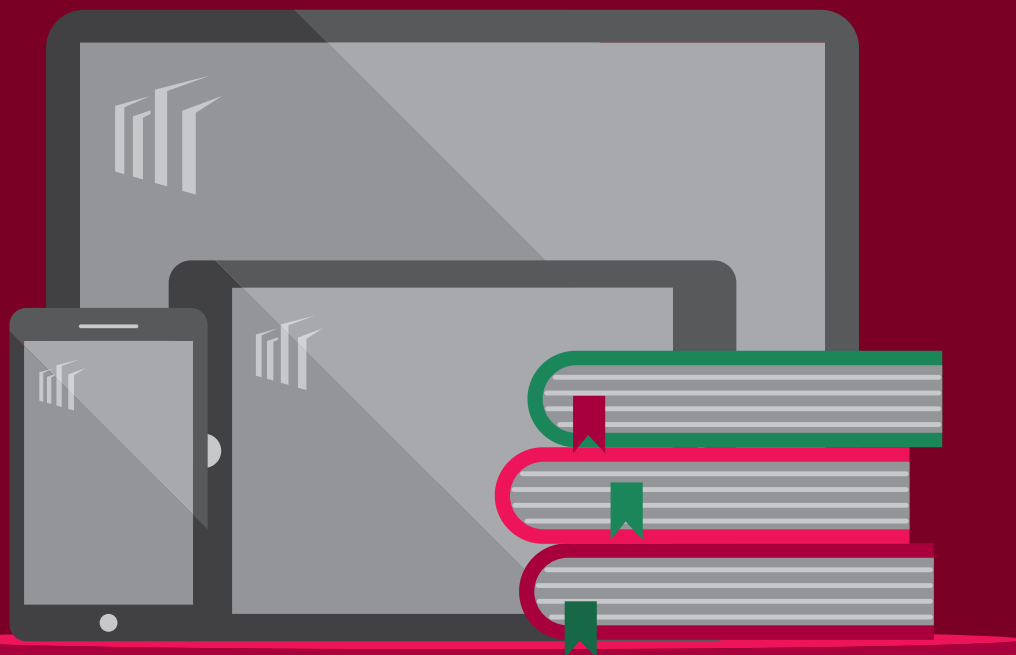
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# A Message From Shirley Robinson, TLA Executive Director

By Shirley Robinson

**Adaptation.** Isn't this the catch phrase of all our lives right now? When I applied for my very first professional position as a program coordinator for the Muscular Dystrophy Association of San Antonio and South Texas, the placement agency shared that the hiring manager was looking for someone who could be a 'chameleon.' Someone who could adapt to many different types of audiences and environments, and find a way to connect with each of them, likely all in the same day. It must have been something that they thought I could do, because 25 years later, this skill of adaptability and 'chameleon-ness' is something that I now look for in organizations and team members alike.

To say that the Texas Library Association, along with all our members, has had to adapt in the last two months is an understatement.

Watching and supporting our librarians of all types as they adapt programs and resources, community interaction and work environments, future and new plans on the fly, well, it's been simply amazing. I have never worked with a more resilient, adaptable group of members. You all have been steadfast and relentless in finding answers to your most difficult questions, blazing a path to create solutions even when you might not have had support or guidance from your governing entities. From in-person to virtual programming, from "open" to "closed" to "curbside" and every variant in between, your flexibility and perseverance are admirable.

These characteristics are what our communities expect from us; they rely on us. Whether at a college or university library, public library, school library or special library, your resourcefulness in developing summer reading programs, re-opening plans, digital instruction guides for students and faculty, and educating your communities about the COVID-19 pandemic has been truly inspiring.

As our team set about defining how to best support our members – we took a similar relentless, inquisitive and passionate approach. Our goal is to meet you where you are, and to provide the resources you need in a timely way so you can implement solutions.

I am so proud of our TLA staff team, the TLA Executive Board and the many, many volunteers, committee and unit chairs and scores of members who have partnered with us to rapidly turn the TLA 2020 Annual Conference into a four-part virtual series that will include a wealth of continuing education. We're also taking our Annual Assembly and volunteer training to digital platforms. This fall's LAUNCH program will also be virtual, and we are working on new and exciting virtual resources that will roll out over the coming months.

One of the most exciting new developments is TLA Talks interactive sessions, planned by the COVID-19 Response and Reopening Team established by TLA President Christina Gola. These interactive, weekly Zoom sessions are drawing hundreds of members together to discuss and share ideas on timely topics related to thriving in this new normal. Join us for stimulating dialogue, honest conversation and a wealth of shared resources. Our huge thanks to members of the Response Team Christina Gola, University of Houston; Dan Burgard, University of North Texas Health Science Center; Many Shorr, Fort Worth Public Library; and Mary Woodard, Mesquite ISD for their leadership and guidance.

As we gear up over the coming months for the 2021 Texas Legislative session, please know that your engagement and passion will be needed more than ever to keep the voice of libraries for funding, awareness and support. It's essential for libraries to demonstrate to their leadership how they have adapted and succeeded during this current crisis. This knowledge will give us the edge we need to demonstrate resilience and importance when lawmakers return to the Capitol.

As always, we are here for you, please let me know what you need most from TLA in this time.



Shirley Robinson, CAE  
shirleyr@txla.org



# TSLAC Receives \$2.6 million in CARES Funding to Assist Texas Libraries

By Mark Smith

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) received \$2.6 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES Act. Those funds are part of a larger appropriation of \$50 million in the CARES Act to assist libraries nationwide. The funds are administered at the federal level by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which distributed \$30 million of the funds to state library agencies in all states. The CARES Act directs that the funds be used specifically for two purposes:

- To prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19, and
- To expand digital network access, purchase internet accessible devices, and provide technical support services.

According to this guidance, TSLAC will be using approximately half of the funds to provide grants to Texas libraries to support digital inclusion projects and Covid-19 response, and the other half to bring Texas libraries into existing high-speed networks statewide.

## TSLAC CARES GRANTS

On May 8, TSLAC staff published a Notice of Funding Opportunity for TSLAC CARES grants. Funds are available to Texas public and academic libraries to address the following goals:

- Fund the expansion of digital access in areas of Texas where such access is lacking, including the purchase of internet-enabled devices and provisions for technical support services in response to the disruption of schooling and other community services during the COVID-19 emergency, and to
- Fund efforts that prevent, prepare for, and respond to situations arising from the COVID-19 emergency.

Single-library locations can apply for up to \$25,000 and multi-branch libraries can apply for up to \$50,000. The deadline to submit completed applications and all required documents was May 31, 2020. This is likely the first of multiple grant cycles for these funds and applications for remaining funds will be taken in subsequent cycles. The TSLAC Commission will meet on July 8 to consider and approve



recommendations for grant awards in this first cycle.

## CARES BROADBAND PROJECT

TSLAC staff are also considering how CARES Act funding may be used to bring Texas libraries that are currently without robust Internet access into existing statewide networks. TSLAC is a member of the Lonestar Education and Research Network (LEARN), a non-profit organization that manages a statewide broadband backbone for Texas colleges and universities. The agency is exploring how a partnership with LEARN could bring minimum 10 gigabit connections to Texas public libraries in remote areas of the state.

Other statewide networks, such as those managed by the Education Service Centers, are also alternatives under investigation by TSLAC staff. TSLAC will make more information available soon on its effort to improve broadband access for Texas public libraries.

These funds will continue the work started by a special appropriation from the Texas Legislature in 2017 that has allowed TSLAC to bring higher internet speeds to over 150 library locations in all parts of the state. Thanks in part to that project, the number of libraries that have internet speeds meeting Federal Communications Commission standards rose from 6% in 2016 to 30% in 2019.

TSLAC has until September 30, 2021, to expend the CARES Act funds. IMLS has made the funds available to states without the usual requirement for match and maintenance of effort for federal funds. TSLAC staff look forward to using the funds to help libraries respond to the Coronavirus crisis and to help build more robust library technology access in all parts of the state.

*Mark Smith is the director and librarian of the Texas State Library & Archives Commission*





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# LIBRARIES RESPOND TO COVID-19

By Michele Chan Santos



# Innovation, Patience Lead to Virtual Success



**WHEN HISTORY ASKS HOW TEXAS LIBRARIANS** responded to the COVID-19 pandemic the answer will be, with innovation, courage and grace.

In the spring of 2020, in the span of a few weeks, the whole world changed as the COVID-19 virus spread. Broadway shut down and sports events were cancelled; theme parks closed and so did schools. Colleges and universities, and local officials and administrators directed libraries to close, or limit services.

Nearly overnight, children across Texas saw their beloved librarians for storytime, but through computer screens instead of in person; book club members learned how to use Zoom, and librarians worked harder than ever as thousands of readers across the state signed up for virtual subscriptions and learned how to check out books and other materials with Libby, Overdrive, Hoopla and other apps. Here are a few ways our courageous Texas librarians made the best of a difficult situation.

## **VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING AND SUCCESSES**

At the **Fort Worth Public Library**, more than 300 residents signed up for virtual Spanish classes, and more than 200 people signed up for a “Stay at Home” Facebook book club. The book club is currently engaged in a robust discussion of *The 7 ½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle* by Stuart Turton.

“We have always valued the creativity and innovation our library staff brings to their jobs, but closing all our library locations in a day presented us with challenges we had never faced before,” said Fort Worth Library Director Many Shorr. “Our staff continues to deliver services that our community is

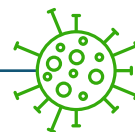
yearning for, while we are all working to keep each other safe and healthy during the crisis.”

The digital collection was already an important component of the library’s offerings, but suddenly it became the only way for patrons to access materials. Around 3,000 titles for all ages, in English and Spanish, have been added to the collection since the closure, with more added almost every day. Digital usage has also increased. From the day the library buildings closed to the public, March 14, to April 5, digital checkouts were up 23 percent to 56,913 items.

One project at the Fort Worth Library is providing a personal touch at a time when isolation has created a new normal for many. Staff members are calling library cardholders age 65 and older to check on them. In the first nine days of the project, full-time staffers made about 289 calls a day. By April 27, they had called nearly 2,600 patrons, connecting with 1,054 of them and leaving messages for the rest. Calls last an average of 18 minutes each, and staff members take note of what was discussed. Overwhelmingly, the call recipients are appreciative.

“Our library staff love people, and they love to help them in whatever way they can,” Shorr said. “The calling project has been an incredible product of their desire to serve the public, even during a difficult time.”

In Plano, a wide array of virtual programming was quickly made available to patrons, said Kristin Linscott, Development Coordinator, **Plano Public Library**. Library programs are being offered via Facebook streaming video each day, with storytimes at 11 AM, adult programs at 1 PM, and family learning programs at 3 PM. The Plano Public Library now offers book clubs, reader’s advisory and Small Talk, a conversation



program for speakers of English as a second language, all virtually. Librarians are also developing collaborative programs with the Plano Parks and Recreation department for nature-themed activities.

“Our community has been overwhelmingly grateful for the continued service of library staff through this challenging time. Parents tell us they appreciate the ability to adapt their storytime routine to our online programs with familiar faces. Adults are thankful to have so many options for online learning and for the opportunity to connect virtually with library staff and each other,” said Cecily Ponce de Leon, Programs Manager, Plano Public Library. “Whether they need a distraction from a stressful environment or are building skills for career development, Plano Public Library offers resources to support our community and to help them feel less isolated. Our staff is enjoying the opportunity to use their creativity and skills in new ways as we embrace virtual services.”

In Pottsboro (in North Texas near Lake Texoma and the Oklahoma border), the Pottsboro Area Library has been hosting drive-in esports events, using the side of a large white trailer as a screen. Ordinarily, the **Pottsboro Area Library** is home to a local esports team made up of high school students, coached by local college students. A drive-in Mario Kart tournament was a big hit, with players in separate cars in the parking lot.

Many people in the Pottsboro area lack Internet access; librarians have been helping residents one-on-one with library computers. Patrons make appointments to come in and four people are allowed in at a time. Computers are widely spaced in the library and staff disinfect after each user, said Pottsboro Library Director Dianne Connery. Many veterans and senior citizens have come in to use the computers to refill prescriptions and update wills, and staff members have helped many people file for unemployment.

In addition, in conjunction with the local Information Technology Disaster Resource Center, the Pottsboro library staff set up a trailer in the nearby Tanglewood Resort and Conference Center parking lot to offer 24/7 WiFi. The Pottsboro Library also offers 24/7 WiFi from its parking lot, which is frequently utilized by local residents.

At the **Houston Public Library**, librarians worked with the local Alley Theatre to get a limited number of e-tickets for a taped performance of the play *1984*, based on George Orwell’s novel. With a library card, you could register to stream the exclusive content. Tickets were available to Houston Public Library MY Link card holders; the performance was a special treat for many patrons.

At the **Denton Public Library**, Facebook Live virtual storytimes have been a great success with local families. Kerol Harrod, children’s librarian at Emily Fowler Central Library in Denton, began the virtual events with a book about compassion.

“Our first book was *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller. I chose this book because I knew my own children were having a hard time adapting to being at home and in close quarters, and that while we were all staying home to keep from sharing germs, kindness

was something we should share,” Harrod wrote, in [a blog post for \*Programming Librarian\*](#). More than 2,000 people have watched the storytime since it first aired, he said.

Harrod has found his online interaction with families very rewarding. “I love creating live virtual programs for families. I believe the live aspect is particularly important since it allows for real-time interaction,” he told TLJ. “In one of our Facebook Live story times, for example, viewers were able to vote throughout the program for their favorite foods; at the end of the story time, the food with the most votes (which happened to be spaghetti) was woven into a song,” Harrod explained. “That’s an opportunity to interact and feel more connected, not just with one’s own family, but with other families who participate. Story times are meant to be interactive, and preserving some of those important dialogic qualities gives children a sense of something that’s familiar and meaningful. It shows them that the library has not gone away, and that they can still show up and be included. Facilitating that kind of connection when we so desperately need it is rewarding for everyone involved.”

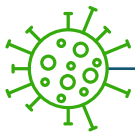
For school librarians, one of the main challenges has been how to support students who don’t have good access to the Internet at home.

“With many of our students living in rural areas of our county, access to technology quickly became a major issue,” wrote Deah Hester, **East View High School Librarian in Georgetown ISD**, in [a blog post](#) for the American Association of School Librarians. “Our students and teachers were ready to continue with their lessons, but how could we ensure that all our students would have the same access? Fortunately, Georgetown ISD quickly surveyed families as to their needs. During breakfast and lunch pick-ups, our school librarians and technology specialists distributed Chromebooks and WiFi hotspots to each family that signed up for one. We also distributed learning packets, and at Frost Elementary, librarian Denise Mozingo gave away over 75 paperback books to her students to keep at home.”

We asked Hester what the most rewarding part is about



Kerol Harrod,  
Emily Fowler Central Library



## LIBRARIES RESPOND TO COVID-19



working with students and teachers during the COVID-19 crisis.

Hester responded, “We discussed that very question at our weekly secondary librarian meeting. And one of the things we mentioned was getting the time and the wide variety of platforms to work with people we don’t normally see very often. The six secondary librarians have been meeting for a video conference every week, and sharing ideas and resources, as well as collaborating on multiple Google docs, Google sites, and new applications like Flipgrid or Peardeck and Sora. I’ve also been able to work with and help some teachers in my building who don’t normally swing by the library, but in this case, I can sit in on team meetings via video, and offer my help, or send an email full of links, and maybe one of them catches their attention. So I’ve been able to build a few new relationships that way.”

Hester talked about how nice it’s been hearing from students, whether the communication happens on Twitter, Google Classroom, through email, the school’s website or through her virtual book club.

“Before the COVID-19 crisis, I only saw students if their teachers brought them as a group to the library, or if the

students came in before school or during lunch,” she said. “I don’t think it occurred to students to just send a quick email to ask me a question. But now, students are learning that their school emails and the school websites can really hold a wealth of information at their fingertips. They can reach a teacher and get an answer much faster now than they could when we were in school, when they might have to wait for the next A day/B day to ask a question.”

This interaction gives her hope that even after school resumes in person, some of these innovations, developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will continue.

“I think the administration, the teachers, the students, and the parents have done the very best job they could throughout all of this. And we’ve learned some really valuable lessons. I foresee the use of more of a hybrid model going forward; even while in a traditional setting, we can still take advantage of some really great programs to flip the classroom and allow students to learn at their own pace, finish their assignments online, while getting instruction time with teachers and more assistance from staff all over the school.”



# LIBRARIES ASSIST FIRST RESPONDERS AND HOSPITALS DURING CRISIS

**THROUGHOUT TEXAS**, librarians found innovative ways to give back to their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are just a few of the many ways library staff from around the state put their creativity and energy to use assisting others.

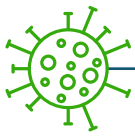
In Edinburg, in the Rio Grande Valley, staff at the **Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library** made face shields, which were donated to the Edinburg Fire Department and Edinburg Police Department to help protect first responders from the COVID-19 virus.

“We had received a 3D printer in 2017, and when the pandemic happened, we said, ‘let’s go ahead and make something for our first responders.’ They are awesome here – they are

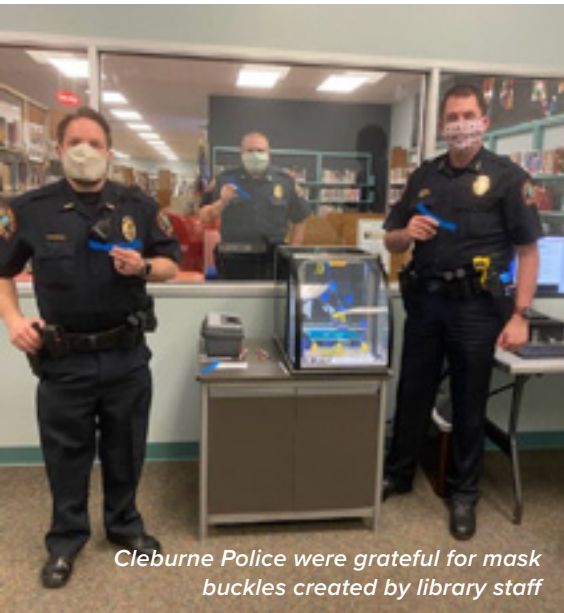
awesome, everywhere – and are always helping everyone,” said Letty Leija, Library Director, Sekula Memorial Library.

The library staff made 121 face shields, for police officers, firefighters and some of the city’s code enforcement staff. [Watch this video](#) to see how they did it.

“We wanted them to be safe. We know they are on the front lines,” Leija said. “Our fire chief has been very grateful. The fire department had been trying to find face shields and couldn’t find any. He has been very happy that we are providing that.” She continued, “The library’s first priority has always been the community, we are here to serve in any way possible. Although this is not part of our traditional library services,



## LIBRARIES RESPOND TO COVID-19



*Cleburne Police were grateful for mask buckles created by library staff*

it is a way to help and we are more than happy to do it.”

In Cleburne (in Johnson County, near the outskirts of Dallas-Fort Worth), the **Cleburne Public Library** staff created plastic buckles that attach to face masks, using their new 3D printer. They gave the buckles to the Cleburne Police Department and Cleburne Fire Department, as well as to nurses at their local hospital, Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital.

The buckles make masks more comfortable to wear, as they replace loops behind the ears that can rub over time

and become uncomfortable. Library staff created 80 buckles for the police, 70 for firefighters and 80 for hospital staff.

“We made the police officer buckles blue, the nurses’ buckles were green and the fire department chose red, of course,” said Director of Library Services Tina Dunham. “They are able to re-use the buckles with different masks.”

The Cleburne Public Library acquired the 3D printer in March, with a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The 3D printer is part of the library’s new Maker Corner, which has various technology, arts and crafts equipment and supplies.

“It was perfect timing,” Dunham said. The library closed in mid-March due to the pandemic; making the buckles for nurses and first responders “was a wonderful way to train the staff on the new printer and help the community at the same time.”

The buckles are greatly appreciated, Cleburne Police Department Assistant Chief Craig Huskey said to the *Cleburne Times-Review*.

“Masks right now are just so hard to get even for doctors and nurses,” Huskey said. “But these buckles make it a lot more comfortable to wear the ones we have. I think that shortage is starting to get a little better and I think that’s going to continue, thanks to good old American ingenuity as more people are making masks and buckles.”

In Corpus Christi, the library staff at **Texas A&M-Corpus Christi** used their Maker Space lab to produce 1,000 face shields for health care workers at Driscoll Children’s Hospital. In an

interview with KRIS 6 television news, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi President Kelly Miller said, “We actually have a student in our Doctorate of Nursing program who also works at Driscoll. And she let us know that there was a need for masks for Driscoll Children’s Hospital. So our staff began working immediately.”

In Decatur, north of Fort Worth, librarians and library staff of the **Decatur Public Library** are the de facto public information officers for their town. They’ve gotten important news out to Decatur citizens related to the COVID-19 pandemic on the city web site and on social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), with frequent updates. Especially when the library was closed (it opened recently for contactless, front porch checkout), serving in this way was a way to help keep the town together.

“It absolutely gave us a sense of purpose,” said Pat Peters, Library Director, Decatur Public Library. “We were all really proud of the fact that the library could step up and help in this way. We feel the public is getting timely and accurate information they wouldn’t have otherwise.”

Librarians also create a popular **podcast**. One recent guest (on a special “quarantine edition” of the podcast) was Decatur Fire Chief Nate Mara. He has been grateful for their help in communicating with the town citizens, Peters said.



*Edinburg Fire Department welcomed the face shields created by library staff*

Library staff member Rachel Foster is their social media coordinator; she’s also usually in charge of interlibrary loan, but with the pandemic the interlibrary services have paused for now. Librarians are also in charge of the redesign of the city’s website.

“We are happy to do this,” Peters said. “We want to keep people up to date.”





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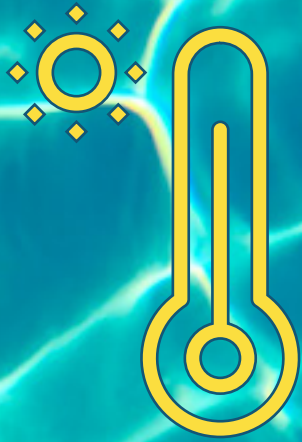
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# SUMMER READING PROGRAMS TURN VIRTUAL

Summer reading programs are part of the summer landscape in most towns and cities, as familiar as the public swimming pool or ice cream trucks. But because of the COVID-19 pandemic, what was once a community standby now has to take on a whole new look.

Across Texas, librarians are changing their summer reading programs to virtual ones. There are as wide a variety of approaches to this as there are ways to make barbecue sauce, each one tailored to the library's specific community. Some libraries are having students track their reading logs on apps or software programs like Beanstack, READSquared, Book Points, Reader Zone, Book Print or others. These programs make it simple for patrons to register, track their reading and earn incentives. Other libraries are relying on paper logs and others are sending out emails with print-at-home reading logs. Many libraries offer packets families can pick up that include reading logs, stickers, bookmarks and other goodies.

Summer reading programming (storytimes, crafts, live performances) is also going online in many different ways.

"With programming that would have been live, librarians are doing a combination of things virtually," said Kim Lehman, youth services consultant at Central Texas Library System (CTLs). "They are doing prerecorded storytimes on Facebook or creating live events using Facebook Live or Zoom. The librarians have very creative ways to elicit interaction."

Lehman and Paul Waak, assistant executive director at CTLs, recently led three interactive web discussions about transitioning summer reading programs into virtual ones.

The discussions were popular, drawing more than 100 participants per session. "People wanted to hear from each other," Lehman said. "They wanted and needed to be

connected, they were yearning to find out from each other, talk and share."

Waak said, "They were very grateful to have these web discussions, a place where everyone can share their ideas." He added that for some libraries in rural Texas, the doors have been open all spring. "They are so far away from the I-35 corridor they have not yet seen any COVID-19, but it is perhaps coming to those areas," he said. "They are having to consider closing (and moving their summer programs online.) They never thought they would have to do this."

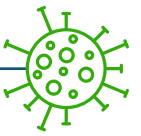
Lehman knows her own summer will play out differently than in the past. In addition to her work at CTLs, she is a storyteller and performer who frequently did live events at libraries. For her summer reading program performances, she plans on creating a virtual interactive adventure where a storytelling character is trapped in a castle and has to get out.

## INCENTIVES

Librarians know that incentives are a good way to keep kids motivated to complete their summer reading, so they are making sure that incentives are still part of the program.

Librarians participating in the CTLs web discussion mentioned a variety of incentive ideas – distributing pool passes from the city Parks & Rec department (in the hope that pools will open later this summer), mailing each participant a free book or giving out coupons from local businesses, among many other ideas.

At the Longview Public Library, the summer reading program is called **Imagine Your Story: Summer Reading Club 2020**. Before COVID-19, children would usually get a free toy or coupon from the circulation desk each week for participating. This year, librarians are doing a drawing from 10 kids per age group (0-5), (6-12), (13-18) every week for either an e-gift card or some type of basket with prizes/coupons in it. Jenna Yeakley, youth services supervisor at Longview Public Library shared



in the CTLS discussion. Each week kids earn a badge, they are entered to win a prize.

**Cedar Park Public Library** is tracking participants' reading using Beanstack, and offering virtual programs for all ages.

At **Bonham Public Library**, participants track their reading through Readsquared and can win a T-shirt for completing a reading challenge; everyone gets an ice cream cone for participating, too.



Carmen Lazo, Pflugerville Public Library

## BOOK BUDDIES: ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

Carmen Lazo is the Children's Services Coordinator at Pflugerville Public Library. She has had success with Book Buddies, a kind of private virtual storytime for families.

Families sign up and she does a WebEx virtual meeting with them. "Some are parents with little babies that used to come to Babytime at the library," Lazo said. "In other cases, there are older kids, five to seven years old, and they read the book to me. People have been very interested in this and we have a waiting list for the Book Buddies sessions."

The library also offers craft kits that people pick up, and then librarians offer instructions about the craft online. Lazo plans to do this with children and tween crafts over the summer.

Typically, the Pflugerville library would have eight in-person craft sessions each summer. Since Lazo had already purchased materials for these, she plans to have people register online and then come pick up the free craft supplies, and the librarians will record themselves giving instructions about the craft and post this online. "It's our first time doing this for summer programming," Lazo said.

## CREATIVITY UNDER PRESSURE

Laurie Mahaffey is the Executive Director of CTLS. She's been impressed with the way librarians across the state have had to pivot from fully open, to closed, to curbside-only and everything in between. Adapting the summer reading program is another example of their ingenuity, she said.

"The librarians have such a tremendous amount of creativity and are doing such a great job with outreach," Mahaffey said. And she knows they miss seeing patrons in person. "They miss the kids coming in and the kids and families miss going to the library."

# IN THE WEEDS

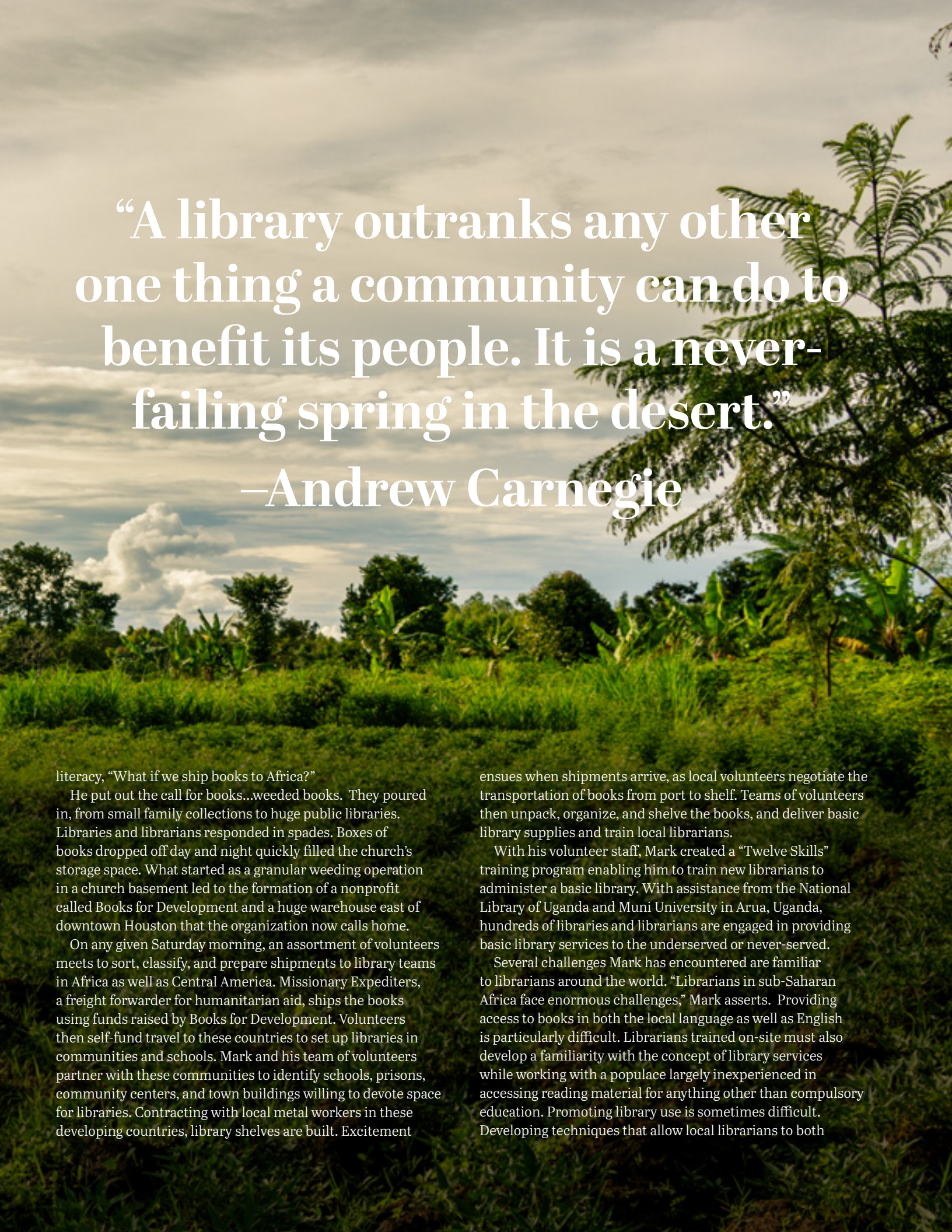
By Robin Cox

**THAT'S PROBABLY AN APT DESCRIPTION** for how most librarians feel when we inevitably reach the season when we inventory and weed our collections. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it. We assemble our crew; winnow the collection of everything that's misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, irrelevant or easily obtained elsewhere. Nevertheless, it's painful. We have our favorites. If we're new to an established library and collection, we scratch our heads in bewilderment when we find six copies of Don Freeman's *Moptop*. Or we well up with emotion when we realize our prized copy of 1957's Newbery, *Miracles on Maple Hill*, hasn't been checked out in ten years. There's a bit of anguish involved in the weeding process. Weeding's a necessary evil, yet most of us recognize that even a discarded book still has value. But weed we must.

That's where Books for Development steps in. Meet Mark Cotham. A brief trip to sub-Saharan Africa twenty years ago morphed into a soul-searching, fact-finding mission that changed his life. When he first visited a small village in the west Nile region of Uganda, he began to quiz its citizens about what might make a difference in their way of life. He expected

to learn of their highest needs as food or clean water. Yet every person he spoke with pointed to education as their greatest hope for themselves, their children, and their country. He repeated this survey process in nineteen more villages, and each community reiterated education as their biggest need. Mark carried this information back to his home church in Houston and shared the burdens and inspiration he found.

He explains, "When we first began visiting places like Uganda, Malawi, and Kenya where we're building libraries today, we found no books." An average school might ask eight to twelve students to share one textbook, and recreational or informational books were nowhere to be found. Teachers taught from their own notes, copying them onto a dated chalkboard to share with their students. Emphasizing the book famine, he states, "We met people desperate to catch up with the modern world." He also discovered that because of this lack of exposure to print, children had no idea that reading could be not only essential, but joyful if books that captured their interest and imagination were available. So, he asked a small group of friends with a similar love for global stewardship and



“A library outranks any other  
one thing a community can do to  
benefit its people. It is a never-  
failing spring in the desert.”

—Andrew Carnegie

literacy, “What if we ship books to Africa?”

He put out the call for books...weeded books. They poured in, from small family collections to huge public libraries. Libraries and librarians responded in spades. Boxes of books dropped off day and night quickly filled the church's storage space. What started as a granular weeding operation in a church basement led to the formation of a nonprofit called Books for Development and a huge warehouse east of downtown Houston that the organization now calls home.

On any given Saturday morning, an assortment of volunteers meets to sort, classify, and prepare shipments to library teams in Africa as well as Central America. Missionary Expeditors, a freight forwarder for humanitarian aid, ships the books using funds raised by Books for Development. Volunteers then self-fund travel to these countries to set up libraries in communities and schools. Mark and his team of volunteers partner with these communities to identify schools, prisons, community centers, and town buildings willing to devote space for libraries. Contracting with local metal workers in these developing countries, library shelves are built. Excitement

ensues when shipments arrive, as local volunteers negotiate the transportation of books from port to shelf. Teams of volunteers then unpack, organize, and shelve the books, and deliver basic library supplies and train local librarians.

With his volunteer staff, Mark created a “Twelve Skills” training program enabling him to train new librarians to administer a basic library. With assistance from the National Library of Uganda and Muni University in Arua, Uganda, hundreds of libraries and librarians are engaged in providing basic library services to the underserved or never-served.

Several challenges Mark has encountered are familiar to librarians around the world. “Librarians in sub-Saharan Africa face enormous challenges,” Mark asserts. Providing access to books in both the local language as well as English is particularly difficult. Librarians trained on-site must also develop a familiarity with the concept of library services while working with a populace largely inexperienced in accessing reading material for anything other than compulsory education. Promoting library use is sometimes difficult. Developing techniques that allow local librarians to both

inform and inspire readers is essential. Promoting the field of library science is also difficult in some of the areas most desperately in need of library services.

Mark's work has expanded to involve several major United Nations refugee camps in northwest Uganda where more than a million refugees from South Sudan are now sheltered. He describes this population as resilient but downtrodden; strong but tired. Sudanese refugees in both Palorina and Imvepi camps have explained that when their communities were gutted, books were burned and scattered to the winds. Sudanese Reverend Bishop Moses Taban, who fled with his family from Kajo Keji to one of the refugee camps in Uganda, works with educators and librarians to provide mobile libraries within the camps. With the assistance of Books for Development and Books for Africa, over 100 mobile libraries in the form of large metal lockers built by local metalsmiths provide books for thousands of refugees.

On a recent trip to Uganda, Mark was greeted by many of his formerly illiterate partners eager to establish book clubs in their villages and neighborhoods. Working with the National Library of Uganda, Books for Development has developed simple guidelines for establishing book clubs in the hundreds of libraries they now serve. In one camp, Imvepi, students have established their own Library Club and have begun to write books telling some of their own cultural stories. Mark's dreams somersault as he encounters such ambitious readers, hoping that one day these efforts can be replicated in other camps. The impact of literacy efforts is evident and growing.

At last count, nearly 300 libraries have been established due to this organization's passion for literacy. Over 200 school libraries are now in operation, along with fifty more in communities and prisons. They've established over a dozen libraries in both Kenya and northern Malawi, six in Zambia, and five in Jamaica. Botswana, Belize, southern Malawi,

Ethiopia, South Sudan, Laos, Guyana, and the Philippines are on the list as well. Mark quotes Andrew Carnegie: "A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never-failing spring in the desert." A man with a mission, a servant's heart, no paid staff, no office space, and little infrastructure, Mark is poised to serve the cause of literacy for years to come.

Nearly a million books have been shipped thus far, with no end in sight. As long as librarians are willing to weed, Mark sees an endless supply chain. On a dusty warehouse floor on any given Saturday, local volunteers serve the marginalized of the marginalized thousands of miles away.

Which brings us full circle, back to weeding.

If you live within driving distance of 9304 Polk St. in Houston, Texas, the exhortation is "Clean house!" Danny the Dinosaur is going to put a smile on a little one's face somewhere west of the Nile. While you weed your collections of superfluous or irrelevant volumes, know that your trash is another man's treasure. By sending your discards to Books for Development, you're able to lengthen the lifespan of each volume today's readers have declined. The organization continues to accept books during the COVID-19 crisis, following recommended health and safety precautions. If you don't live in the Houston area and are interested in shipping books, please coordinate delivery by emailing [booksfordev@gmail.com](mailto:booksfordev@gmail.com).

A greater goal is on the horizon. We must look forward to the day when the quality of the collections being added to library shelves in Uganda and beyond will reflect what we all truly value...that every child, every reader, deserves not our discards but the very best we have to offer. Follow Books on Development's journey on their [Facebook page](#) or online at [www.booksfordevelopment.com](http://www.booksfordevelopment.com).

*Robin Cox is the library media specialist at Hairgrove Elementary School in CyFair ISD, Houston.*



*Attorneys Mark Cotham, Harvey Brown, Kevin Dubose, and John Wallace with other volunteers at the opening of a new Uganda library.*

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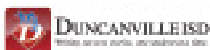
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- The perks of partnership: Students read more when schools & libraries pair up

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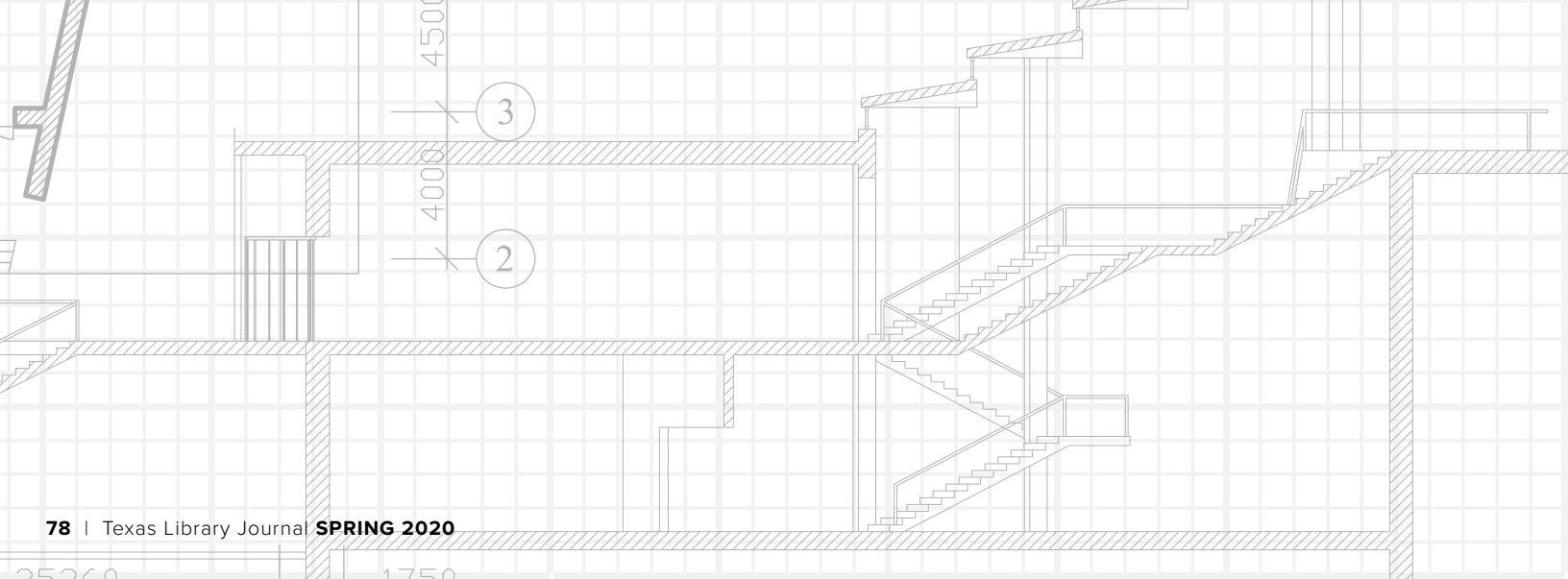
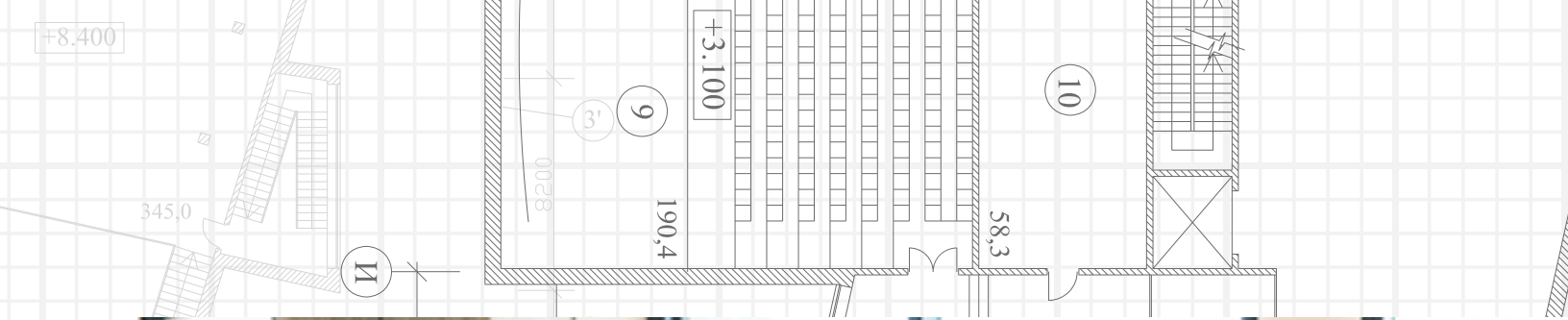


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# SCHOOL LIBRARIES WITHOUT WALLS

## *Preserving the Library's Sense of Place*

By Amy Lanier

**LIBRARIES AS PHYSICAL SPACES HAVE LONG BEEN THE OBJECT OF FASCINATION, REVERENCE, AFFECTION, AND EVEN OBSESSION**, so it's a curious thing to see so many of the old standards are fading away. Trending now is a new architectural phenomenon in which forward-thinking school districts are building libraries as the literal "hub" of the school, physically speaking. These modern learning commons reside in the center of the building as open spaces without walls, the goal being that at long last the library can function with no barriers to its patrons, who are free to come and go at any time as the library melds as one with the rest of the building. This eliminates the separation of the library from the classrooms and faculty, making resources more accessible and creating a culture of deeper research and increased learning. The Texas Administrative Code, Section 239.55, Standard IV, commissions certified school librarians to "develop and maintain a flexible, functional, and barrier-free library facility that conforms to national and state library standards". In light of this, a library with no walls sounds like the perfect solution. Or does it?

In my fifteen years as a librarian, I have worked in all types of libraries. I am all too familiar with the old dungeon-type libraries sporting drab colors, has-been furniture, and antiquated collections. But I've also managed brand new state-of-the-art libraries with gorgeous furnishings, pristine collections, and ultra-modern technology. A few years ago I found myself in charge of one of these new-age, architecturally stunning libraries-without-walls after landing a job in a shiny new school known as one of the largest high school buildings in the state of Texas. To work there carried prestige,

and I felt honored to be chosen. The library resided in the exact center of the building. A round circulation desk with tall shelves surrounding it were arranged like the spokes of a wheel. This library served as the true hub of the school. I'd never even seen a library like this--let alone managed one--so this new position was my dream come true.

In the first weeks on the job, I loved the layout every bit as much as I thought I would. I felt less closed-off from the rest of the building, and it thrilled me to see students coming through in a steady stream. But I soon noticed that the books weren't circulating like I thought they should be, which I attributed to the students' full schedules and heavy course loads. This compelled me to create a couple of displays in an effort to create interest. However, with only tall shelves and no walls, I realized I had nowhere to feature them. Instead, I chose another route and genrefied the collection in hopes that organizing all the books by subject would draw students in for a quick browse on their way through. But genrefication didn't improve my circulation, either.

I hated admitting it, but my brand new, trendsetting library had become a glorified hallway. Students didn't seem to even see the library anymore, much less use it. This beautiful space central to the rest of the school happened to be the quickest route to the cafeteria, the office, their classrooms, and out the front doors at the end of the day. Those who came to the library to study seemed frustrated by the noise. They said they missed having a separate place to go to where they could read, get help, or study in a quiet environment. My teachers weren't fans of the



setup, either. Those who wanted to hold classes in the library felt frustrated by how difficult it was to keep their students' attention in a space with so many distractions. They invited me into their classrooms instead, and I eagerly obliged (because I'm distractible, too). Still, some teachers expressed to me that they missed holding classes in the library during research projects and other activities.

As it turned out, this major architectural endeavor to create a library with no barriers to its patrons did not solve all the problems it was supposed to. When I thought about all the libraries I've worked in (even the dungeons) and considered their layout, how they functioned, how I felt as I ran them, and how students used the space, I realized that I am a fan of the old-school library design after all. So the question then became, "How can I achieve the same feel of the old design in this modern space?" The obvious answer was to shift my view of the library not so much as a room at the back of the building, but as a *place* central to learning and with as few barriers as possible, yet still set apart. I knew that it was my responsibility to preserve that sense of place, walls or no walls.

My predicament prompted me to think about how to get students to see the library again--not as a common passageway, but as the space it was meant to be. When a place is set apart, we tend to find it more interesting, which compels us to pay more attention. In the case of my library, rerouting traffic solved several major problems. This can be achieved in several ways, including placement of plexiglass walls, velvet ropes, or strategic furniture arrangement. Displays are important, but in the absence of walls, they can be virtual. If distractions persist, lessons can be planned to accommodate

for peak noise levels. The fact is that all perplexing situations demand creative solutions, and school librarians are expert problem-solvers.

Today I teach at a university where our library is housed in its own building. Students flock there daily in multitudes to fill every seat, table, and study room. They call our library a refuge, a place of peace and comfort during times of stress. It's one of the most beautiful libraries I've ever seen, but that's not what makes it popular. Place encompasses so much more than beauty, and experience has taught me that it can be difficult to revere something as a place if it lacks borders and has no distinguishing

features from the larger space that contains it. But a place can also feel so closed off and out of reach that no one ventures inside. Our job is to ensure that when our patrons cross over that boundary and enter our space, they know without a doubt that they're somewhere special.

I don't believe we've seen the last of this architectural trend of building libraries without walls. Even if the design isn't ideal, the rationale behind it certainly

has merit. We all want the barriers gone, regardless of architectural structure. So if concrete walls surround your space, pretend they don't exist. In the absence of walls, find unique ways to set your space apart. Make it your mission to demolish the barriers separating your patrons from all that is held within. Let the exchange of words, interactions, and information flow freely across the defining lines of your space so that your library serves as the essential hub of learning it was always meant to be.

*"...all perplexing situations demand creative solutions, and school librarians are expert problem-solvers."*

*Amy Lanier is an instructor in the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman's University*

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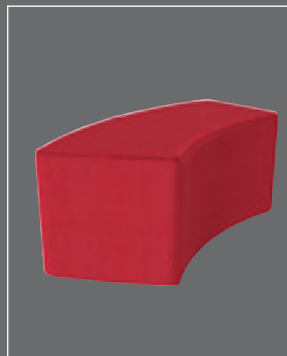
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The virtual event also features showcases, information and resources from our exhibitors which are designed to be year-round resources for librarians to use. Be sure to check out the **Exhibitor Information & Resource Center**.

If you are already registered for TLA 2020 Virtual, you are automatically registered for the Summer of Learning events. Not registered? June 29 is the registration deadline to participate in the July 7 live event; and July 30 is the deadline for the August 4 event. **Register today!**

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**July 7**  
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# TLA 2020 Awards

## Congratulations to the 2020 TLA Award Winners!

### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:

#### CINDY BUCHANAN



The Texas Library Association Lifetime Achievement Award, given to a librarian who has been a long standing member of TLA, recognizes an exemplary career in librarianship, an extended record of services, active participation in professional organizations, and creative leadership and service to the library

profession.

This year's recipient is Cindy Buchanan, program director for Library Services at Aldine Independent School District (Aldine ISD).

Under her leadership, the Aldine ISD library program has been through a great deal of growth and change. She managed a large project to realign library collections to meet new grade level groupings that impacted most of the schools in the district.

Buchanan has hired, trained, and championed her librarians to become state leaders in their work, with programming such as STEM and Makerspace integration and Name that Book competitions.

Through her relationship building and advocacy, Buchanan was able to grow the library services department staff to include a digital learning specialist to help her train and support the 80 libraries and 67,000+ students in her district.

Buchanan has served as the Program Director for Library Services at Aldine ISD since 2012. Previous to that, she was a system administrator, librarian and teacher with Aldine ISD for many years.

### LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR AWARD:

#### EDDY SMITH



This award honors a librarian who has demonstrated extraordinary leadership and service within the library community over the past 12 – 18 months. The 2020 Librarian of the Year is Eddy Smith, executive director of the Abilene Library Consortium.

Smith was selected because he is an outstanding model of librarianship. He is a broadband evangelist who calls the expansion of broadband to rural

areas the economic equivalent of farm-to-market roads.

His advocacy for broadband in rural communities has earned him an appointment to the Governor's Broadband Development Council, which was established this past legislative session to identify barriers and study solutions related to broadband development in unserved areas. This appointment spotlights the value of a librarian in working to bring equity of resources to all communities.

One of his most impressive contributions was making several visits to Austin to testify before the Texas Legislature during the 2019 session in support of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Sunset Reauthorization, TSLAC Budget Exceptional Items, and for broadband legislation.

### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD:

#### JULIE TODARO



The Texas Library Association Distinguished Service Award is presented to a librarian who has demonstrated substantial leadership in the profession, and provided outstanding services in one or more areas of the library profession. Julie Todaro, the dean of Library Services at Austin Community College, is this

year's Texas Library Association's Distinguished Service Award recipient.

Todaro served as the President of the American Library Association from 2016-2017. The focus of her ALA presidency was on the value of librarians, which resonated with librarians from all types of libraries.

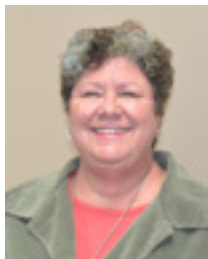
She is the author of *Library Management for the Digital Age: A New Paradigm* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) and *Mentoring A to Z* (Neal-Schuman, 2015).

She has led the TLA's Executive Leadership Immersion program and A to Z webinar series, providing essential training and education to librarians of all types, at all stages of their careers.

Todaro has been a passionate library and librarian advocate throughout her career. She possesses a deep knowledge and understanding of the library profession. Her publications, workshops, research, and consulting spread across disciplines and cover topics from library management and leadership, facilities management and emergency procedures to customer service.

# TLA 2020 Awards

## **OUTSTANDING SERVICES AWARD: TERI LESESNE**



Honoring an individual or organization that demonstrates outstanding advocacy and support for libraries, this award recognizes advancement of library services, development and promotion of sound library policies and standards, successful advocacy to the community, significant contribution to

the promotion of library legislation, and active participation in TLA.

Teri Lesesne, Professor of Library Science at Sam Houston State University, is this year's recipient of the Outstanding Services to Libraries award. Lesesne has dedicated the last 23 years to educating library science students at Sam Houston State University's Department of Library Science and Technology. Her commitment to preparing school librarians in the area of literature, both children's and young adult, is impressive. If we use the average of 15 students per semester and multiply that out by her semesters and years of service, Lesesne has taught over 3,105 library science graduate students in her career.

Lesesne has presented numerous times at the Texas Library Association Annual Conference, district library workshops across Texas, regional workshops and many others. She was also the TLA designated attendee to the International Book Fair in Monterrey, Mexico. She has received numerous grants that support libraries, including one that funded 40 library science students in South Texas to pursue their MLS (Masters in Library Science) certification.

## **LIBRARIES CHANGE COMMUNITIES AWARD: ALMA DALIA SALINAS**



Presented to a collaborative community effort that recognizes positive achievements and promotes outstanding library-based initiatives in Texas, this award recognizes good practice in any innovative library-related effort that involves communities, demonstrates imagination and innovation, and has

the potential to be developed and adapted elsewhere.

Alma Dalia Salinas, the director of Library Services and Instructional Resources at La Joya Independent School District (La Joya ISD) in Hidalgo County is this year's Libraries Change Communities Award recipient.

Salinas is a caring community member who passionately believes that building strong literacy in children and parents will bring success not only to individuals, but to the community as a whole. She is a staunch, research-based advocate who believes that providing an environment where reading together, collaborating with children and building a bridge that connects home and school will help to establish successful and cohesive families. Through her hard work and innovation, she has changed the lives of many students, parents and community members, with her projects that include school buses with QR codes that link to books, Fall and Spring Literacy Tertulias (literary gatherings), access to Little Free Libraries and participation with Parent Book Clubs.

## **BENEFACTOR AWARD: THE EDOUARD FOUNDATION**

The Edouard Foundation received the annual Benefactor Award which recognizes substantial donations such as land, buildings, stocks, cash, and collections by individuals, institutions, and foundations which have a significant impact on libraries and their programs.

Funds from The Edouard Foundation supported reading initiatives benefiting libraries in Texas and the communities they serve. The Edouard Foundation has contributed \$28,000 since 2016 to the Friends of Libraries and Archives of Texas (FLAT) to use in support of programs at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC).

Additionally, the Edouard Foundation supported the creation of historical research scholarships, which have allowed for new and exciting scholarly works delving into important aspects of Texas history, such as the state's criminal justice system and the experience of African Americans in Texas. The Edouard Foundation has also sponsored several activities at TSLAC since 2016. The Edouard Foundation's gifts have enabled FLAT and TSLAC to partner with the non-profit organization First Book for the Lone Star Dia program. The partnership was extremely well-received, with 40 libraries receiving about 2,400 books in communities, including Dallas, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and El Paso, as well as smaller towns such as Ozona, Johnson City, and Eldorado.

# TLA 2020 Awards

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## ADDITIONAL ASSOCIATION AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### Jeanette and Jim Larson Mystery Grant

Elsie Purcell, Hondo Public Library

### Junior Library Guild/Diversity & Inclusion Committee Conference Stipends

Alice Garza, Round Rock ISD

Elizabeth Tanguma, McAllen Public Library

### Demco Upstart Innovative Programming Awards

Jenny Brewer, Helen Hall Library

Erica Leu, Pflugerville Elementary School Library

### Christina B. Woll Memorial Fund Grant

Crystal Drillen, Nueces County Public Library

### Ray C. Janeway Scholarship

Jeffrey Merino, Sam Houston State University

### TLA Summer School Scholarship

Christine Robbins, University of North Texas

### Van Dusen-Kaiser-Halley Scholarship

Melinda Scribner, Laredo Public Library

### Vivian Greenfield Award

Paula Schwertner, Bushland ISD

### Walter H. Escue Memorial Scholarship

Genaro Medrano, Texas A&M – Kingsville

### Siddie Jo Johnson Award

Karen Stanley, Rosenberg Library

## DIVISIONS

### TASL Distinguished Service - School Administrator:

Manuel Brandon Rios, Principal, Slider MS, Socorro ISD

**TASL Shirley Igo Award:** Henry Ostlund, librarian; Nichole Chapman, PTA President; William J. Brennan High School Library, Northside ISD

### TASL MLIS Scholarships

Katie Prescott, Liberty Hill Jr. High School

Kimberly Andrew, Texas Woman's University

Priscilla Delgado, St. John's University

Jeffrey Merino, Sam Houston State University

## ROUNDTABLES

**Library Instruction Project of the Year:** University of North Texas Libraries

**Library Instruction Round Table Outstanding Service in Library Instruction:** Dr. Yumi Shin

**Small Community Librarian of the Year:** Dara Cavness, Marathon Public Library

**Small Community Library Advocate:** Erin Albright,

Marathon Public Library

**Young Adult Reading Incentive:** Amanda Cawthon, Pflugerville Public Library

**Standing TALL Award:** Marty Rossi, ESC 20

**Greg Escue Conference Stipend-Paraprofessionals:** Travis Hyzak, Texas Woman's University

## DISTRICTS

### District 8 Stipends

Christina Saldivar

Misty Schattle

## OTHER AWARDS

### J. Frank Dobie Library Trust Grants

Meridian Public Library, Meridian

Honey Grove Library & Learning Center, Honey Grove

Whitewright Public Library, Whitewright

Terrell County Public Library, Sanderson

Hughes Springs Area Public Library, Hughes Springs

**Letters About Literature** presented by Texas State Library & Archives Commission

### Level 1: Grades 4–6

1st: Avinash Kumar, Clayton Elementary School (Austin) wrote to Marcus Emerson

2nd: Adelaide Cowden, Regents School of Austin wrote to Laurie Halse Anderson

3rd: Nylah Qureshi, Greenhill School (Addison) wrote to Veera Hiranandani

### Level 2: Grades 7–8

1st: Sara Rose, J.T. Hutchinson Middle School (Lubbock) wrote to Wendelin Van Draanen

2nd: Elisa John, South Texas Preparatory Academy (Edinburg) wrote to Bruce Cameron

3rd: Jasmine Jeremiah, Hill Country Middle School (Austin) wrote to Angie Thomas

### Level 3: Grades 9–12

1st: Gabrielle Avena, Dripping Springs High School wrote to Hanya Yanagihara

2nd: Ella Johnson, Dripping Springs High School wrote to Gaile Carson Levine

3rd: Cecilia Longoria, Sharyland Advanced Academic Academy (Mission) wrote to John Green

# 2020 Branding Iron Awards



## BEST OF SHOW

### International Book Discussion, Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library, Edinburg

This year marks the 10th anniversary of a wonderful event called the International Book Discussion, which connects children from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Each year, educators from the Oxford School of Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico and St. Matthew's School of Edinburg, as well as the Dustin Michael Sekula Memorial Library staff, select a book that is entertaining and educational, as well as inspirational. The selected title must also spark curiosity and discussion, but most importantly it should help expand the child's understanding of cultural differences, language, and vocabulary.



The book is selected in late December of each year and distributed among the participants at the beginning of January. Third through sixth-grade students from both schools read the selected book and conduct a series of online book discussions guided by their teachers in January and February. The event is part of the Festival of International Books & Arts (FESTIBA).

The online debates culminate with one final face-to-face discussion that takes place at the library. The staff makes sure the children get to interact with one another by grouping them in teams that are made up of students of both schools. Students answer questions that have been carefully selected to ensure that, at the end of the event, they build a connection with one another.

The International Book Discussion is a beautiful example of how books and literacy can bring together children from different countries for education, friendship and a memorable shared experience.

## CATEGORY WINNERS & HONORABLE MENTIONS

### Community Engagement (Winner)

#### Sartartia Middle School Library, Fort Bend ISD

Librarian Jessica Fitzpatrick inherited a library "that only allowed fifteen people in the library at a time, did not have any kind of programming, and did not have any kind of technology." She has transformed it into a busy, interactive space featuring several monthly programming events, including mental health Monday, Nightly STEM activities, Harry Potter Club, Book Club and Lunch and Learns for technology. "We moved from being a library that only allowed fifteen people in the library at a time with no programming, to a library that allowed everyone and anyone into a library that is full of programming and technology," Fitzpatrick said. These changes energized the school and made middle school students excited about their library and what they can do there.



### Community Engagement (Honorable Mention)

#### San Antonio Public Library

#### Nature Smart Libraries

The goal of Nature Smart Libraries, an initiative of San Antonio Public Library, was to provide nature programming for the city's youth. The highly successful Nature Smart Libraries Kick-Off event was held on the grounds of Cortez Branch Library, with activities both inside and outside the library for more than





# 2020 Branding Iron Awards

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650 community members. Over 20 local organizations provided interactive booths with activities for all ages. Community partners included the San Antonio River Authority, Zoo School, University of Texas at San Antonio, Green Space Alliance, Eco Centro, and many more. Each booth consisted of nature-themed activities such as a free adopt-a-tree center, nature demonstrations, outdoor scavenger hunt, rock painting, bee keeping, and more. This innovative program demonstrated that nature, libraries and youth are an incredible combination.



## Public Relations & Marketing Campaign (Winner)

### Fort Worth Public Library

#### “Free to Return”

The Fort Worth Public Library launched a citywide communications effort to announce the library going fine-free, to encourage residents who stopped utilizing the library to return, and to encourage current patrons to utilize the library even more. The library no longer charges overdue fees and has forgiven existing overdue fines. The extremely successful #freetoreturn campaign utilized press releases, videos, email marketing, newsletter articles and many other means to convey the message. In the first two days of announcing their fine-free status, FWPL had on-air and online stories run in three of the largest news radio channels, three of four TV stations and the front page of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram newspaper. The library system was also successful in earning an interview in the weekend television community show for their Spanish-speaking audience. In a year-to-year comparison, from October to December, Fort Worth Public Library saw increased visits to the Library by 11% with more than 319,000 residents visiting their locations.



## Public Relations & Marketing Campaign (Honorable Mention)

### Weslaco East High School

#### Anytime Anywhere Reading

This Weslaco ISD program empowered children in Weslaco to read “anytime, anywhere” with digital books. The WISD Anytime - Anywhere Reading Digital Books Campaign provided quality digital reading materials to all students riding school buses, waiting to be picked up by their parents, or visiting the doctors’ office to help them gain access to high-quality and engaging reading materials in both Spanish and English, achieve the goal of reading 15 minutes or more outside of school and increase their academic achievement. The district equipped all their school buses with ebooks. Students use their phone or other electronic device to scan a code on a laminated book cover taped on the bus walls or ceiling; the ebook is automatically loaded onto their device. More than 80 titles are available. Some students live in rural areas and spend an hour or more on the bus; now they are able to read books for free on their rides to and from school.

# 2020 Branding Iron Awards



## Special Events (Winner)

### North Shore Middle School, Galena Park ISD, Houston Literacy Night

North Shore Middle School planned and held a very successful “Bookflix”-themed Literacy Night with more than 800 people attending. The event was planned to instill a love of reading in students, reach out to parents and families to provide them with support and resources, and finally, to involve the community by giving them the opportunity to donate, volunteer or attend.

Their Bookflix Literacy Night included a walk-through Harry Potter World and a walk-through Maze from The Maze Runner. The Harris County Library signed families up for library cards and performed puppet shows. Two authors signed their books - Chad Sell, author of The Cardboard Kingdom and Aurora Margarita González de Freire, author of Harvey Bear Gets Rescued. There were five craft booths, 13 literacy-related booths including a Book Walk and a Kids Corner. Roaming storytellers dressed in costume entertained the crowd. Every person that came to the event received a free book (or more) before leaving.



## Special Events (Honorable Mention)

### Allen Public Library “Library After Dark”

The Allen Public Library began the Library After Dark program in 2017, inspired by the remake of “Murder on the Orient Express.” It is an annual after-hours mystery event for adults ages 18 years and older. There is a different theme each year, with all the mystery components created by Adult Services Librarians. Participants are encouraged to dress in theme for the event. Additionally, the Food for Thought library café provides catering and signature mocktails. Event attendees are provided with clues and work alone or in groups to solve the mystery, with the opportunity to win a prize. Past themes include Mystery at the Depot (event hosted at the Allen Depot Museum) and Mystery in the Art Gallery, with art donated by local artists.



## Rebranding (Winner)

### City of Sundown Public Library

Sundown, Texas (west of Lubbock) has a population of about 1,500. Recently, the City of Sundown Public Library was rejuvenated through sustained community effort, a grant from the Tocker Foundation, a partnership with local schools and support from community businesses and volunteers. In a little over one year, total active accounts increased by 69 accounts from 493 (opening, 10/2018) to 562 (current, 12/2019). “For that one year, our library had 713 check outs! From April to June 2019, we had over fifty hours of volunteer services, and the multiple summer community programs averaged 25 attendees each program, adults and children,” said Librarian A’ndrea McAdams. In addition, the library has a fresh new look thanks to donated shelving and is now on social media. Follow them on Instagram @ sundownlibrary.

A VISION FOR ALL TEXANS  
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VIRTUAL  
SUMMER OF LEARNING

# Join us July 7 for our Live Event

- **Charlotte Moore** (Black Bodies Project) a storyteller with over 20 years of experience as a print and television news journalist, filmmaker and producer
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion panel conversation led by **ALA President Julius Jefferson**, Library of Congress
- Critically acclaimed author and illustrator **Don Tate** presents his upcoming book *William Still and His Freedom Stories: The Father of the Underground Railroad*.
- **Stephen Harrigan** is a member of the Texas Literary Hall of Fame. His latest book is *Big Wonderful Thing*, a sweeping narrative of Texas from prehistory to the present.



**Charlotte Moore**  
Photo by Amber Flowers



**Don Tate**  
Photo by Sam Bond Photography

# We Stand in Solidarity: Statements Condemning Racism and Encouraging Action

## TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

As people around the world march to honor the life of a fellow Texan, George Floyd, and protest his death, as well as the violent and senseless deaths of countless Black people, our community mourns and our hearts are broken. We stand in solidarity with Black people and all people of color from across the globe in protest of the racism, discrimination, pain and sorrow marginalized communities have experienced for too long.

[Read the full TLA statement here.](#)



## BLACK CAUCUS ROUND TABLE

On behalf of the Black Caucus of the Texas Library Association, we condemn the most recent acts that we have witnessed of George Floyd. We oppose all acts of racism towards Black people. There are complexities regarding how systemically we have been reared as a nation. This creates current-day tensions between humankind that will take time to unfold, understand, and heal. [Read the full BCRT statement here.](#)

## LATINO CAUCUS ROUND TABLE

TLA's Latino Caucus Round Table stands in solidarity with the Black Caucus Round Table and with Black people, including Afro-Latinx Americans, who are a significant part of our community, against injustices. We ask our Latino Caucus members to commit to addressing anti-blackness, both inside and outside of our Latinx community. To support, fight for, and love our Black brothers and sisters as we stand with our communities demanding justice. [Read the full LCRT statement here.](#)

## TLA COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

TLA leadership quickly formed a COVID-19 Reopening Response team to develop resources and tools for our members to use as libraries reopen across Texas. The team members are Christina Gola, University of Houston; Dan Burgard, University of North Texas Health Science Center; Manya Shorr, Fort Worth Public Library; and Mary Woodard, Mesquite ISD.

The team launched TLA Talks, free, weekly interactive discussions, on timely topics where participants can share resources and learn from each other. To date, sessions have focused on library reopening, school library advocacy, summer reading programs; and equity, diversity and inclusion. Registration is free.

### June 23 TLA Talks

[Navigating & Understanding Library Budgets Amid Economic Uncertainty](#)

### June 30 TLA Talks

[Safety & Managing Risk When Reopening](#)



## THANK YOU TO EBSCO

The Texas Library Association is very grateful to EBSCO for their recent, extremely generous gift of \$50,000.

Kevin Leffew, Vice President of Field Sales, U.S. & Canada at EBSCO Information Services, said "I am so pleased and honored to be able to offer this sponsorship. We recognize all that TLA does for Texas Libraries and Texas Librarians, and realize that this past spring's last-minute cancellation had to have an unwelcome impact...Ultimately, it's the people that this is all about, whether it's the ones we are serving, or serving with. I look forward to when we get the chance to do that again together face-to-face."

Shirley Robinson, TLA Executive Director, said "We are so thrilled and this gift means so very, very much to the Texas library community during this time. I know that EBSCO is working hard to continue serving their Texas library customers and we are proud of our long-standing partnership with the company. Thank you for this incredible support."

**EBSCO** is the leading provider of research databases, e-journals, magazine subscriptions, e-books and discovery service to libraries of all kinds.



## BRIGHT BY TEXT DELIVERS DEVELOPMENTAL GAMES AND TIPS RIGHT TO PARENTS' CELL PHONES FOR FREE

Texas PBS and the Texas Department of Family Protective Services have teamed up with Bright by Text to bring the program to Texas communities! The program offers parents and caregivers expert tips and resources for children prenatal to five right at their fingertips.

The interactions that a child has with adult caregivers at this stage of their life set the foundation on which all later learning, behavior, and health depends. Bright by Text helps parents and caregivers make the most out of these interactions by illustrating fun and easy activities, providing positive parenting tips and resources, tips for aiding a child's physical development, and much more. The program is proven to build nurturing caregiver-child relationships, and positively impact a child's healthy development and school readiness.

In addition to expert content, Bright by Text includes messages about events and resources specific to the local community, like library storytime, free museum days, health clinics, and preschool open enrollment periods.

To sign up, parents and caregivers with children under eight can text the word #TexasKIDS to 2-74448. They will receive two to five text messages per week, and each message includes a link to a landing page with more detail, short modeling videos, and links to related resources.

If you are interested in helping to build this partnership in your local community, would like to share your library resources and events, and can help get the word out, contact **Kierstan Schwab** at Texas PBS.



## TALL Texans Class of 2020

Members of the TALL Texans Leadership Development Class of 2020 were selected from a pool of dynamic Texas library leaders to study strategic planning, risk-taking, conflict negotiation, persuasion, coaching, ethics, and more. Congratulations!



- Pamela Arevalo-Thompson, Lead Librarian, *Judson ISD*
- Gina Bastone, Humanities Librarian, *University of Texas at Austin*
- Judy Boone, Library & Information Technology Educator, *Richardson ISD*
- Maggie Bootman, Director, *Mitchell County Public Library, Colorado City*
- Carrie Bresnehen, Librarian, *Leander ISD*
- LaMoya Burks, Head Librarian, *Texarkana College*
- Mindy Davenport, Middle School Librarian, *Forney ISD*
- Jennifer Eckert, Library Support Specialist, *Northside ISD, San Antonio*
- Susan Garrison, Access Services Manager, *Rice University*
- Vickie Glass, Library Technician, *Duncanville Public Library*
- Rachel Hadidi, Community Outreach Librarian, *Plano Public Library*
- Jana Hill, Adult Services Manager, *Fort Worth Public Library*
- Travis Holder, Research & Instruction Librarian, *Texas Medical Center Library, Houston*
- Elizabeth Ibarra Gaylor, Literacy & Outreach Librarian, *Ardmore Public Library*
- June Johnson, Circulation Librarian, *Texas Wesleyan University*
- Rachel Keeler, Collection Development Librarian, *Lake Travis Community Library, Austin*
- Misu Kim, Assistant Head of Metadata Services, *University of Texas – Dallas*
- Emma McDonald, Library Systems Manager, *Mesquite ISD*
- Sheri Miklaski, Community Outreach Librarian, *Georgetown Public Library*
- Andrea Naismith, Library Media Specialist, *Aransas County ISD, Rockport*
- Erin Owens, Access Services Coordinator, *Sam Houston State University, Huntsville*
- Ann Rector, Adult Services Supervisor, *Midland County Public Library*
- Kathryn Seybert, Instructional Media Coordinator, *Grand Prairie ISD*
- April Stone, Librarian, *Leander ISD*
- Robin Swaringen, Adult Services Manager, *Hurst Public Library*
- Cate Sweeney, Public Services Manager, *Bee Cave Public Library*
- Michelle Touche, Library Media Specialist, *Harilee Early Childhood Center, Dallas*
- Bernadette Trammell, Library Media Specialist, *Light Farms Elementary School, Celina*
- Laura Waugh, Digital Collections Librarian, *Texas State University*
- Dawn Wilbert, Youth Services Manager, *Decatur Public Library*

### 2020 MENTORS

- Christina Gola, LA President, Director, Recruitment & Organizational Learning, *University of Houston*
- Dan Burgard, TLA President – Elect, University Librarian & Vice Provost for Scholarly Information Management, *University of North Texas Health Science Center, Fort Worth*
- Carter Cook, Director, Library Media Services, *Fort Worth ISD*
- Edward Melton, Director, *Harris County Public Library*
- Gretchen Pruet, Director, *New Braunfels Public Library*
- Laura Sheneman, Lecturer, *University of West Georgia*

**JUNE 23**

3:30 PM

**TLA TALKS: Navigating & Understanding Library Budgets Amid Economic Uncertainty**

Free, registration required

**JUNE 30**

3:30 PM

**TLA Talks: Safety & Managing Risk When Reopening**

Free, registration required

**JULY 7**

12:00 – 12:30 PM

**TLA 2020 Virtual Summer of Learning Live Event**

Must be registered for the TLA 2020 Virtual Conference

**AUGUST 4**

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

**TLA 2020 Virtual Summer of Learning Live Event**

Must be registered for the TLA 2020 Virtual Conference

**CLASSIC A TO Z WEBINARS NOW AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE**

Sitting at home? Behind closed doors in your libraries, but pretty much alone? Looking to take a break from inventory, filing and struggling to decide how to clean materials when we are “back?”

Consider viewing five of TLA’s older, but classic A to Z series webinars. Ranging from library functions and services to critical infrastructure content, completion of the five webinars will earn a completion certification and a feeling of accomplishment and control over something during this unusual and unknown time. The sessions, which are offered free of charge, are presented by Dr. Julie Todaro and include handouts. **Find the free AZ webinars here.**

**TLA 2020 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY**

This year’s virtual Annual Assembly will offer great resources, information and opportunities to connect with TLA members and leaders. There is no cost to register for Assembly. **View the full schedule.**

**July 1** TLA Officer Training

**July 6** TLA Executive Board Meeting; TLA Council I (pre-recorded)

**July 8** TLA Officer Training Q & A Sessions

**July 9** TLA Council II; TLA Executive Board Meeting II



*Presenting Fall 2020 Titles*

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APRIL 20 – 23

**Mark Your Calendars!**

