

# *TEXAS LIBRARY JOURNAL*

Volume 97, Number 2, Summer 2021

**“THE STRUGGLE  
... IS FOR A  
LIFETIME”**

**— CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS**

**TLA 2021 Speakers  
Address Racial Injustice and  
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## 128

- 130 President's Perspective**  
Daniel Burgard
- 132 Editor's Letter**  
Wendy Woodland

## 133

- 133 "The Struggle is for a Lifetime"**  
TLA 2021 Speakers Address  
Racial Injustice and Equity,  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Michele Chan Santos
- 137 Research by Mail: A Reference  
Service for People in Prison**  
Shane Harris
- 139 Nooks & Crannies: Claim Every  
Square Inch of Your Library  
Space**  
Julie Brem
- 141 Employee Recognition =  
Community**  
Sandra Cannon
- 145 E-Read Texas Statewide  
E-Book Program**  
Karen McElfresh
- 146 Longview Public Library  
Leverages CARES Grant for  
COVID-19 Recovery**  
Leah Shreves



## 147

- 147 NewsNotes**
- 150 Upcoming Events**

## 151

### TLA 2021 CONFERENCE

- 152 TLA 2021 Wrap-Up**
- 155 Corporate Sponsors**
- 156 TLA Awards**
- 159 Branding Iron Award Winners**

### AD INDEX

- 149 Consumer Financial Protection  
Bureau (CFPB)**
- 127 Gale**
- 131 Indeco**
- 144 Jump**
- 129 Junior Library Guild**
- 144 Lab Resources**
- 150 Libraries Transform Texas Podcast**
- 163 TLA 2022**



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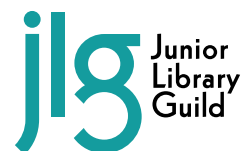
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# On the Road to Recovery & Reconnection

By Daniel Burgard

**AS I WRITE THIS COLUMN**, Texas and other states are taking the first steps to completely lifting COVID-19-related restrictions for vaccinated individuals and we seem to be headed toward the real possibility of recovering a bit of normalcy and reconnecting with our colleagues and communities. We have undoubtedly been through a physical and emotional wringer in the past year, and it will be good to emerge from our shared pain and get back to the business of connecting with patrons and each other.

This won't be an easy or linear process, however. We will make progress, fall back a bit, reorient, and keep moving forward, all while questioning many things in our environments. We will also find ourselves at very different points in the recovery spectrum as we move at a pace appropriate for our organizations and patrons. Ambiguity and anxiety will be constants as we move forward in the best way we know how. In other words, we will be in the perfect environment for libraries to work their magic!

Libraries and their employees will play a key role in helping their communities make the safest and least stressful recovery possible. Among other things, libraries are neutral, safe spaces where people can find acceptance and normalcy. Patrons can also find information, evidence, and assistance in the library as they work on rebalancing their own personal and family situations. Some will also find sanctuary and safety and the kind of welcome they need to recover some sense of themselves and their worth. Our communities and patrons are collectively hurting like never before and I am reassured in knowing that our profession will meet this challenge and help to improve lives and communities across our great state.

What exactly are we facing? Well, virtually every measure of personal and public health has worsened during the past year. Substance abuse rates, reports of domestic violence, and mental health challenges have all increased as compared to pre-pandemic times. Further, individuals report being less motivated and increasingly stressed by work-at-home environments that lack sufficient boundaries between work and personal activities.

The latest challenge we are seeing is people experiencing "re-entry anxiety" or discomfort about needing to adjust their routine yet again as they face the challenge of returning to work in a more traditional setting. I know the feeling ... Wouldn't it be nice if something stayed the same for just a little while?

I am concerned that many of the issues we are facing



are made worse by the fact that librarians in Texas and elsewhere are overwhelmed by serving in many roles at work. It is very difficult for overburdened librarians and staff to be effective at work or to engage with TLA. My TLA presidency will focus attention on members' personal and professional health needs and seek to increase engagement by supporting programming and resources aimed at increasing librarian and staff well-being.

I am firmly of the opinion that our first step in helping our communities is to help ourselves. There is no way we will be up to the challenge in front of us if we do not take care of ourselves first. Even though it goes

against our inclination as service professionals, we must take some time to recharge our own batteries and get our own personal situations solidified before we can even think of helping others. This goes for our staff as well.

I am fully confident that we can rely on each other.

Librarians are experts at helping others, so please touch base with your friends, don't be afraid to ask for help for yourself, and above all, check in with the staff and your community at TLA to see what great opportunities they have for you to reconnect with your librarian family.

TLA stands ready to help as it puts out a steady flow of helpful information and offers numerous ways to connect with your colleagues. Our association is also actively seeking out programming that can help us with our own mental and physical challenges. I know that you are facing more challenges and taking on more than your normal complement of roles at work, so I encourage you to call on and connect with your TLA colleagues for help as we travel to our "new normal."

As Matthew McConaughey said in his Spotlight Author presentation during our 2021 annual conference, "We don't really like yellow or red lights, those make us pause: a sacrifice, an intervention, sickness, death. We don't like them, but inherently in every red and yellow light we have, these reveal a green light in our future."

The pandemic was a "red light" for our whole library community. Let's find the green light together.

Daniel Burgard  
2021-2022 TLA President



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# Wrap Up: Texas Legislative Session

By Wendy Woodland

**THE 87TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION ENDED MAY 31 IN A DRAMATIC WAY.** House Democrats left the Capitol and broke quorum so that the House was unable to vote on SB 7, the elections and voter registration bill. It was the culmination of a one-of-a-kind legislative session which opened under strict COVID-19 restrictions in January. The pace of business picked up in the Capitol in April, as pandemic restrictions throughout the state eased. At the end of the 140-day session, 6927 bills were filed, and 1073 were passed. Governor Greg Abbott has until June 20 to veto any bills. The governor is expected to call a special session, perhaps this fall, to tackle redistricting, and most likely, other leadership priorities such as the voter registration bill, which did not pass during the regular session.

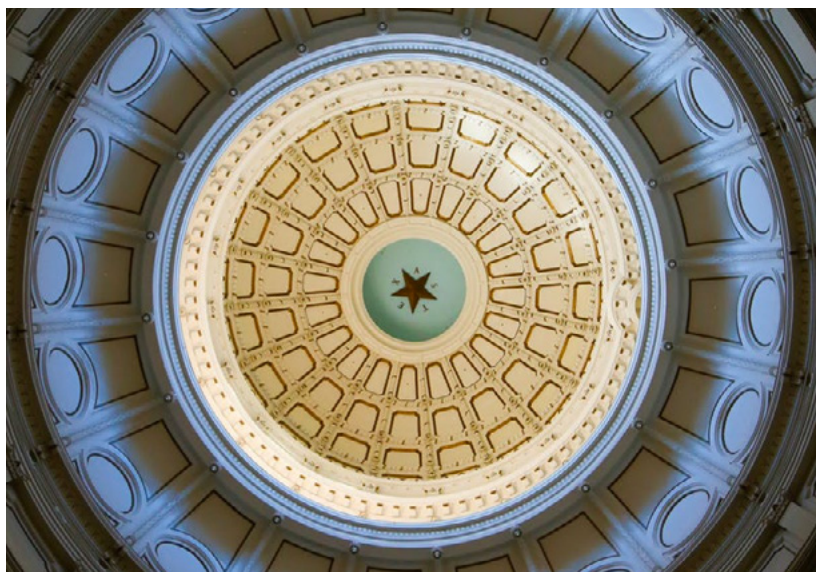
**SB 1**, the appropriations bill, included \$71 million requested by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC). The agency had several exceptional items in their budget request, including one for \$3.75 million that would directly support Texas libraries.

*Thanks to the strong advocacy from librarians around the state, the additional \$3.75 million is included in the final TSLAC budget.* These funds will support library initiatives including digital literacy, entrepreneurship, small-business development, STEM learning, and workforce training programs.

**HB 1381** would have given TSLAC explicit authority to award grants for public library construction and renovation. Currently, the state library is statutorily prohibited from awarding grants for this purpose. TLA's Legislative Committee Chair Gretchen Pruett testified at the House hearing on the bill, which was passed by the committee in April. Unfortunately, time ran out before the bill could be heard on the House floor, so it did not pass this session.

**HB 5** is the omnibus broadband bill which establishes a statewide broadband development office in the Texas Comptroller's Office, requires a statewide broadband plan, directs the broadband office to create and publish a map identifying areas of the state where 80 percent of addresses have access to broadband, and those areas where they do not, and creates a broadband development program to award grants, low-interest loans, and other financial incentives to expand access to and adoption of broadband.

TLA is a member of [Digital Texas](#), which advocated broadening the scope/work of the broadband office and the broadband plan to address digital access, adoption, and readiness, not just infrastructure. TLA also specifically advocated for language directing the broadband office to work with libraries in developing the statewide broadband




plan. While the library-specific language was not included, the language in the bill was expanded to address access, adoption, and use. The bill passed and was sent to the Governor.

**HB 1811** required the State Board of Education (SBOE) to create standards for online school library resources purchased by TSLAC for primary and secondary schools. TSLAC would have been prohibited from purchasing any online school library resources from vendors that do not certify compliance with the of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). TLA strongly opposed this bill which would have created duplicative, inefficient, and unnecessary processes. The bill was not heard in committee and did not pass.

However, the bill's sponsor, Rep. Valoree Swanson, successfully added amendments to the TSLAC and Texas Education Agency (TEA) budgets requiring the agencies to ensure that vendors are CIPA compliant. We expressed our concerns to conference committee members and were able to have the TSLAC amendment removed in conference.

However, the amendment to the TEA budget did make it into the final bill. SBOE will now be required to ensure that any instructional materials and technology purchased using funds from the Instructional Materials & Technology Fund meet CIPA requirements to the extent the certification is applicable.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our emails requesting support during this session! Your calls and emails made a tremendous positive difference in TLA's advocacy efforts.



# THE STRUGGLE

# IS FOR A

# LIFETIME

## TLA 2021 Speakers Address Racial Injustice, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

By Michele Chan Santos

**THE TLA 2021 CONFERENCE THEME WAS “CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES, EMPOWER VOICES,” A GOAL THAT WAS ACHIEVED** in the many hours of authors speaking, audiences engaging in record numbers and the empathy created when different perspectives are shared.

Many of the speakers and presenters addressed the themes of racial justice and equity, diversity, and inclusion, which were particularly meaningful and poignant since the past year brought us the death of George Floyd and many other people of color at the hands of law enforcement, as well as a rise in discriminatory acts against Asian-Americans and the continued struggles of the LGBTQ+ and

trans communities to be heard.

Christina Gola, TLA 2020–2021 president, explained why this theme was chosen and why these conversations are more important than ever:

“Our theme and program were designed to challenge participants to move outside their comfort zones, and open hearts and minds to different perspectives and narratives, which is critical to providing equitable and inclusive services to our diverse communities,” Gola said. “This has always been important to building stronger libraries, but all the painful events of this past year brought us to a more compelling reckoning. Members wanted to engage in meaningful





conversations about the history of our nation's inequities and their impacts on our work and communities. Our diverse speakers and challenging topics offered opportunities to reflect on recent events and better understand why and how to take action. And most importantly, to understand that it is a continuous struggle, and one that will be important beyond our lifetimes."

General Session I speaker **Frederick Joseph**, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person*, started the conference off with an infusion of positive energy and empathy, laying the groundwork for meaningful conversations throughout conference.

Librarian Zinnia Bayardo asked Joseph: "You used the words accomplice and co-conspirator instead of ally — Why use these words, can you explain more?"

Joseph answered, "I have always viewed an ally as someone who wants the world to be better. Not just in terms of white supremacy and racism. An ally is someone who wants women to not have to suffer misogyny. Who wants there to be no homophobia, to be no transphobia."

He explained, "If you want to see a new world, you have to take the access you have and actionably do something to create a world that is better. You have to work to create it. It doesn't necessarily mean that you are out at the protest or posting every single day about racial justice or gender justice. It might mean I make a monthly donation to an organization doing good work. It might mean, I am going to follow voices that are unlike my own. Those are actionable steps in creating the world we want to see."

While Joseph's talk was focused on the future, **Isabel Wilkerson's** address excavated the sources of America's continued racial tension.

Wilkerson, the General Session II speaker, spoke about her #1 *New York Times* bestseller, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*.

"The reason we are here today is to talk about a book that I did not wish to write," she said. "But it's a book that demanded to be written because of

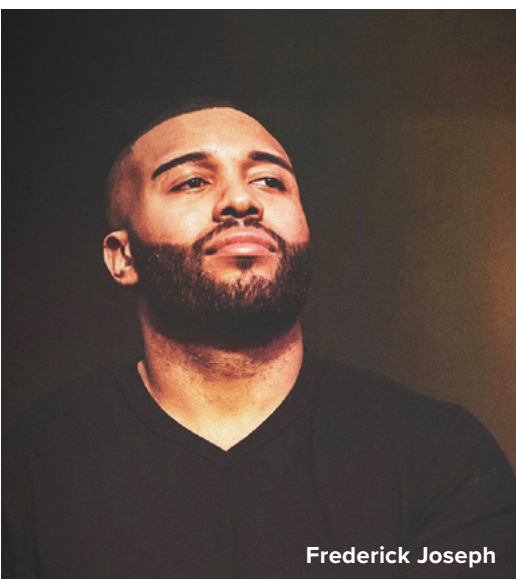


Isabel Wilkerson

the existential crisis we have found ourselves in in recent years. Caste is with us whether we choose to see it or not. We are now forced to recognize it; current events have forced us to see it. Our society is built on an embedded hierarchy based on enslavement."

Wilkerson talked about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visiting India. "He had always wanted to visit India because he was inspired by Gandhi. He was greeted as a dignitary there; he had dinner with prime minister. Dr. King wanted to visit the "untouchables" — the people at the very bottom of the hierarchy. He visited a school. The principal was so excited, and he introduced him in this way: 'I'd like to introduce you to a fellow untouchable from the United States.' When Dr. King heard that language, at first he was peeved. He did not see himself as an untouchable. But then he thought about the 20 million black people in the United States, prohibited from voting or even to make use of public accommodation. Restricted in every aspect of their lives, whose efforts to be recognized as citizens were met with hostility and violence. Dr. King realized, 'I am an untouchable and every black person in the United States is untouchable too.' The United States has a hierarchy with aspects of caste that is similar to India's. People in a caste system instantly recognize caste when they saw it."

"It's not until next year that the United States will have been free of slavery as



Frederick Joseph

"If you want to see a new world, you have to take the access you have and actionably do something to create a world that is better."



Ilyasah Shabazz

“When we look at the criminal justice system and all the things that are happening today, we wanted to make sure that we show the humanity of these young people. These inmates.”



Tiffany D. Jackson

long as it had slavery,” Wilkerson said. “Slavery lasted 246 years, that is 12 generations.”

The presenters at the Black Caucus Round Table Author Session also connected the struggles of the past with today’s injustices.

The BCRT Author Session featured **Ilyasah Shabazz**, the daughter of Malcolm X and adjunct professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, part of the City University of New York, and author **Tiffany D. Jackson** (*Allegedly, Monday’s Not Coming*). They discussed their new young adult novel, *The Awakening of Malcolm X*, about the legendary activist’s adolescent years in jail.

“Many people thought Malcolm X was just this young deviant who came out of prison and miraculously became Malcolm X. But he was able to become Malcolm X because of the foundation that his parents provided,” Shabazz said. “They gave him a love for literary works, showed him the importance of nature. His parents were two young activists.”

Shabazz said she was inspired to write the book to share the truth about her father’s teenage years with the public, and to speak honestly about the criminal justice system.

“When we look at the criminal justice system and all the things that are happening today, we wanted to make sure that we show the humanity of these young people. These inmates.” She quoted author and attorney Bryan Stevenson: “Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.”

Sharing her father’s story is part of “controlling the narrative,” she said.

Author **Andrew Aydin** had a heartfelt, moving conversation with Austin Public Library Director **Roosevelt Weeks** in the Your Public Library Presents session.

Aydin co-wrote the bestselling *March* graphic novel series with the late Congressman John Lewis. They also wrote the upcoming *Run* series, a sequel to *March*.

Aydin quoted Congressman Lewis: “The struggle is not for a day, a week, a month, or a year – it’s for a lifetime.” He said he finished *Run* as a tribute to Lewis.

“If you look at the context (of civil rights protests) today – another generation faced this same backlash and we will be able to get through it. We see these lives lost for senseless reasons. We are part of the same struggle today. We need to remember and hold on to the radicalness and militarism of John Lewis in his day.”

Aydin and many other speakers credited librarians for making sure many voices and different perspectives are shared with students and the public.

“People who have no internet come to the library. In many states you can do voter registration at your library. You have say in what books come to your library. It’s through our libraries that we teach our history, that we teach our culture,” Aydin said. “The most important thing you can do is care for your community. The emotional exhaustion from COVID-19, the things we are seeing in the streets every day. We need you now more than ever.”

Aydin praised Weeks and other librarians for their work.

“Librarians, you are the first line of defense for the mental health of this nation. This nation owes you a great



Andrew Aydin





Nicola Andrews

“Feeling devalued in an institution is not the same as having low self-confidence.

It’s normal to be anxious or depressed when you are operating in a system that causes anxiety or that doesn’t value you.”

debt. Anything I can do to come and support you and your communities, I’m here to help.”

**Nicola Andrews**, a librarian at the University of San Francisco, led a revelatory session called “Reframing Imposter Syndrome: From Individual to Organization”.

Andrews was born in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa (Auckland, New Zealand); and is Ngāti Paoa Māori (a tribe of the Hauraki region of New Zealand).

She said that many times, women and minorities are told they have “imposter syndrome” if they feel anxiety or a sense of low self-worth, particularly in a professional setting. And often they are told to “be more confident.”

However, this attitude can mask underlying misogyny and racism in the workplace. For example, Andrews said, “Say you are an employee who is being bullied. A colleague is undermining you, disparaging you. You have a lot of anxiety before meetings with this person. You go to your boss and instead of the boss saying, ‘I’m going to talk this person and this behavior is inappropriate,’ your boss instead says, ‘develop a thicker skin; you might have imposter syndrome.’ He tells you ‘Adopt a power stance and feel powerful.’ It’s much easier for an institution to tell someone they need to feel confident instead of dealing with a bully. That’s what I mean by an institution gaslighting their employees.”

Andrews continued, “I’m Maori, where I come from, if I practice humility or gratitude or let other people speak up – that does not mean I have poor self-esteem. Where I come from those are normal and confident behaviors.”

Reframing “imposter syndrome” from being an individual problem to an institutional one makes solutions possible, she said. “Feeling devalued in an institution is not the same as having low self-confidence. It’s normal to be anxious or depressed when you are operating in a system that causes anxiety or that doesn’t value you.”

Newbery Award-winning novelist **Linda Sue Park** was the General Session III speaker. She asked conference attendees to beware of the



Linda Sue Park

dangers of a “single story,” i.e., only one side of the story, especially regarding history.

For example, she asked the audience to, “Picture 40 cowboys.”

After a moment, Park said, “For 100 years in the United States, 1 in 4 cowboys was black. So in a group of 40 cowboys, 10 of them were black, if you were being historically accurate. But I bet you pictured a group of all white cowboys. That’s the single story – we have seen in books, seen in movies, over and over again.”

In her novel *Prairie Lotus*, Park created the story of a half-Asian, half-white girl in a pioneer town in the same time period as the *Little House on the Prairie* books. “The pioneer story is also a single story. There is a long and shameful history of government sanctioned racism against Asian Americans in the United States. With this story I was trying to address this situation, as well as address the “single story” pioneer story we have been taught.”

Park ended her inspiring address with an entreaty to librarians and teachers.

“I remind myself that there is hope. That is where you all come in – librarians, administrators, educators. You are the secret weapon. You may be the most powerful weapon we have. We need to dismantle the single story in our classrooms. We need to adjust the lens through which we teach history.”

*Michele Chan Santos is the marketing specialist at the Texas Library Association.*





# *Research by Mail*

## A REFERENCE SERVICE FOR PEOPLE IN PRISON

By Shane Harris

**THE STORY GOES THAT ABOUT THIRTY YEARS AGO, A LIBRARIAN AT HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY (HCPL) RECEIVED A LETTER FROM SOMEONE IN PRISON.** The letter contained several reference questions, so she answered the questions and mailed a response back. That one letter all those years ago has grown into thousands of letters over the years to become HCPL's Research by Mail service. In fact, just this past year, HCPL received over two thousand letters from people in prison, many of whom use this service more than once throughout the year. This means that over four thousand answers were provided to over five hundred people in prison last year. Most letters we receive are from people in a Texas facility; however, we have received letters from people located in other states including California, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Florida. From time to time, we even receive letters from people not incarcerated, and we happily answer those, too.

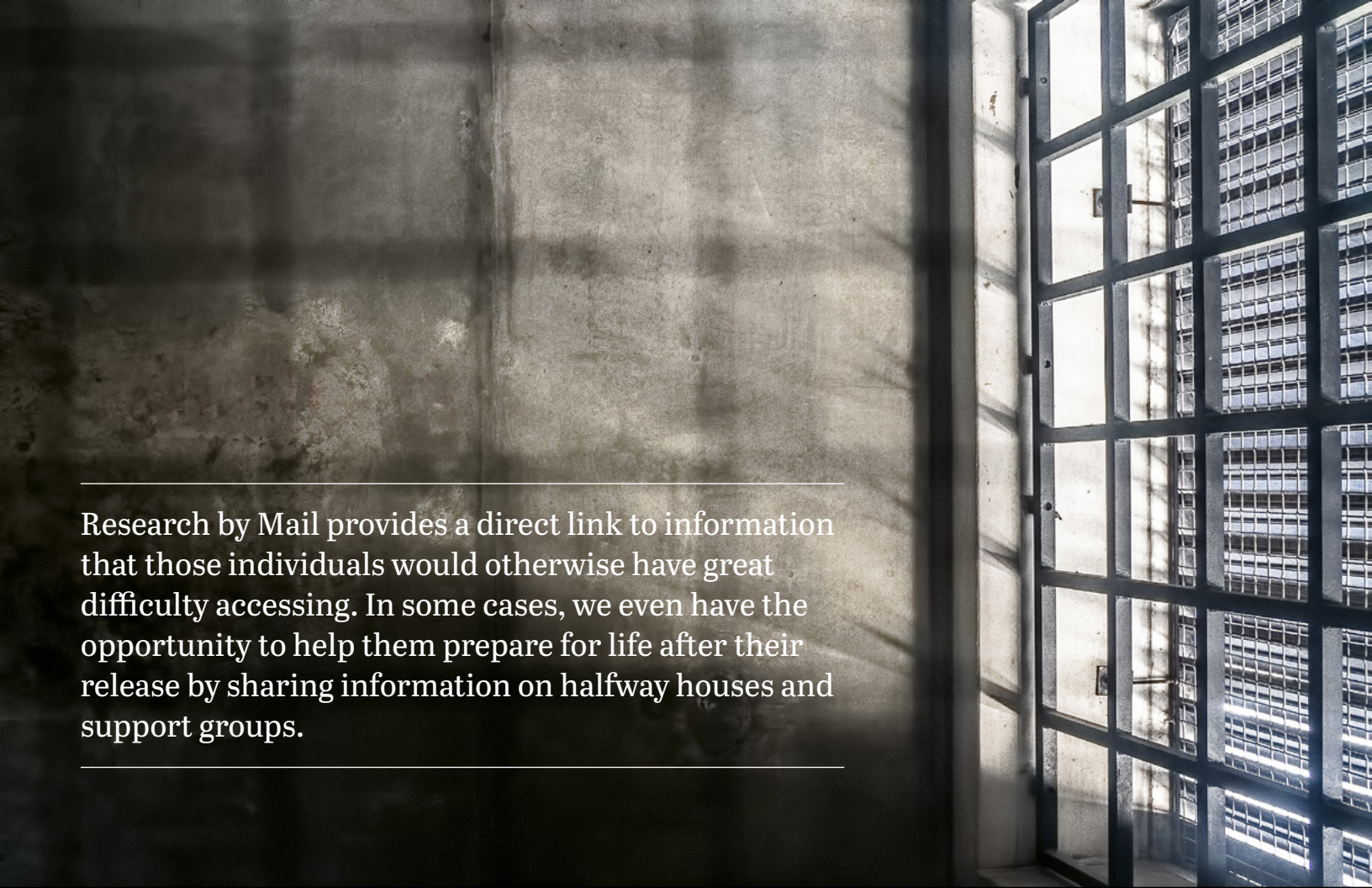
The Research by Mail service has evolved organically via word of mouth. We have never marketed this service and yet last year we witnessed a growth of 83%. Letters often begin with, "Someone told me that we can ask you questions, and you'll find the answers for us." The increase may be due to COVID-19 related restrictions since many of the people in prison have been isolated as a protective measure. While there is no way to account for the increase, it has been rewarding to assist even more of those in prison. Many of them have stated that they do not have access to a computer or the internet,

so we are that access for them. Due to the recent increase in volume, more employees have been trained to respond to the letters. We now have about 100 employees who participate in the service. The workload is shared among twenty-five branches and our administrative office.

Some might argue that it has become increasingly more difficult to keep one's reference skills sharp since the advent of Google. Research by Mail has allowed library staff members to actively use their research skills. In an age where many libraries have embraced the practice of showing customers how to use a database or how to find relevant, trusted information on their own, library staff members must do more for people in prison. To assist those in prison, employees must find the answers for them. Research by Mail provides a direct link to information that those individuals would otherwise have great difficulty accessing. In some cases, we even have the opportunity to help them prepare for life after their release by sharing information on halfway houses and support groups.

The questions we receive run the gamut. Some are looking for information to support their claims of false imprisonment, to prove their innocence; while others are looking for something to help them pass the time. Some use our services to educate themselves. The most common questions and requests fall into these categories: lyrics, images, legal information, religion, business, and pop culture. We have had, however, many questions that fall into other categories, questions about physics, metaphysics, dog breeding, book lists, magic,





Research by Mail provides a direct link to information that those individuals would otherwise have great difficulty accessing. In some cases, we even have the opportunity to help them prepare for life after their release by sharing information on halfway houses and support groups.

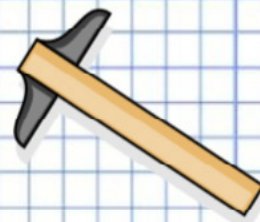
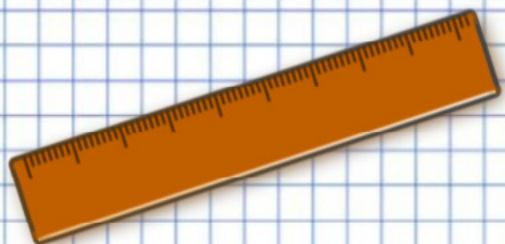
games, health – and the list goes on and on. Sometimes, we have questions that are rather unique, such as one asking for information on how to milk a snake. Sometimes we receive requests that are too broad or too vague, so we respond by asking for more details. This essentially becomes a rather slow reference interview. There are also times when we simply cannot answer the question or must reject a letter due to a conflict with Texas Department of Criminal Justice policies or HCPL policies.

Since the majority of letters we receive are from TDCJ facilities, we abide by their policies for mail correspondence. In addition to those, we have our own policies. For example, while we do not restrict the number of letters a person can write to the Research by Mail service at any given time, we do restrict the number of questions per letter. A TDCJ policy states that we are not allowed to provide personal contact information to people in prison. However, it is okay to provide contact information for businesses. At HCPL, we also do not provide employee information of any kind and sign all letters with “Research by Mail”. Regarding staff, anonymity is of utmost importance. In some cases, people ask employees to act as pen pals which goes against HCPL policies.

Most participating staff members have stated that this is a rewarding experience that gives them an opportunity to do research while supporting a population that receives very little assistance. HCPL’s mission is to provide information and resources to enrich lives and strengthen communities through innovative services within and beyond our walls. This service embodies that mission, going far beyond our walls to serve a group of people living behind walls most of us could never begin to truly understand.

Regardless of the crimes for which they have committed, helping people find information is what we do. Doing it without judgement is just as important. We provide the same customer service to them that we would to anyone that enters the library. Treating the letter writers with the same respect that we do our daily customers is paramount to who we are as an organization and as a profession. We are here to provide information to everyone that we can regardless of who they are or where they are.

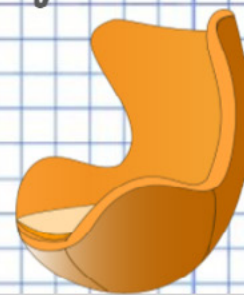
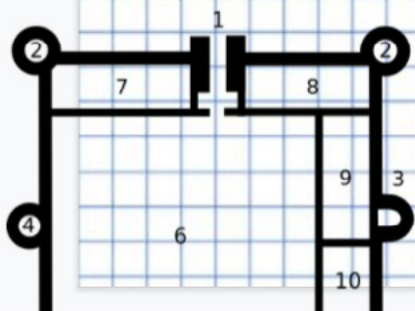
*Shane Harris is the Branch Administrative Services Manager at Harris County Public Library. He oversees the Research by Mail service.*



## NOOKS & CRANNIES

### *Claim Every Square Inch of Your Library Space*

By Julie Brem



#### **WHAT A STRANGE AND UNIMAGINABLE YEAR IT HAS BEEN.**

Many of our library spaces went from being abuzz with the familiar life and laughter of students to feeling stilted and unfamiliar, with plexiglass dividers and ubiquitous disinfectant. Of course, we adapted and rose to the occasion, working alongside teachers and students to remove and minimize barriers to learning and maximize access to high-quality resources for digital learning experiences. But what about our physical library spaces? In this time of flux, as districts roll out new tech and change strategies to reach learners, we must have a clear, communicated, and intentional vision for each and every nook and cranny of our library learning commons in order to remain student-centered in the transition back to “normal”.

Back in the pre-pandemic era circa 2017, I lived a librarian’s dream - I opened a school! My principal kept saying “you are going to love the library!” When she showed me the floor plans, I was surprised and pleased all at the same time. Surprised that I saw spaces labeled “A/V Storage” and

“Periodicals,” but pleased at the size and location of the space: big, and truly at the center of the school. The plan was adapted from a school that had opened several years prior in another part of the state. Because of this, there were vestiges of libraries past. Who has media retrieval systems and large collections of media when most of our content is online? Who subscribes to and stores periodicals still? (No offense if you do and this works for your patrons.) I saw many little offices along the perimeter of the library. Immediately, my mind went to work with ideas for each of these “nooks.”

Of course, since I did not yet know my patrons, I instead drew upon my years of experience working with teens in general. As I got to know my patrons at Weiss and assessed their wants and needs, the “nooks” have evolved. The A/V storage room became a “quiet/calming sensory room” that can also be booked for group study, with dry erase walls, filtered light and color-changing lamps, the “periodicals” room became our A/V production studio, and now that our district has gone 1:1 with devices, I hope to turn the computer lab into a

“student life room” for clubs to meet.

So how can you claim every square inch of your library space for learners? Get out or roughly draw up your library’s floor plan. Walk around your space, including all the storage areas. Let your patrons’ voices be heard and have ownership over the changes by conducting an informal needs assessment via a Google form. Faculty getaway or PLC meeting room (i.e., opportunities for collaboration)? Eating zone? Do you have students (in a “normal” year) asking for a quiet space? Do you have students asking to eat in the library? Do you need a space for board games? What about a makerspace? Although we were extremely busy this year supporting our learning communities, our fallow spaces provided time to clean out and fresh eyes to think of the possibilities as students return. Bring in (virtually or in-person) thinking partners for fresh ideas for your space (colleagues, your PLN, etc.).

Once you have determined various desired zones, invite your learning community in on the process. Are you designing a sensory area? Perhaps your



special education team can give tips, or students can vote on sensory items like bubble lamps and rainbow lights, that bring them calm. A kindness rock or meditation garden? Ask around to see if student clubs or organizations would be willing to take on the project for community service. I've had two green screen walls painted by Eagle Scout candidates and an outdoor table area constructed by a Girl Scout for her Gold Award.

Be ready to overcome doubts, naysayers and problems as they arise. Don't let the risks keep you from this venture. After we created the quiet room, students quickly found a corner of the room we could not see from the circulation desk. A convex mirror (strategically placed) solved this problem. The dry erase wall became very popular for student artwork, doodling and quotes...and then came offensive words and images. We then made the dry erase markers for checkout only at the circulation desk to better track usage. In our A/V production studio, students got into the button maker and jammed up the machine. We then created a QR code leading to a Google form for students to sign in and out to provide greater accountability.

Lastly, publicize these exciting changes through school newsletters and social media. Order or print attractive and professional signage. *This is really important.* If an administrator walks in looking for an office for a testing coordinator or parent liaison, but he

or she sees a sign that this office is a student podcasting/green screen studio and set up as such, they may be more hesitant to commandeer the space.

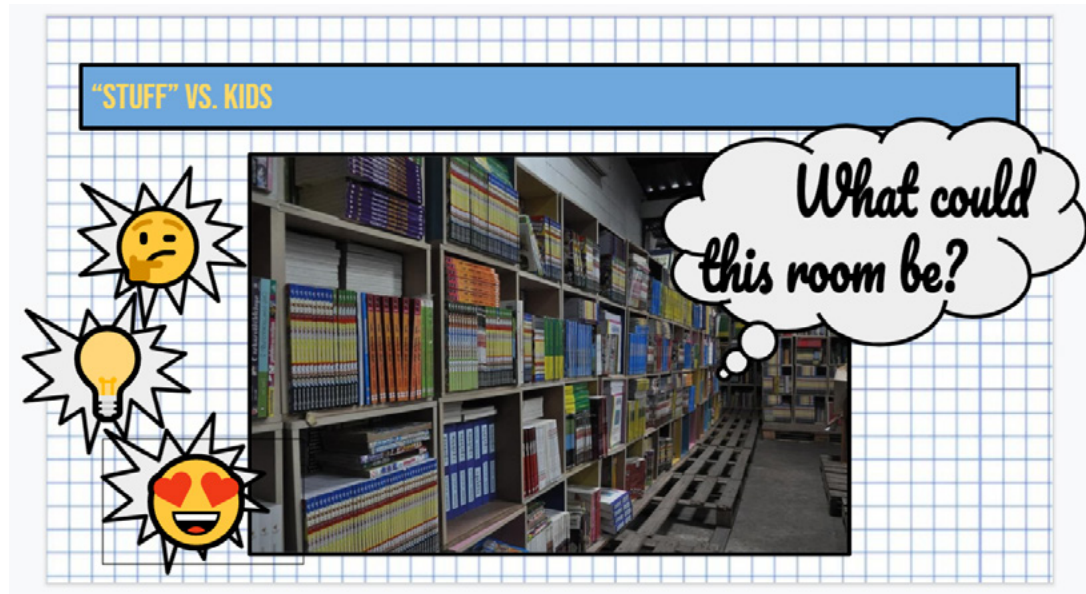
You might be thinking to yourself, "Well, this all sounds great, but there are other school staff officing out of the library space. I can't kick them out!" My advice would be watch, wait, and plant seeds. Some staff would be beneficial to share the space with - your school social worker, for instance, or your instructional coach. You can work together to plan programs for students and teachers. Others are not so convenient. For instance, a couple of summers ago, my administration snuck the testing coordinator's office into the office where our tech help resided. This has not been ideal as I have been, by default, sucked into a much larger role in testing, and the library space has

been closed more for testing ever since. However, there is some movement on the horizon, and I booked some time with my principal to make the case for the testing coordinator and social worker to switch offices. I laid the groundwork by talking to my colleagues and if all goes well, it will be a win for everyone.

Most importantly, students will view the library as a resource for more of their needs - literacy, enjoyment, and social-emotional care. So don't give up! Wait for an opportunity and have intentional conversations with all involved. Advocate for your learners. When the tech office was taken away, I spoke with my administration and was given a closet across the hall. This turned out well because the "stuff" could go away and the spaces within the library could be used for students. Don't be afraid to walk the building and ask your administrators for a closet for "remote" storage just as they sometimes try to "sniff out" areas within the library.

Have fun reimagining your spaces as we look forward to post-pandemic library life. Clear out those offices and closets and carve out interactive, multipurpose areas to amplify your library's role as the hub of your learning community. Reconfigure and rethink your space to invite every type of learner to find their "spot." Name it and claim it!

*Julie Brem is the librarian at Weiss High School in Pflugerville ISD.*





# Recognition = Community

By Sandra Cannon

As we transition to different ways of working now that COVID-19 pandemic restrictions have partially eased, it is more important than ever to know if your employees still feel connected and essential. Many experienced changes by moving to remote work after the familiarity of the workplace. As we move back to our work sites, some will continue to work remotely. No one knows for sure what our work environment will look like. As a manager, you will need to know whether employees are engaging with the process of change; however, what has not changed is their need to be recognized.

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We respond to praise and learn through observation. Everyone likes public recognition and appreciation. Public recognition capitalizes on these innate tendencies to positively influence workplace behavior and benefit your library. When an employee is publicly praised, they feel valued and important. Receiving praise from peers boosts employees' morale and confidence.

Managers will need to have regular check-ins with their team members who work on-site as well as with those who work remotely. Libraries may want to survey attitudes on returning to the workplace, identify issues and find ways to proactively deal with any concerns.

The good news is that with a bit of creativity and an understanding of what drives employees, managers can translate recognition culture to both the physical and the virtual workplace.



Recognition and appreciation should be about employees' commitment to the library; "out-of-the-box" thinking that accomplished great results, or exemplary implementation of the library's priorities. The recognized employee should be honored for their work; and other employees should want to learn from them. It is essential to reward specific accomplishments that you would like to see replicated.

Recognition improves employee engagement, it also strengthens manager-to-peer relationships, peer-to-peer relationships, and understanding of a library's core values and mission.

## Recognizing and Awarding Employees

### Where to Start

Start by asking yourself, what is the reason for showing appreciation or recognizing your employees? What is the goal of providing recognition; why are we honoring an individual's accomplishments; do we just want to inform others of a team member's commitment and the efforts they made to reach a goal?

Develop an inclusive Employee Awards and Recognitions committee to develop nomination award categories with criteria. When developing the criteria, be mindful that some employees may still be working remotely while others are working on-site. Treat them equally.

Criteria should be developed based on library priorities such as customer service tasks, completed projects that met the needs of the library's mission, outreach, projects, programs, or life-long service (this is an incentive to those who are new to the library). We need to exemplify our reasons for showing appreciation to our co-workers.

## Awards

### What to Give

Decide what the award winners will receive. If it is to be monetary or time off, it can be announced as an official congratulatory letter from the director with the monetary and/or time off stated.

Gift cards are often given as awards. If you can provide a gift card, do so by utilizing online vendors who are already approved by your library. If it is better to have a monetary gift, it could be added to an employee's paycheck. It should be substantial enough that the removal of taxes does not diminish its value.

## The Event

### Probably Virtual

How is recognition or appreciation manifested to employees? Initially a totally virtual format will be best to include all employees. Have a virtual event, like a webinar, where all employees register and join the event plus provide training credit. Have a keynote speaker. Presenters could include your executive leadership team who would present/announce the award-winning employees. Have fun! Develop an interactive game with prizes. Make the event a joyous occasion with music and colorful backgrounds for presenters and speakers. Keep it moving. Be positive, uplifting, and happy! Make it memorable. Each aspect of the event should be first class which demonstrates respect for the award winners and all your employees. As safety protocols permit, consider a hybrid event allowing for onsite attendees yet accessible virtually by those still working remotely.

## Online Recognition

### Brag About Them

To recognize employees, develop a "Wall of Stars" page on your intranet site. Include the award categories and criteria; the winner's nomination with a current color photo of the winning employee(s). In the future, awards would be delineated by year so that there would be a historical reference of employee awards and recognition.

## Debrief to Improve

A week after each annual awards event and while memories are fresh, meet with the Employee Awards and Recognition committee. Critique every event detail. Be honest about what



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Recognition improves employee engagement, it also strengthens manager-to-peer relationships, peer-to-peer relationships, and understanding of a library's core values and mission.

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worked, what didn't and what needs to be tweaked. Consider a post-event short employee survey for additional feedback, and then begin preliminary planning for next year's event.

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Recognizing people for their commitment to challenging circumstances gives employees a sense of what is important and where to focus.

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## Employee Recognition *Not One Event and Done*

Employee recognition is not a once-per-year event. It is important to keep track of what employees are doing at your library, especially if your employees are now working both on-site and remotely. If you see above and beyond behavior that should be rewarded, do not wait! Peer recognition is a valuable way to foster a positive culture and create an environment where employees regularly go the extra mile, especially since busy managers do not always see those extra efforts. Support peer-to-peer employee

recognition so that apart from getting appreciation or recognition from managers and superiors, they receive it from peers as well.

Recognizing people for their commitment to challenging circumstances gives employees a sense of what is important and where to focus. Reward an employee instantly to make your recognition more meaningful. You can do this through a myriad of channels: library team-wide email, add a "Yay, You Did It!" list of names on your "Wall of Stars" site, or highlight the employee verbally during impromptu virtual meetings. Another method to reward an employee for going above and beyond, is by ordering lunch from a local restaurant that offers delivery services. Buying an employee lunch is an easy way to reward remote and on-site employees.

## Recognition *Community*

Capitalize on the human desire for recognition and create a year-round employee awards and recognition program that will connect your employees whether working on-site or remotely. It's a simple equation. Employee recognition generates positive employee morale and a tangible sense of a library community.

*Sandra Cannon is division manager, administration at the Austin Public Library.*





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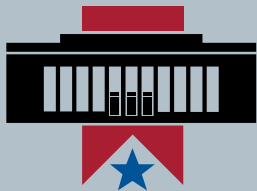
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# E-books from your library. Anytime, anywhere.



TEXAS STATE LIBRARY  
AND  
ARCHIVES COMMISSION



By Karen McElfresh

E-Read Texas is the Texas State Library & Archives Commission's (TSLAC) statewide e-book program for small and medium-sized public libraries. The program started in 2019 in an effort to bring e-books to small communities all over the state. In 2020 the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for this program dramatically as more libraries began to look for electronic resources to serve their patrons. As of April 2021, 142 public libraries are participating in the program.

Libraries that join [E-Read Texas](#) get access to a collection of over 6,000 e-books and a mobile app to access the titles, called SimplyE. Public libraries that serve a community of no more than 100,000 people are eligible to join, and all costs associated with the program are paid by TSLAC. Most of these small libraries would not be able to afford to purchase access to such a large collection of content, which makes E-Read Texas an invaluable service.

The E-Read Texas collection has thousands of titles, comprised of mostly adult fiction and popular nonfiction. The collection includes older bestsellers and award-winning books, as well as content from independent authors and small publishing houses. The nonfiction collection includes content such as cookbooks, craft and hobby books,

biographies, and more. There is also a large collection from the Texas Book Consortium that includes many books on Texas history, and other Texas-specific topics. In addition, there is a young adult crossover collection from Orca Book Publishers that is perfect for adult literacy programs. TSLAC will continue to add more titles to the collection as funding is available.

Even though the full E-Read Texas is only open to small and medium-sized public libraries, there is a large portion of the collection that any library can use, regardless of type or size. The e-books we purchase from the vendor Biblioboard have all been licensed for statewide use with unlimited simultaneous users, so they are available to all libraries. The Biblioboard website is geofenced so that any user located in Texas can access it, no login or password required. The [collection](#) has approximately 4,100 titles, and includes fiction and popular nonfiction for adults, young adults, and children.

In an effort to make the collection more navigable for younger users, we created a [separate site](#) that contains only the children's content, which is called E-Read Texas for Kids. The children's content includes a collection of over 600 titles from Teacher Created Materials, including the TIME for Kids series. The majority of the titles comprise juvenile nonfiction, including science, mathematics, sports, history, and art, in both English and Spanish, and are

most appropriate for children from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Libraries participating in the full E-Read Texas program also get access to the mobile e-book app SimplyE, that allows library users to checkout and read e-books on their Apple and Android devices. SimplyE is an open-source app developed by the New York Public Library with the goal to make the process of accessing an e-book as simple as possible. TSLAC contracts with Amigos Library Services to host the app for each participating library, and to provide technical support. SimplyE also allows libraries that already have their own locally or consortially purchased e-books to incorporate them into SimplyE to provide a one-stop e-book app for their users.

If your library hasn't joined E-Read Texas yet and you would like to find out if you are eligible, please contact [Karen McElfresh](#), TSLAC Resource Sharing Projects Coordinator. The process to join is simple, and only requires two forms. Once your library joins, TSLAC offers a media kit with promotional materials to help you advertise the program to your users. For more information about this program, please visit our [website](#).

*Karen McElfresh is the Texas State Library & Archives Commission's Resource Sharing Projects Coordinator.*



**SimplyE**  
The Library eReader App



# Longview Public Library Leverages CARES Grant to Help COVID-19 Recovery



By Leah Shreves

**THE CITY OF LONGVIEW IS A SPRAWLING CITY FILLED WITH ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS, AND HOME TO THE GREAT TEXAS BALLOON RACE.** Located just outside of downtown Longview, the Longview Public Library hosts a variety of programs ranging from story time to adult craft days, and events like Chautauqua and Indie Author Day. The library strives to cater to every individual who walks through its doors, serving more than 58,000 patrons with over 300,000 visitors each year. After the numbers of COVID-19 steadily climbed higher and higher, the library was required to shut down for six weeks. Anything that was checked out, would now not be due until after the library reopened. Our staff was challenged to alter our renewal process for items checked out, coordinate virtual programs and work from home.

When the Longview Public Library reopened its doors to the public after the six week closure, it was faced with a dilemma. How to clean the items being returned and follow CDC guidelines to help mitigate community spread. The library started out with using utility carts that routinely hold donations for the Friends book sales. Once the library opened, we saw an influx of items being returned that were due while the library was closed. After the items were returned, staff had to place them on the Friends carts for a 24-hour quarantine, which soon turned into an eight day quarantine.

On average the library has about 13,000 books returned each month. Since items being returned had to be quarantined for eight days, it created a backlog of items needing to be checked in once the quarantine was finished. Patrons also had to wait longer to check out books they had holds on, or items that were popular and had waitlists. Each item that had a waitlist

or hold, would then receive an automatic notification for their item being ready for checkout, but in reality, the item was still in quarantine and every person had to be called and notified to pick up their items in eight days.

Then the library discovered a machine advertised to kill bacteria and viruses. At the time of purchase, it was not yet verified to kill the COVID-19 virus. The library decided to take a chance that the science would prove its ability to kill the virus and received confirmation that it would do so in December 2020.

The Longview Public Library was awarded a \$20,000 CARES Act grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services to be used for COVID-related expenses. The funds were used to help purchase the Super Book Sanitizer from PIKinc, an international library services company. The Super Book Sanitizer uses ultraviolet light technology and high-pressure air circulation to kill germs, according to information from PIKinc. It can help kill the novel COVID-19 virus, among other viruses and bacteria, on 20 books in only five minutes. The sanitizer can help sanitize more than books though, it also helps sanitize the keyboards and mice in the library's computer lab, DVDs, audiobooks, and more.

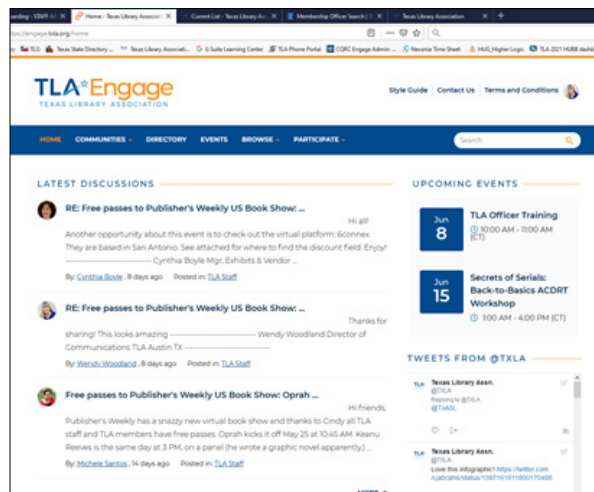
The Longview Public Library was the first in Texas to own these machines from PIKinc. The purchase helped the library present a faster and safer turnaround option on items for patrons. Instead of waiting 8 days for an item after it has been returned, in five minutes all the items in the sanitizer are clean and safe for the next patron to checkout.

*Leah Shreves is the technical services supervisor at Longview Public Library.*

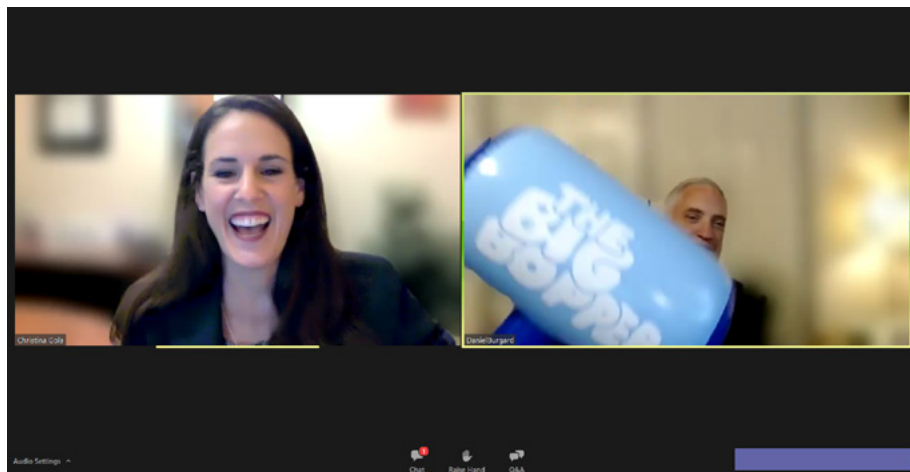
## TLA Engage Launching this Fall

This fall, the Texas Library Association is planning to fully migrate our member networking and communications from the Lyris listservs to TLA Engage, a brand-new online community. This will allow groups to better manage conversations, archiving and continuity needs, and streamline engagement.

We're working to make TLA Engage the centralized space for TLA members to communicate online. The Lyris listserv will remain available for a period of time as we transition to the new platform. **NOTE:** *The Texas Library Connection (TLC) listserv, which is open to TLA members and nonmembers, and the TCAL listservs will remain on the Lyris platform.*



## OUTGOING TLA PRESIDENT CHRISTINA GOLA PASSES THE GAVEL TO 2021-2022 TLA PRESIDENT DAN BURGARD AT COUNCIL II



## NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH GRANT AWARDED TO UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

A **\$6.4 million grant** has been awarded to the Lewis Library at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to help reach communities through health-centered education, information, outreach and grant-funding to external organizations.

"The competition for the award this time was fierce and we were extremely happy to be re-awarded," said **Daniel Burgard**, University Librarian and Vice Provost for Scholarly Information Management and Principal Investigator for Region 3. "We look forward to continuing to serve the health information needs of our region, including the new states of Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska."

## CONGRATULATIONS TO TEXAS LIBRARIANS ELECTED TO AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION DIVISIONS AND ROUND TABLES

ACRL Community and Junior College Libraries: **Vicky Ames Hart**, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

ACRL University Libraries: **Sian Brannon**, Secretary

Association for Library Services to Children Newbery Committee: **Marion Rocco**

Association for Library Services to Children Sibert Committee: **Cynthia Alaniz**

United for Libraries: **Andera Lapsley**, Division Councilor

Reference & User Services Association Emerging Technologies Section: **Chad Pearson**, RUSA Board Representative-at-Large

Young Adult Library Services Association: **Elizabeth Nebeker**, Councilor

Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Coretta Scott King Book Award Committee: **Janice Newsum**, Chair-Elect

Rainbow Round Table: **Nancy Jo Lambert**, Director-at-Large

Intellectual Freedom Round Table: **Johana Orellana Cabrera**, Director-at-Large

## SMU'S BRIDWELL LIBRARY WILL HOUSE WORLD METHODIST MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

The historical and theologically-significant collections of the World Methodist Museum are moving to **Bridwell Library**, part of the Southern Methodist University (SMU) Libraries system and located in the Perkins School of Theology. Public exhibits and opportunities for study will ensure the long-term integrity and accessibility of this important resource. Museum collections tell the story of Methodism, which began in England with brothers John and Charles Wesley in the early 18th century. Portraits of the early founders are included in the collections, as well as rare books and manuscripts, letters and the traveling pulpit of John Wesley.



## \$100,000 DONATED TO UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS – SAN ANTONIO TO FUND FREE TEXTBOOK PROGRAM

To help ease the burden of the high costs of textbooks, **Scott Sawtelle** and **Kathleen Curry** have committed \$100,000 to the UTSA Libraries' Adopt-A-Free Textbook program which supports faculty in utilizing free and low-cost learning materials. The gift is the largest commitment to the free textbook program and will allow additional grants to be funded to professors who adopt open access resources in their courses. Read more about their gift [here](#).

"We are whole-heartedly grateful and humbled by the generosity of Scott and Kathleen not only for their challenge gift during giving day, but also for their commitment to help fund our free textbook program," said **Dean Hendrix**, dean of UTSA Libraries. "We foresee that this gift will have an immediate impact on several thousand UTSA students and will only grow exponentially over time. It will truly help put the libraries at the forefront of championing open resources for students."

## MARK SMITH, TSLAC DIRECTOR AND STATE LIBRARIAN, TO RETIRE



Mark Smith, TSLAC Director and State Librarian, plans to retire on August 31, 2021, he announced in this [blog post](#).

"Serving as the Texas State Librarian and leading TSLAC since November 2013 has been the honor of my life. When I began my library career as a page at the Austin Public Library in 1979, I could never have imagined

I would work for 42 years in libraries, much

less serve as the State Librarian of Texas. But it has been a wonderful career and this position has been an amazing experience," Smith wrote.

Congratulations, Mark, on your upcoming retirement. During his tenure as TSLAC director, TLA and TSLAC have enjoyed a strong partnership to support all Texas libraries and librarians. And of course, Mark worked for TLA many years ago. Thank you for everything you have done for libraries, Mark!

## School Librarian Certification Advisory Committee Appointed

In November 2020, the Texas Library Association met with TEA staff and submitted a letter to the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) asking that they consider updating the School Librarian Certificate Standards. These standards are the foundation which prepare educators for careers as certified school librarians; however, they have not been updated in over a decade and professional practices and school library programs have evolved and changed significantly.

SBEC agreed to convene an advisory committee to review and recommend updates to the standards. In April 2021, [SBEC approved TEA's recommendations](#) for the following school librarians to serve on the School Library Standards Advisory Committee:

- Abby Moore, Breckenridge ISD
- Amanda Galliton, Burkburnett ISD
- Barbara Jansen, University of Texas
- Cristal Isaacks, Levelland ISD
- Emma McDonald, Mesquite ISD
- Katherine Countermand, Katy ISD
- Laura Sheneman, ESC 1, University of West Georgia
- Melissa Rippey, Pasadena ISD
- Nicole Cruz, Sharyland ISD
- Susanne Fleenor, Seagraves ISD

The committee will begin meeting (virtually) in June, with a second meeting in July. Additional meetings will be held as needed August – October and committee recommendations will be presented to the Board for discussion in December 2021. TLA thanks these outstanding school librarians for sharing their time and expertise in this important effort.

## TLA WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The Texas Library Association is delighted to announce that Lovdy Grossman has joined the team as Director of Education. Most recently, she was the Director of the Office of Conferences and Training at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin, a position she had held since 2011.

"I am thrilled to be joining the TLA team," Lovdy said. "TLA's mission and who they serve truly speak to me. My first job out of college was at the UCLA Library. In that job, I found librarians and library staff to be 'my people'. I look at joining TLA as my professional homecoming."

At the LBJ School, her responsibilities included providing conference development and support services for LBJ faculty and student-sponsored conferences on a myriad of topics. She was also involved in a variety of professional development programs to serve the training needs of elected and appointed officials.

Lovdy has more than 12 years of experience developing, managing and executing educational meetings, conferences and long-term training programs for non-profits, medical societies, local and state health departments, technology consortiums and for-profit companies. She holds a BA in Fine Arts from UCLA and a Master's in Public Affairs from the LBJ School at UT-Austin.

When not in the office, Lovdy can be found enjoying life with her two kiddos, two shoe-chewing dogs, and an incredibly patient husband of 15+ years. She enjoys reading (gasp!), cooking, genealogy research, listening to live music, and wandering aimlessly down trails in Central Texas.





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## Annual Assembly

Annual Assembly events, including officer training, unit, and committee business meetings, Council I and Council II will be held virtually in June.

Learn more at [www.txla.org/annual-assembly](http://www.txla.org/annual-assembly)

**JUNE 1 – JULY 1**

**Unit and Committee Virtual Business Meetings**

**JUNE 8**

**TLA Officer Training Webinar;** Recording is posted on [TLA's Officer Resources Page](#)

**JUNE 24**

**Council I** [recording will be posted](#)

**JULY 1**

10 – 10:30 AM

**Council II** [Register here](#)

## Other Events

**JULY 7 – 9**

**TLA 2022 Program Committee  
Planning Meeting, Austin**

**JULY 20**

2:30 – 3:30 PM

**TLA Talks: Harris County Public  
Library Community Broadband  
Project**

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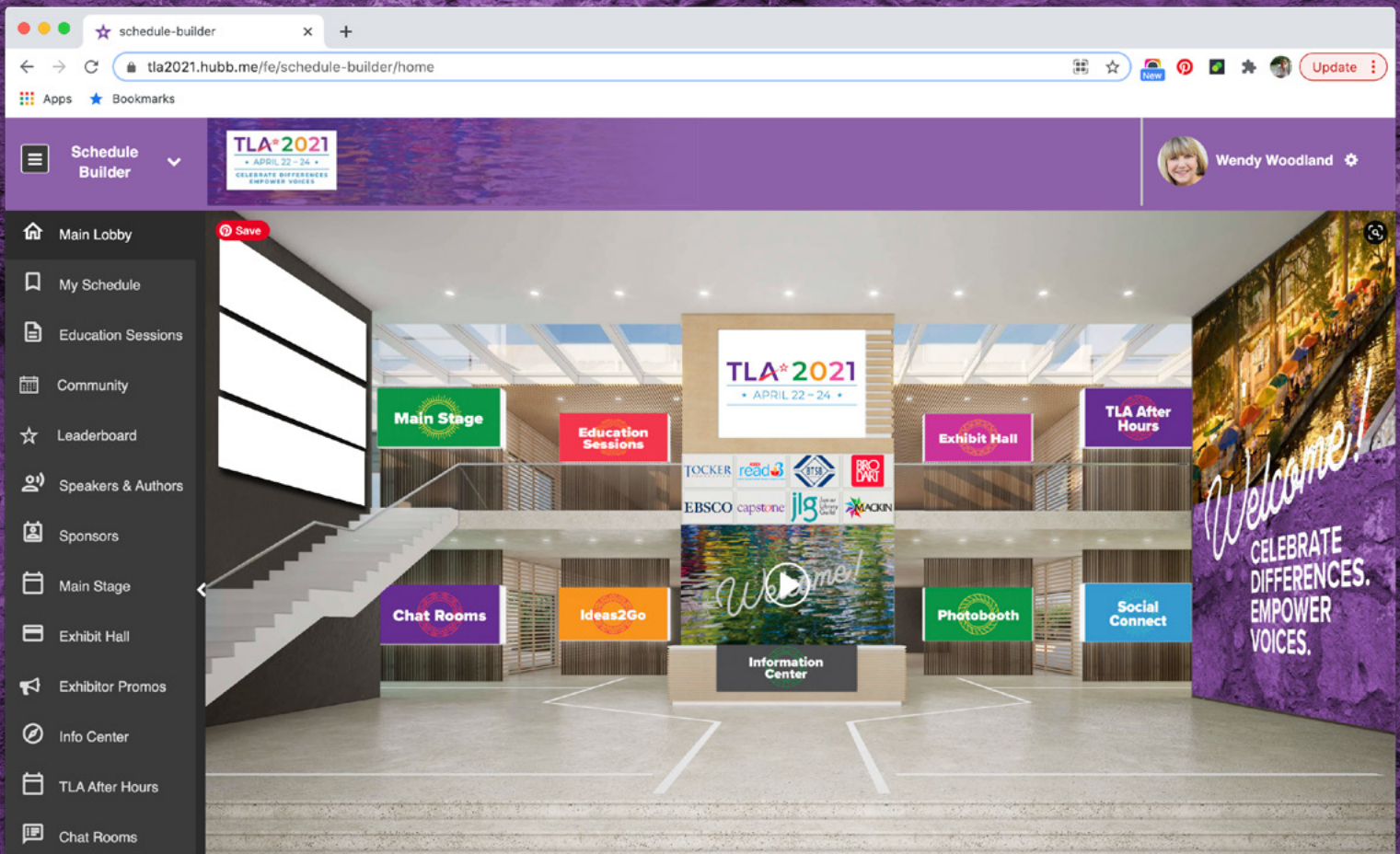
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# TLA★2021

★ APRIL 22 – 24 ★

CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES  
EMPOWER VOICES





# TLA 2021 Annual Conference Wrap-up

Thank you to everyone who attended, sponsored and exhibited at the TLA 2021 Annual Conference, our most affordable, most accessible, all-virtual conference!

TLA 2021 drew an amazing **4,791** people, who attended a total of **76,215** education sessions. The General Sessions were viewed **14,481** times. A whopping **2,479** people attended the Spotlight Author Session with Matthew McConaughey. Author visits were attended **7,883** times!

Our array of speakers had us laughing, crying, and reaching for notebooks to write down the names of new books we want to add to our library collections (and personal bookshelves.)

Hundreds of posts and thousands of likes & “loves” for #txla21 events flooded social media. Here’s a small sample of the posts:

**Best part of #txla21? No blisters on my feet and getting to go back and watch all the things! This year, having six must see sessions in one time slot is a solvable problem! Congrats, Christina and ProCo21 for a huge success!**

**Just finished an amazing session from @WPray\_ @mrsscottreads and @coxcougarsread! All the ideas shared were practical & easy for elementary & secondary. I highly recommend every school librarian watch the Beyond Student Aides presentation! #txla21 #misdlibraries**

**Teachers and librarians are in kahoots with each other to provide knowledge and books to our students! Those sneaky #librarians and #teachers @varianjohnson They are master collaborators! #TDTLA @txasl @txla #txla21**

**I didn’t come to @TXLA to cry @Gary\_paulsen123 Keepin’ it real. Thanks for sharing your stories about reading and writing. #txla21** *(Re: the moving interview with Gary Paulsen and Jarrett J. Krosoczka)*

**Melanie Scales – That was one of the top ten best sessions of TLA ever! He was Incredible! His enthusiasm and passion for his work made me tear up. And then cry.** *(Re: the Your Public Library Presents: Andrew Aydin session. APL Director Roosevelt Weeks interviewed Aydin about his “March” and “Run” series written with the late Congressman John Lewis.)*

**Beth Rickman Pruitt – Loved this book and the sequel! Waiting on book three. Thank you for sharing with us today!** *(Re: Closing Session with Attica Locke, where she spoke about “Bluebird, Bluebird” and its sequel, “Heaven My Home.”)*

**Mandy Watson – I loved it when he (Trejo) said, “Librarians are the smartest people in the world; they know where everything is!”**

One of the most popular sessions was actor Danny Trejo’s presentation at TLA After Hours. The legendary character actor known for his hard-edged roles in Machete and other movies spoke frankly about his personal struggles, pride in his family and efforts to support his community. His kind-hearted nature and love of books and librarians was on full display.

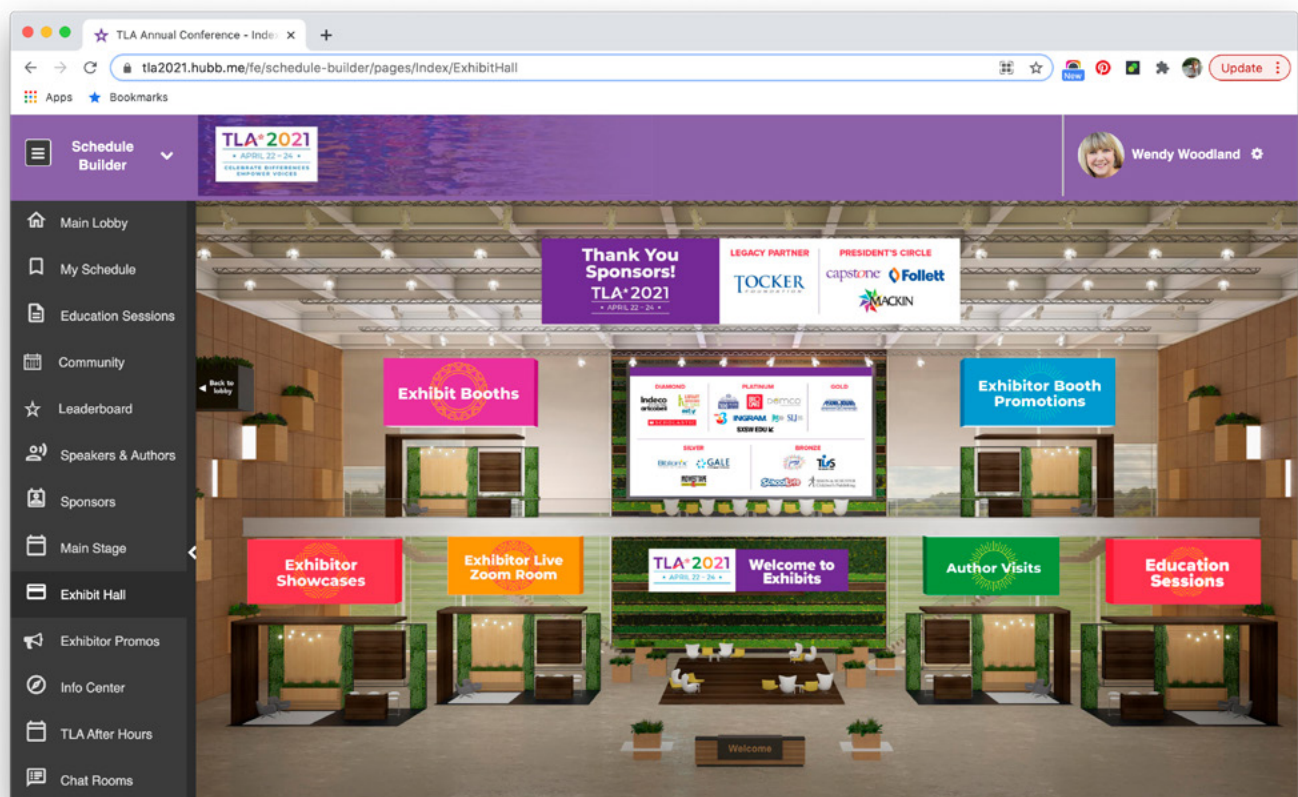
# TLA 2021 Annual Conference Wrap-up

In the survey sent out afterwards, many people expressed gratitude for a virtual format that allowed the annual conference to happen, even during a pandemic year.

**“Although in-person would have been great, I love being able to attend more than one session with the on-demand feature.”**

**“I actually liked some aspects of the virtual conference better! I liked being able to go to more sessions because there was no limit of people who could attend. I also went to more sessions because I could get there fast!”**

The amazing virtual exhibit hall at TLA 2021 hosted more than 250 companies represented by 131 exhibitors. You can find a full list of exhibitors beginning on page 42 of the [Spring Issue of the Texas Library Journal](#) or listed in the online [Exhibitor Profiles](#).



Conference attendees had extra time to explore the Exhibit Hall, as it opened on Monday, April 19, three days before conference officially began. The “Resources” section of each booth had a wide variety of offerings, including author and demo schedules, videos, new titles, sample chapters, book club picks and other useful resources.

Attendees enjoyed hearing from more than 90 wonderful authors via [Author Visits](#), which took place in exhibitor booths via live Zoom rooms. The virtual portal recorded an astounding 7,800 participants in author visits! And more than 900 attended the Exhibitor Showcases and Exhibitor Live Chats.



# TLA 2021 Annual Conference Wrap-up

Hundreds of people took fun selfies in the Photobooth, sponsored by Scholastic, Inc. Here's just a small sample.



Thank you to our [sponsors of the fun Attendee mailer](#) and TLA 2021 prizes.

Congratulations to the winners:

- Member Grand Prize (Geometrix Two Bay Arc Mobile Bookcase) courtesy of Brodart: Heather Horner, Richardson ISD
- TBA 2021 reading list quilt courtesy of Bound To Stay Bound: Lanie White, Oglesby ISD
- Custom Justin cowboy boots, courtesy of Visit Fort Worth: Deidre Black, Brazoria County Public Library

We'd like to give a big Texas thank you to all our sponsors for their support. Their partnership with TLA is absolutely essential to fulfilling our mission. [See our full list of Sponsors with their chosen events listed.](#)

**And a big shout-out to our many sponsors** of stipends, scholarships, and events and services beyond conference including TLA Reading lists, Annual Assembly, TALL Texans, Launch, District Meetings and more!

# 2021 Corporate Sponsors

As of March 22, 2021

The Texas Library Association expresses sincere gratitude to our corporate sponsors. Their generous support enables TLA to continuously improve the TLA Annual Conference, programs, events, and services offered to our members and the library profession. Please support our sponsors and exhibitors throughout the year.

## Legacy Partner

### **TOCKER FOUNDATION**

Conference, Leadership Events, New Education Series

## President's Circle

### **EBSCO INFORMATION SERVICES**

Annual Assembly, Attendee Mailer, Leadership Events,  
TLA 2021 Library School Socials,  
TLA After Hours Keynote Session

### **H-E-B/READ 3**

Attendee Mailer, Accessibility Resources at TLA 2021,  
Spotlight Author Session

## Diamond

### **BOUND TO STAY BOUND**

Attendee Mailer, Texas Bluebonnet Author Session

### **BRODART COMPANY**

Conference Information Center, General Session III,  
Member Grand Prize

## Platinum

### **CAPSTONE**

Attendee Mailer, Black Caucus Round Table Author  
Session, School Administrators Conference,  
Teacher Day @ TLA

### **JUNIOR LIBRARY GUILD**

Authors Visits, General Session II, Junior Library Guild  
Conference Stipend, School Administrators Conference

### **MACKIN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

Closing Author Session & All Conference Read,  
Technology Sessions, District Meetings, School  
Administrators Conference, Teacher Day @ TLA

## Gold

### **DEMCO, INC.**

Battledecks, Leadership Events, Demco/Upstart  
Innovative Programming Award

### **FOLLETT/BAKER & TAYLOR**

General Session I, TLA After Hours

### **GALE, A CENGAGE COMPANY**

Scholarly Forum: Contributed Papers Presentation,  
Director's Symposium Breakfast, Teacher Day @ TLA

### **LIBRARY INTERIORS OF TEXAS/ ESTEY LIBRARY**

### **SHELVING BY TENNSCO**

Attendee Mailer, Annual Assembly

### **PERMA-BOUND BOOKS**

2x2 Reading List & Conference Session, Lone Star  
Reading List Session, TAYSHAS Reading List Session,  
Topaz Reading List & Conference Session

### **SCHOLASTIC, INC.**

Photo Booth, Teacher Day @ TLA

## Silver

### **BIBLIONIX**

Biblionix/PLD Stipend, Biblionix/SCLRT Stipend, Public  
Library Division Membership Party, Small Community  
Libraries Round Table Social

### **TASLA - TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL**

### **LIBRARY ADMINISTRATORS**

School Administrators Conference, TALL Texans Institute,  
Teacher Day @ TLA



# TLA 2021 Awards

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Congratulations to each of the 2021 TLA Award winners! In year that was marked by a global pandemic, severe winter storms in Texas and many other challenges, you exemplified service to your communities.

## **Lifetime Achievement Award:**

### **Sharon Amastae**

Sharon Amastae, retired librarian, library advocate and former president of the Texas Library Association, was awarded the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

Amastae served as an TLA executive board member and ALA Councilor from 2003-2006. She was president of TLA from 2014-2015. As a middle school librarian at Camino Real Middle School in El Paso from 1989-2012, she assumed leadership positions on different campus committees offering her perspective and her expertise.

A hands-on volunteer with many different organizations, she has sat alongside abused and neglected children at court hearings as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Volunteer. In the recent years of immigration crisis, she has helped provide meals and a myriad of other volunteer services at emergency shelters throughout El Paso. During the COVID-19 crisis, she was a lifeline for people in her church, delivering food and other supplies to homes throughout the community and also volunteering every Saturday, masked and gloved, at food distribution sites. She has made a difference in many people's lives through her advocacy and volunteer work.

## **Librarian of the Year Award:**

### **Manya Shorr**

Manya Shorr, Director of the Fort Worth Public Library (FWPL), received the Librarian of the Year Award.

While she has proven herself to be a stellar librarian and director over the years, Shorr truly shined in 2020. In February she traveled to Austin to advocate for libraries to legislators. In August 2020, the new Golden Triangle branch of FWPL opened. She also oversaw a large-scale project called "Amplify 817" that launched in 2020.

Much of what made Shorr stand out last year was her library's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within days of closing their doors due to stay-at-home orders, FWPL began streaming library programming. Early on, she began an initiative that had library staff calling senior citizen cardholders to check on them and to help refer them to social services, if needed. She oversaw a city-wide PPE drive using library branches as drop-off locations. Librarians gathered more than one thousand

masks that were distributed to city employees. Her desire for all libraries to be successful, and her passion for public service, is abundant.

## **Distinguished Service Award:**

### **Ana Cleveland**

Dr. Ana D. Cleveland, Regents Professor in the Department of Information Science at the University of North Texas, was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award.

Cleveland has been a leader in library and information sciences (LIS) education for over 40 years. She began her career in Texas at Texas Woman's University (TWU) School of Library & Information Studies in 1977 and moved to the University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Information Science (formerly School of Library and Information Sciences) in 1988. Throughout her career as a LIS educator, she has focused her efforts on recruiting and educating diverse individuals to all aspects of the profession. Her visionary approach has led to innovation in the education of librarians.

## **Distinguished Service Award:**

### **Ted Wanner**

Ted Wanner, recently retired from his longtime position as TLA's Director of Education and Member Services was recognized with the Distinguished Service Award.

Few have had the reach Wanner has had in Texas and in continuing education. He was an excellent representative for TLA and is loyal, supportive, and positive, exemplifying the values of the library profession.

He is an excellent advocate for the profession in the broadest sense, but also worked tirelessly as an advocate for every corner of Texas – supporting and working for all Texas districts and for any size and type of library and for all levels of library employees.

## **Libraries Change Communities Award:**

### **Alief ISD**

The Alief Independent School District won the Libraries Change Communities Award for their years-long, comprehensive project "Innovating Inside the Box: Transforming the Literacy Culture of Alief by Ensuring Equitable Access."

# TLA 2021 Awards

The library department saw the need to provide equitable access across all the school district's libraries and took significant steps to make improvements. Recognizing that some campuses did not have access to the most recent books, librarians began sharing these resources between campuses. The district infused money for campus MakerSpaces based on prior campus-based funding, so the campuses that had the lowest building budget would receive the highest district allotment. District funds were used to equitably help campuses purchase eBooks, attend author visits, attend book festivals and purchase books for students to read prior to participating in book competitions.

During the 2018-2019 school year, over 25,000 books were given to students for their home libraries. During the pandemic, librarians launched curbside delivery of books, hotspots, laptops and tablets; delivered items to apartment complexes and stocked official and unofficial Little Free Libraries throughout the community so patrons would have access to physical books in a safe manner.

## Benefactor Award:

### Cathy Hartman

Cathy Hartman received the annual Benefactor Award in recognition of her generous support of the Cathy Nelson Hartman Portal to Texas History Endowment.

Established in 2012, the endowment enables the University of North Texas (UNT) Libraries to extend the impact of the Portal to Texas History by creating a permanent, sustainable source of income. Funds derived from this endowment help to enhance future technology development, to acquire and support additions to the collections and content in the portal, and to create lesson plans that support new educational initiatives.

Since its inception, Hartman has donated over \$100,000 to the endowment and she and her husband, Walter, made an irrevocable planned gift to the endowment of nearly their entire estate. Cathy Hartman is a long-time, active member of TLA, and spent the last 20+ years of her career at the UNT Libraries.

## Wayne Williams Project of the Year Award:

Tom Green County Library in San Angelo was awarded the Wayne Williams Project of the Year Award for "Creating Accessible Children's Libraries: Touching Lives with Books."

In this project, the library led the charge to create beautifully decorated and well-stocked library rooms at the two Boys and Girls Clubs in San Angelo. These

centers are located in underprivileged parts of the city. Although both centers had children's libraries, the library collections and even the rooms themselves had fallen into disrepair.

Library staff, led by Tom Green County Library Director Jill Donegan, scoured the library for spare furniture and shelving. Children's librarian, Sally Meyers, began gathering a diverse book collection which would enable every child to find him or herself in a book. The Junior League volunteered to paint the libraries. At each location, the outer space theme with oversized posters and pictures, delights students the minute they open the doors.

## Demco Upstart Innovative Programming Award:

### Cozby Library & Community Commons

The winner of the 2021 Demco/Upstart Innovative Programming Award in the public libraries category is Cozby Library and Community Commons of Coppell. The library receives the award for their "Meet Your Neighbor" Project.

The "Meet Your Neighbor" project is a series of events that consist of a panel of three to four citizens from the community who get a chance to tell their stories and answer questions from the audience. The library works with the Community Builders Committee, which consists of library staff and residents. This collaboration with community members helps library staff to identify important topics for the City of Coppell. The project provides a safe place for people to share their stories, answer questions, and address stereotypes. This project has also been an innovative way for underserved populations to have a voice in the community. The "Meet Your Neighbor" project has also contributed to the successful transition of the library services into the online environment. Additionally, it increased the library's visibility in the community.

## Demco Upstart Innovative Programming Award:

The winner of the 2021 Demco/Upstart Innovative Programming Award in the school libraries category is Penny Payte McLeaish LRC (Sharyland High School) of the Sharyland Independent School District for their Alumni Snapshot Campaign.

The **Alumni Snapshot Campaign** focuses on increasing the use of the library for students, teachers, and parents; increasing college readiness among upperclassmen; and motivating incoming freshmen to set their goals early upon entering high school. The program shows an



# TLA 2021 Awards

impressive level of engagement between the current high school students and recent graduates. Because of this program, current students aspire to not only be accepted to college but to be chosen as role models for current students and upheld as success stories. It gives the entire school community a sense of accomplishment to see the graduates excel at the next level.

## ADDITIONAL AWARDS, GRANTS AND RECOGNITION

### TASL Scholarships

Paige Neighbors, Midland ISD; Jamie Vandiver-Sesay, Leander ISD; Barbara Lopez, Brownsville ISD; Shannon Lane, Highland Park ISD; and Kasey Fowler, Prosper ISD

### TASL Distinguished Service Award - School Administrators

Natalie Griffin, Executive Director of Special Programs, Mineral Wells ISD

### Shirley Igo Award

Brandy Carnline, librarian; Coy Miller Elementary PTA in Frisco ISD

### Media Virtual Presence Award

Alexandra Cornejo, Harlingen School of Health Professionals, Harlingen CISD

### Siddie Joe Johnson Award

Kristin Fournier, Round Rock ISD

### Small Community Library Advocate Award

GFWC Florence J Scott Woman's Club

### Jack Alton Strawn Standing TALL Award

Cecilia Barham, North Richland Hills Library

### YART/Young Adult Reading Incentive Award (YARI)

Chari Kauffman, North Shore Middle School

### Library Instruction Round Table Project of the Year Award

Patricia Becker Johnson, Brown Middle School, El Paso ISD - Virtual Escape Rooms

### Jeanette & Jim Larson Grant

Marisol Vidales, Dr. Hector P. Garcia Memorial Library

### Woll Memorial Fund Grant

Norma Hallmark, Allen Memorial Public Library

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

Kyla Schooling, Grand Prairie ISD; Lisa Zinkie, Fort Worth ISD; Elizabeth Fisanick, Lewisville ISD; Brenda Speck, Round Rock ISD; Martha Coleman, Wiley College; and Stephanie Leslie, Austin ISD

### Library Instruction Round Table Devin Zimmerman Stipend

Victoria Jesswein, Sam Houston State University

### PLD – Biblionix Stipend

Linda Crosland, Garden Ridge Public Library; Celeste Perez, Fort Bend County Public Library; Meghan McCain, Harris County Public Library; Barbara Stroud, Bay City Public Library; Brenda Sanchez, San Antonio Public Library; Crystal Rogers, Houston Public Library; Latasha Patterson, Houston Public Library; Katherine Hector, Marathon Public Library; Melissa Neybert, Irving Public Library; and Laura Herman, San Antonio Public Library

### SCLRT – Biblionix Stipend

Michelle Marlin, Calhoun County Public Library; Marisol Cano, Bridgeport Public Library; Michelle Slonaker, Chico Public Library; Brittany Winebrinner, Chico Public Library; and Pam Kemp, Rhome Community Library

### District 8 Conference Stipend

Kathryn Gwinn, AISD; and Ronna Clawson, Texas Woman's University

### J. Frank Dobie Library Trust Grants

Dublin Public Library, Adina Dunn, Library Director  
Lakehills Area Library, Dianna Landes, Library Director  
Linden Public Library, Denise Haas, Library Director  
Mitchell County Public Library, Maggie Bootman, Library Director

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### Ray C. Janeway Scholarship

Rosa Villa, Texas Woman's University

### Vivian Greenfield Scholarship

Wendy Pray, Sharyland ISD

### TLA Summer School Scholarship

Jennifer Urban-Flores, Texas Woman's University

### Walter H. Escue Memorial Scholarship

Joshua Bergmann, University of North Texas

# 2021 Branding Iron Awards

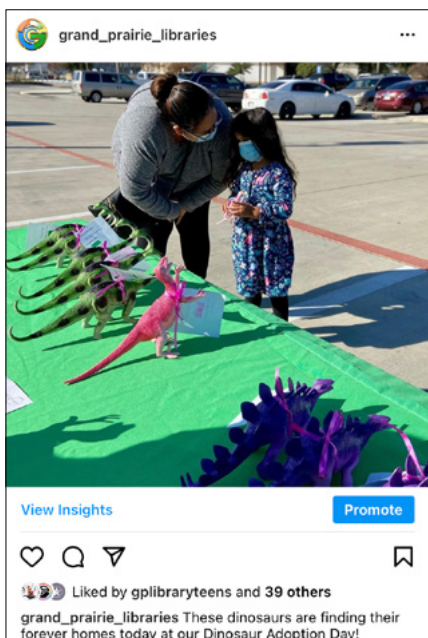
Librarians across Texas continually create amazing work to promote their services, programs, and events. This was especially true in 2020, when libraries everywhere had to adapt their programming because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Texas Library Association's Branding Iron Awards honor this inspiring and creative work with awards presented in several categories, and one overall Best of Show winner.



## BEST OF SHOW

Barbara Bush Branch Library/Harris County Public Library  
Curbside Larry

The “[Curbside Larry](#)” video campaign made an instant icon out of this librarian with the voice and style of a late-night TV used car salesman. Played by John Schaffer, program production specialist at HCPL, Curbside Larry helped raise the profile of library services nationwide during the pandemic. As Texas Monthly wrote, the Harris County Public Library created “a hero who, in these troubled times, reassures library patrons that there is still a safe way for them to nurture their minds and inner selves through the written word, at no cost. That hero is Curbside Larry.” Over several months, Curbside Larry promoted not just curbside checkout, but also drive-through voting for the 2020 election, digital library cards and even the Texas Library Association. Through appearances on CBS This Morning and thousands of YouTube views, he elevated the work – and spirits - of librarians everywhere during the pandemic.



## CATEGORY WINNERS

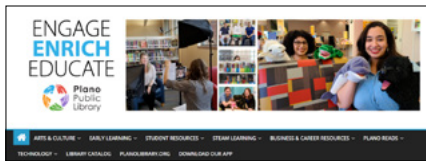
**Digital Communications: Public Library Category**  
Grand Prairie Public Library System  
Dinosaur Adoption

In this inventive children's program, families “adopted” toy dinosaurs, and children cared for them and did activities with them. The Dino Adoption Day trailer, and other creative movie-style trailers, generated a lot of interest, and children loved the program, something they could safely do during the pandemic.

“On the day of the adoption, families came to pick the right dinosaur for them that shared some of their interests and would fit in best in their family,” wrote Caitlin Milligan, of Grand Prairie Public Library. “After they finalized the adoption process, took a picture with our resident dinosaur and headed home, it was up to these kids to take care of their new family member. They had a list of activities to complete and were encouraged to cater to their new friend's interests.”



# 2021 Branding Iron Awards



## External Communications: Public Library Category

### Plano Public Library

#### Plano Library Learns Blog

Early learning, literary reference, student resources, and job and college preparation were combined into the [Plano Library Learns Blog](#). This dynamic, attractive site has something for all ages. From December 2019 through December 2020, staff wrote 275 blog posts with 35,398 total page views.

Over the course of the year, the Plano Library Learns blog reached 15,000 new readers who had never come to the blog before. There was a 38.9% bump in views in March 2020 (COVID-19), and 148% bump in April as programming turned virtual and the blog became a central hub of information and program content.



## Digital Communications – School Library Category

### Jaime Escalante Middle School Library

#### Social & Digital Media Programming and Promotion

A creative and multi-pronged social media presence including Instagram, InstagramTV, YouTube, website and an e-newsletter has helped the library reach an ever-growing audience, even during the pandemic, and made its programs successful. Due to the popularity of the social channels, digital newsletters, and online events, students and staff are more involved and confident in sharing their successes on global platforms. While library staff highlight student achievements, recognitions, events, and community news, their main goal has always been to shed a light on how the library transforms the lives of the local community.



## Reading Programs – Public Library Category

### Keller Public Library

#### Good Reads & Good Deeds Summer Reading Challenge

In this heartwarming program, children and families were encouraged by librarians to complete both “good reads” (summer reading) and “good deeds” (kind actions to help others and/or the community.) Librarians took great care to design reading activity options that families could complete together that appealed to a wide range of people, and that focused on sharing and caring. For example, some of the “good reads” options included, “read a book to someone younger than you,” “read a book recommended by a friend,” or “read silently next to someone.” Likewise, the list suggested service activities that could be accomplished from a safe social distance that would spread kindness. For example, some of the “good deeds” activities included “make and send a thank you card to a community helper,” and “plant a tree or flower.” All told, the community completed more than 20,000 good reads and good deeds.

# 2021 Branding Iron Awards



## Reading Programs – School Library Category

### Castleberry Independent School District Books & Bytes “Grab & Go” Reading Program

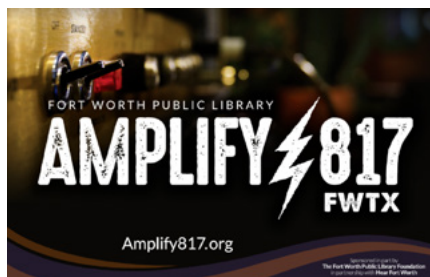
The Castleberry ISD Books & Bytes Reading Program distributed books and nutritious meals to families in their district in the summer of 2020. The Grab & Go Library is a unique strategy to address the lack of activities, supplies, and books for students living in the school district and surrounding areas. Designed to be scheduled once a week on a designated day, the plan included a pick-up location at one of the elementary schools providing meal pick-up services. On the appointed day, bags of books selected and marked by grade level along with themed activity packs were packaged up and made available to families driving through to pick up their meals. Participation in both the reading program and in food pickup increased because of this inventive program.



## Special Events – Academic Library Category

### Cornette Library, West Texas A&M University Kickback and Movie Night Outreach Programs

Cornette Library successfully transformed their Kickback and Movie Night programs into virtual ones, continuing this tradition despite the challenges of the pandemic. Thanks to skilled pivoting by the Cornette Library staff, hundreds of students enjoyed these events, and for the Movie Night they were given themed T-shirts and snacks to bring to their homes.



## Special Events – Public Library Category

### Fort Worth Public Library Amplify 817

Through the Fort Worth Public Library, [Amplify 817](https://www.fwpl.org/amplify817) delivers commercial-free, curated music from Fort Worth artists. This gathering place for Fort Worth music-lovers and musicians inspires discovery and sharing. FWPL saw high engagement on Twitter and their Instagram account doubled impressions month-to-month, because of Amplify 817 content. Media coverage of the launch appeared in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, *Fort Worth Business Press*, *Fort Worth Magazine* and multiple newsletters throughout the city.



## A vertical strip of a colorful, abstract painting. The image shows a close-up of a textured surface with swirling patterns of green, blue, and orange. The colors are vibrant and the brushstrokes are visible, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is reminiscent of a microscopic view of a material or a close-up of a natural phenomenon like a liquid crystal or a mineral.



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A close-up photograph of an agave plant, showing its thick, green, pointed leaves with serrated edges. The plant is the central focus of the image, with its leaves radiating from the center. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the plant and some outdoor structures.

RECOVER, REBALANCE,  
RECONNECT

**TLA**  **2022**

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★ FORT WORTH ★

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APRIL 25 – 28

Mark Your  
Calendars!