

## Young Adult Round Table: Councilor Candidates

### **Rose Brock**

Libraries represent the best our communities have to offer; as they have been heralded, libraries are the very epitome of democratic institutions, but instead of being revered, they have become a battle ground. From my twenty years of experience as a school librarian and teacher of library students, I deeply understand the vast challenges faced by our profession now and moving forward. Today, more than ever, libraries of all kinds are working harder to support readers, and young people need our unfailing advocacy for them and their right to read. TLA's leadership and guidance through these tumultuous times remains essential, and I have great faith in their ability to serve as a professional guidepost moving forward.

### **Brooke Corso**

While there is a shared and necessary concern to provide our students with a place of comfort and confidence to pursue their interests and goals, there is also a need to increase proactive fellowship within the profession itself. Though librarians serve the entire campus, it can be an isolating job if there are not regular opportunities for staff development and mentorship with colleagues throughout the district and state. It is also crucial to increase representation of librarians of minority groups and from rural areas, provide financial aid to attend conferences, and offer incentives to present or lead sessions. Innovation occurs every day throughout Texas libraries, fresh perspectives enrich professional discourse, and new librarians will continue to show how essential we are to lifelong, engaged learning.

### **Jennifer Freeman**

Censorship and threats to patrons' right to freely access information are among the biggest challenges currently facing libraries. Our schools, communities, state, and country are strongest when we are all able to read widely, engage in civil discourse, and make informed decisions. In the vast majority of cases, attempts to restrict access to books are based on misinformation or misrepresentation propagated by vocal outlier groups who seek to create division and instill fear. As librarians, we need to continue to advocate for all students. In addition, it is essential to engage parents, students, and community members to speak out against falsehoods and to advocate for the importance of libraries.

### **Misty Schattle**

The past few years have brought many challenges for librarians with the Covid-19 pandemic and, more recently, book challenges throughout our state and country. Libraries are safe spaces that exemplify the message emblazoned on the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Safety and representation in literature for all, regardless of race, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation is the main concern currently facing librarians and the Texas Library Association. In order to enact change, we must face these challenges through discourse with parents, community members, lawmakers, county, and city officials.