NEW JERSEY NJLA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

NJLA NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

January 2023   Vol. 21 Issue 1

Important Dates

NJ Academic Libraries Conference
Friday, January 6, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

NJLA Executive Board Meetings
Tuesday, January 17, 3 p.m.
Tuesday, February 21, 10 a.m.
Tuesday, March 21, 10 a.m.

Library Workers of Color Meetings
Tuesday, January 24, 2 p.m.
Tuesday, February 28, 2 p.m.
Tuesday, March 28, 2 p.m.

View the NJLA Events Calendar for all meetings and events.

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NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
SUSTAINABLY FORWARD

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by JESSICA TRUJILLO

"...the start and finish, is helpin' people when life is on the edge. Even people you don't like. Stars is easy, people is hard."
–A Hat Full of Sky by Terry Pratchett

I periodically revisit the Discworld as a way to find comfort, gain understanding of the world, and just have a fun read. Granny Weatherwax's distaste for the written word aside, witchcraft has always struck me as very similar to library work. It is difficult to get consensus in a large group, it is unglamourous, it is not always appreciated, and you never charge for your help – all in the service of helping others.

Books are easy but people are hard because there are many opposing opinions, beliefs, and needs that are sometimes at odds. Serving all members of our community and providing them with information and materials that are relevant to their needs is a bedrock principle of our profession yet the current iteration of "culture wars" has led to school librarians receiving personal and professional attacks for doing just that. The New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), the NJLA Intellectual Freedom Committee, librarians, library workers, students, parents, and library supporters have all coalesced to help stem the tide of censorship within the state. Without the power of this collective voice, a minority of vocal people are able to dictate the framework of acceptability. Regardless of age, people who are LGBTQIA should have the ability to have materials that meet their educational and recreational needs and it should not be seen as a controversy. Librarians help people.

These challenges are isolating and often devastating, but one of the most effective ways to meet these challenges is to join as a community unified behind intellectual freedom. Martha Hickson, NJASL, and the NJLA Intellectual Freedom Subcommittee have shared multiple resources to help librarians dealing with book challenges at their libraries. If you have not already, please consider joining the NJASL/NJLA Rapid Response Team to help add your voice to meet local book challenges and/or join NJLA as a partner with Unite Against Book Bans.

Yours in solidarity,
Jessica

Jessica Trujillo is the current NJLA president and enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Emporia State University's School of Library and Information Management because why wait for life to impose changes on you when you can do it yourself? Her research focus is on EDI, leadership, and education. Email her at president@njlamembers.org.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
by CINDY CZESAK

While NJLA is in a time of transition, it's also a time of impressive initiatives. First, there will be new leadership with a new Executive Director; resumes have been received and the interview process will soon begin. I am sure you agree that the future with new leadership will be motivating for the full membership of NJLA.

Membership in Sustainable Libraries, initiated and shepherded by our President, Jessica Trujillo, offers us all a chance to think about our lives, our libraries, and the future. Jess has also arranged for webinars on this topic and speakers at our conference to move this initiative forward.

And, speaking of membership, the option for Enhanced Institutional Membership has been quickly embraced by an amazing number of libraries. This membership category offers libraries the opportunity, for a fee, based on the library budget, to enroll all the employees in a library – librarians, library assistants, maintenance workers, security guards, you name it. While this development will very likely change the direction of programming by the association, I am confident that broadening the membership base will serve to make the organization stronger and more responsive.

Work continues on programs, from equity and diversity initiatives, to public policy work, to minimum salary recommendations, to conference planning, to multiple program offerings by sections and committees – all of this demonstrates the vital contributions of NJLA members. We all contribute to each other and to the continued growth of NJLA!

Cynthia Czesak is the retired Director of the Paterson Public Library, working there for 17 years. Prior to that, she worked at the Clifton Public Library for over 20 years; for 13 of those years, she was Director. Since retiring, Ms. Czesak has formed a consulting firm and has served as interim Executive Director of BCCLS, Demarest Public Library and Parsippany Public Library. She now works for Library Crossroads Consulting.

Ms. Czesak has been very active in various library organizations in the state of NJ, including serving as NJLA President, and was selected as a NJLA Librarian of the Year. She has also served on several ALA committees, including on ALA Council for 9 years.

NJLA STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS

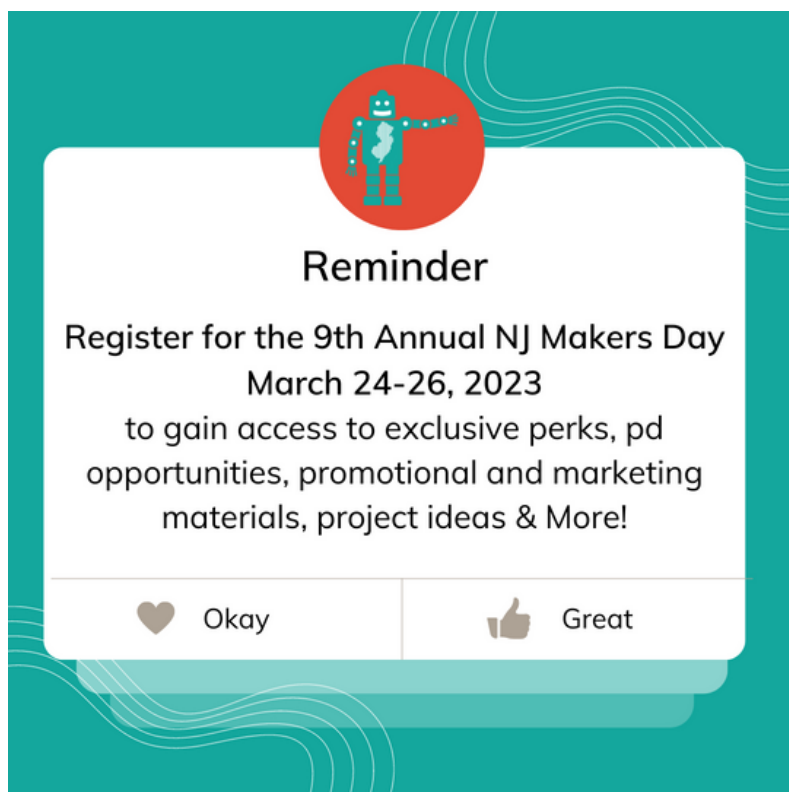**As NJLA works towards creating our new Strategic Plan, it is vital to hear from our members!**

Take part in a Strategic Planning Focus Group! Sign-up for a virtual focus group or see us in-person at the following events.

- New Jersey Academic Libraries Conference, January 6, 2023 at 2 PM
- Zoom Focus Group, January 12, 2023 at 10 AM. Register in advance here.
- Zoom Focus Group, January 31, 2023 at 2 PM. Register in advance here.
- Zoom Focus Group, February 8, 2023 at 3 PM. Register in advance here.
- MentorNJ Mega Meet-up in March 2023

Please note: There is a unique Zoom registration link for each focus group.

NEW JERSEY MAKERS DAY REGISTRATION REMINDER

Reminder

Register for the 9th Annual NJ Makers Day
March 24-26, 2023
to gain access to exclusive perks, pd opportunities, promotional and marketing materials, project ideas & More!

♥ Okay   👍 Great

Has your Library registered for New Jersey Makers Day 2023? Join over 200 libraries, universities, museums, and other organizations in this statewide celebration of making!

Any questions about registration can be sent to Site Support Chair Emily Witkowski at ewitkoswki@njmakersday.org

NJLA Newsletter

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Cindy Czesak

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OTHER NJLA NEWSLETTERS:

Use these links to access the latest newsletters from other NJLA Sections.

Professional Development

College and University

History and Preservation

INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING?

For all inquires please contact

newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org.

Proposals for the Spring 2023 issue are due on FEBRUARY 20TH

INCREASING ACCESS TO LGBTQIA+ COLLECTIONS WITH THE HOMOSAURUS VOCABULARY

by SAL HAMERMAN, SARA HOWARD & KIM MCCAULEY

In February 2019, Princeton University Library (PUL) began to acquire a collection of LGBTQIA+ materials including periodicals, magazines, monographs, and ephemera. In lieu of creating a finding aid, we worked with colleagues in our metadata department to create a hybrid "box collection." These box collections combine MARC cataloging and finding aid practice by creating individual descriptive cataloging for each piece in the collection. The end result is robust discoverability in our catalog.

As we began to describe the materials, it became clear that the Library of Congress Subject Headings presented limitations in accurately describing the unique contents of the collection. We wanted to ensure that the MARC records reflected the robust and dynamic language of the LGBTQIA+ community, accurately described the physical and intellectual contents of the collection, and provided multiple access points for users.

To accomplish this goal, we implemented the Homosaurus Vocabulary, an "international linked data vocabulary of LGBTQ terms that supports improved access to LGBTQ resources within cultural institutions." The Homosaurus Vocabulary uses the current language of the LGBTQIA+ community, and is congruent with best practices for its description. Being an online linked data vocabulary, we felt reassured that we were using common terms, utilized across the world by various other cultural institutions, to accurately describe LGBTQIA+ materials.

HOMOSAURUS
AN INTERNATIONAL LGBTQ+ LINKED DATA VOCABULARY
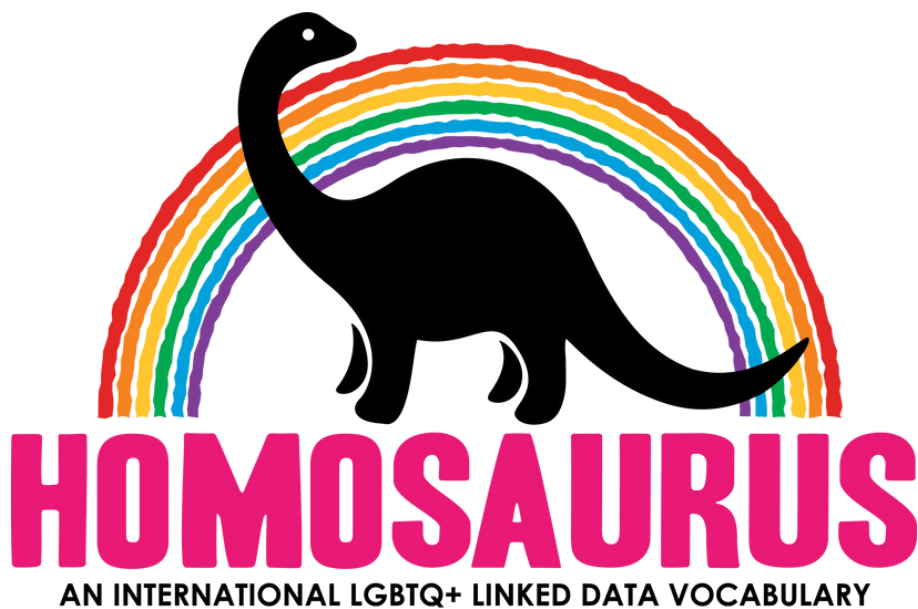
Project staff submitted a request for Library IT Staff to upgrade the catalog to ensure that subject and genre terms coded "$2 homoit" for Homosaurus in MARC records would display in our public-facing catalog. After the upgrade was implemented, the terms displayed with the labels "Homosaurus Subject Term" and "Homosaurus Genre Term," respectively.

Princeton University Library staff presented a poster on this initiative at the 2022 New Jersey Library Association Conference.

Next steps include developing strategies to implement the Homosaurus vocabulary more broadly across the library's catalog and enhance existing records for other LGBTQIA+ collections. Additionally, many of these materials are available via our Digital Princeton University Library (DPUL) site, and all digitized materials will be freely available via the Digital Transgender Archive.

View Resources here:

LGBTQIA+ Periodical and Ephemera Collection Libguide
DPUL Site
Digital Transgender Archive

L to R: Sara A. Howard, Sal Hamerman, Kim McCauley

Sal Hamerman is a Metadata Librarian, Rare Books Specialty at Princeton University Library. Their professional interests include critical and ethical cataloging and the history of artists' publishing.

Sara A. Howard is the Librarian for Gender & Sexuality Studies and Student Engagement at Princeton University Library. Her interests include gender & performance in the workplace and creating access to traditionally & purposefully marginalized voices in academia.

Kimberly McCauley is a Library Collections Specialist at Princeton University Library.

DIGITAL EQUITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

by NEIL GRIMES

In the 21st century, there is a need for digital equity to close the divide that exists in communities across the United States. Libraries and librarians can lead efforts to close this digital divide. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) defines digital equity as "a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy" (Tesfaye & Miller, n.d.). Digital equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services.

For decades, libraries have worked to close the digital divide. From providing access to public computers and Wi-Fi, to technology classes and resources, they have created lifelines for disconnected communities (Fallows, 2021; NTIA, 2021; PLA, 2020; ULC, n.d.). The digital divide continues to disproportionately impact marginalized communities. In recent years the lack of in-home internet was strongly correlated with COVID-19 deaths. A 2021 survey by Pew Research found that among households earning less than $30,000 per year, 43% did not have a home broadband connection, and 41% did not own a computer (Vogels, 2021). For 27% of adults in those households, their only internet access was through a smartphone. Libraries play a key part in American society in building more equitably connected communities.

Digital equity provides a positive image of what a connected community would look like. It challenges librarians to ask the following questions:

- What would it look like if everyone could participate fully in online life?
- What would it mean if every person could choose to pursue their own goals in the way that worked best for them?
- How do we reach the goal of digital equity for our library and in the community as we work to lessen the digital divide?

In an effort to accomplish digital equity, libraries need to work toward digital inclusion by providing the necessary services, programs, and partnerships in their communities. Digital inclusion consists of the following five elements: affordable, robust broadband internet service, internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user, access to digital literacy training, quality technical support, and applications as well as online content designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration. According to Barbakoff (2022), libraries can implement four strategies to bring digital inclusion to their communities. They are: **1) Digital Navigators, 2) Community Networks, 3) Facilitated Access, and 4) Community Organizing and Advocacy.**

Digital Navigators are "trusted guides who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices" (Balboa et al., 2021, p. 4). The **Digital Navigators** model has been adopted by libraries in communities across America. This model involves a librarian meeting with a patron and conducting a reference interview. Through the interview, the librarian, as digital navigator, will learn "about the patron's goal(s) and what types of digital access or skills they might need to accomplish it" (Barbakoff, 2022, p.11).

The librarian then provides information and resources to the patron to meet their specific needs. This model is effective because it addresses broadband access, computer ownership, and digital literacy in the same service. One of the earliest libraries to fully adopt this model was the Salt Lake City Public Library System. This library system, in partnership with the NDIA, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), developed a freely available *Digital Navigators Toolkit* (Balboa et al., 2021).

Community Networks are "cooperatives owned and managed by neighborhood residents, able to provide high-speed internet at low cost in other neglected communities" (Barbakoff, 2022, p.13). The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) released a briefing in 2020 explaining the important and varied roles that libraries play in community networks, including hosting workshops, raising awareness, and sharing infrastructure.

The city of Detroit provided one of the prominent early successes using this model. The **Detroit Community Technology Project (DCTP)** brought together neighborhood coalitions, nonprofits, and faith communities as part of the **Equitable Internet Initiative (EII)**. Detroit residents were trained as digital stewards, able to install access points and maintain the network. This project recognized the need for digital literacy education, so they developed a digital skills curriculum as well.

According to Barbakoff (2022), "most libraries would likely not start a community program on their own," but "they can be invaluable partners in efforts led by others" (p.13). For example, the roof of the library can be an effective location for an antenna or repeater, which makes the library's commitment as low as allowing roof access and a connection to existing electricity or data lines.

In addition, libraries can support the creation and delivery of digital literacy classes for network users. The freely available *Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit* may be helpful to libraries and librarians understanding and improving their broadband and IT infrastructure (Internet2, 2021).

Facilitated Access occurs when the library lowers the "the barrier to entry for complex technologies" (Barbakoff, 2022, p.15). An example of this is offering a hybrid program or class, which patrons could attend in person at the library, or connect virtually with a staff

member managing the technology. The **2020 PLA Public Library Technology Survey** found that approximately half of libraries offered streaming programs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This type of hybrid programming could provide a low-barrier way for libraries to begin offering facilitated access.

Another example of facilitated access in libraries is telehealth (Brooks, 2022; Settles, 2021). A patient may want a virtual appointment with a healthcare provider and may need a single or occasional visit. To engage in a virtual appointment video call, a patient needs a high level of Internet speed, device access, and digital skill. The library can provide that community member (patient) the space and connectivity to facilitate access to the technology needed for telehealth appointments. Telehealth visits at the library can offer benefits beyond simply providing the high-speed internet technology to connect with healthcare professionals.

Those benefits include: access to a semi-private meeting room space, access to public transportation if immediate follow-up care is recommended, and access to library resources to learn about health care and medical topics. Another key element to supporting telehealth for community patrons at your library is partnering with local health organizations to have appropriate practices in place to avoid unnecessary access to private health information, ensure user health and safety, and make appropriate choices about what software and hardware to adopt. The **Pottsboro Library** in Texas created a large telehealth initiative for its community and has shared its success story through a LibGuide.

Community Organizing and **Advocacy** happen when the library is included in community-based efforts for better broadband infrastructure. The library can actively participate in these efforts by "sharing information, offering space, providing project management expertise, making connections between community groups, and more (Barbakoff, 2022, p.17).

A source of likely collaboration is the Digital Equity Act (DEA), a $2.75 billion component of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Frisque, 2021). **Over the course of five years, the DEA will provide grants to states to create and implement digital equity plans. Libraries are good partners in this work.** As individual states create committees and solicit input to develop their plans, librarians can help legislators understand the value that libraries bring to their communities.

BroadbandUSA, an arm of the National Telecommunications and Infrastructure Administration (NTIA), has even created documentation to help states understand why they should include libraries in digital equity planning. Designed to help local organizations supporting digital inclusion, BroadbandUSA's website is helpful in demystifying government policies and funding.

When libraries become an integrated part of DEA planning, they can share knowledge about

the communities they serve and potentially receive significant funding to serve them. Libraries need to be a part of community organizing and advocacy in order to bring digital equity to their communities, especially people from poor and marginalized groups. In the 21st century, libraries and librarians are essential partners for a more equitably connected world.

Libraries and librarians hold the key to bringing digital equity to all members of their communities. They need to collaborate with state and community organizations to help make that happen in the years ahead to create a more equitable future for all.

Neil Grimes is the Education & Curriculum Materials Librarian, William Paterson University. He is Co-Chair of the NJLA Professional Development Committee.

This article originally appeared in the September 2022 NJLA Professional Development Newsletter. **All citations and resources can be found <u>here</u>.**

The Library of Congress Federal Credit Union is a supporter of the NJLA Newsletter.

More information can be found <u>here</u>.

NEW JERSEY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION NJLA

NJLA SECTION SPOTLIGHT: LIBRARY WORKERS OF COLOR SECTION

Library Workers of Color (LWOC) was established in 2019 as a roundtable, and has since become a section. The group meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m., and all NJLA Members are invited to join.

The LWOC has open leadership positions, which are a great opportunity to get more involved! There are two positions open on the executive board: Vice-President, who will be President in 2023-24, and Secretary, who will continue through the end of the current year. If anyone is interested, please email Keisha Miller, President of LWOC at kmiller@sopl.org with "LWOC Vice-President" or "LWOC Secretary" in the subject line. **Keisha M. Miller is the Head of Youth Services at South Orange Public Library. She is the NJLA 2021 Librarian of the year and a Member-at-Large on the NJLA Executive Board.**

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: JOHN WALLACE

John Wallace is the Systems and Emerging Technologies Librarian at Ocean County College and a Visiting Reference Librarian with the R. Barbara Gitenstein Library at The College of New Jersey. He has served as the Chair of the Public Policy Committee, Chair of the Scholarship Subcommittee, Co-Coordinator of the NJLA Internship Program, and currently serves as a Member-at-Large for the Executive Board.

John got his start with NJLA as an intern for the Public Policy Committee. To sit at that table as a graduate student and absorb the knowledge of so many experienced librarians and library directors was an invaluable experience. And in many ways, it was also an education, where the work of Public Policy illuminated the broad and numerous needs of the library community as a whole. It also helped instill the importance of being an advocate, and how the stories of the work we do can be powerful motivators. But perhaps John's most gratifying work with NJLA has been supporting LIS students through service with the Internship Program and the Scholarship Subcommittee. A particular highlight was being part of the team that developed the NJLA Equity Scholarships this past year and now seeing those commitments continue beyond the inaugural class. Be sure to check out the President's Luncheon at the NJLA Conference to see this year's new cohort of NJLA Scholarships awardees including the Equity Scholarship winners.

SAVE THE DATE!
2023 NJLA PUBLIC RELATIONS SPOTLIGHT

Thursday, January 26, 2023
2:00 pm
Virtual Program
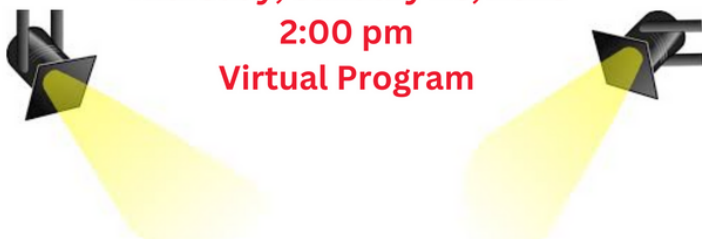
Our 2022 Winners & Presenters

- **Information Literature - MAIN Members Relations Committee**
- **Surprise Us! - Piscataway Library**
- **PR Campaign - Plainsboro Library**

More Information coming soon!

NEW JERSEY
NJLA
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Sponsored by:
NJLA Public Relations Committee &
NJLA Honors & Awards
Subcommittee

Save the Date for the 2023 NJLA Virtual Public Relations Spotlight, **Thursday, January 26, at 2:00 p.m.**! We are looking forward to the presentations from our PR winners: MAIN Member Relations Committee: "Information Literature," Piscataway Library: "Surprise Us!", and Plainsboro Library: "PR Campaign." You won't want to miss it!

NJLA CONFERENCE
## You won't want to miss the Wednesday lineup!

by MARYJEAN RIOU

The NJLA Conference Committee has been working hard to organize another exciting annual conference. The 2023 conference, Sustainably Forward, will take place at Harrah's Resort and Casino in Atlantic City from May 31 – June 2, 2023. This year we are introducing **Wednesday Workshops**, a more hands-on, interactive version of the previous pre-conferences.

On Wednesday evening, after workshops, NJLA is excited to host ALA President-Elect Emily Drabinski (2022-2023). Afterwards, attendees are invited to spend the evening playing a variety of tabletop and role-playing games. Game hosts will be available to teach attendees how to play, answer questions, and offer tips for game play in your library. This will be a great opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, network, and have some fun! The Conference Committee is working hard to provide attendees with a great overall conference experience. We look forward to sharing more news about keynote speakers and conference events in the coming months. If you have any questions about the 2023 conference please visit njlaconference.info.

VOLUNTEERED AS A GSTBA READER?
Tips on getting through your assignments in time for deliberations

by EMILY MAZZONI
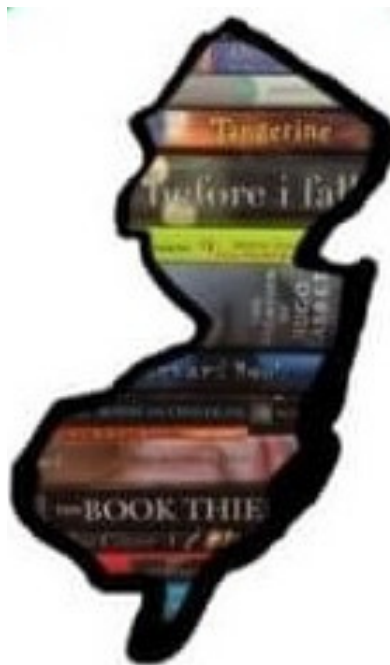
Thank you for volunteering to read for the Garden State Teen Book Awards (GSTBA). I hope you will find the process fun and learn about a lot of books over the next few months. The NJ GSTBA is in its 29th season, thanks to participation from library workers across the state.

So, what should you consider while reading your assigned titles? First, take a look at the reader guidelines found on the NJLA Members Site.

It is a great idea to download and fill out the Reader Feedback Form, even if you plan on attending the debate meetings in person. It will help you to remember the positive and negative aspects of each title you read.

It is important to read your books with the target audience in mind. Even if you don't particularly like a story, would a tween or teen find it appealing? Staying objective and neutral can be difficult—no one wants to read a book they don't enjoy!

That being said, if you really don't think a tween or teen would like it, or if you find it problematic in some way, you don't necessarily have to finish the whole book! As professionals, we often "just know" that a title isn't going to win with our population.

If you are on the fence about voting yes or no for a title, take a look at some data! Has the book circulated frequently at your library? Is there an element of diversity or representation that makes the book a welcome addition to collections? This info can help us with that objectivity.

Try your best to come to the debate meetings in person! It is a fun way to discuss the titles from multiple perspectives, as well as hear about the titles you didn't get assigned to read. Oh, and all those books you already read from the list but weren't assigned? You get to vote on those too!

Not a reader this year? Intrigued? Reach out to YASS Members at Large to get involved! Jenna Ingham jennakingham@gmail.com and Moira Miller MMiller@ebpl.org.

Emily Mazzoni is the Vice President of NJLA YASS. She is the Teen Services Librarian at Monroe Township Public Library in Middlesex County.

FEATURED PARTNER

SUSTAINABLE LIBRARIES INITIATIVE

by REBEKKAH SMITH ALDRICH and MELISSA K.R. HOZIK

The Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) was founded with the goal of "empowering library leaders to advance environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible practices to intentionally address climate change and co-create thriving communities." SLI developed tools, and resources for library leaders in the areas of decision making, resource use, service and program design, and partnerships to align with the tenets of environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic feasibility.

Climate change impacts all of our communities, and libraries have the opportunity to create actionable projects and policies to help minimize its impact for future generations. SLI advocates for libraries to work in partnership with existing organizations that are aligned with these goals—to help end what has been called a, "code red for humanity."

Members of NJLA have a free one-year membership to the SLI and a discounted rate if one decides to pursue certification. Membership includes having access to a custom CO_2 calculator to help estimate their current institutional greenhouse gas emissions so they can measure progress in reducing GhG emissions; a vendor list to source more environmentally-friendly products and services; policy examples; a webinar archive; and the Road Map to Sustainability resource to help with planning. They also receive access to exclusive deals such as free registration to the upcoming four-week eCourse we are partnering with the American Library Association to offer.

The Sustainable Library Certification Program (SLCP) is a proven methodology to help libraries and library workers make operational, service and program design, and financial planning decisions using the triple bottom line approach of sustainability. If you are not able to participate in SLCP, there are ways to help your library and your individual actions as librarians, including, thinking about the necessity of what you purchase, its impact on the environment, ethical creation, and consideration of what will happen and the end of its useful life.

For more information regarding SLI and to get started on you and your library's sustainability actions, visit sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Kate Jaggers will start as the Assistant Director of Public Service at the Hunterdon County Library in January 2023.

Chrissie McGovern is the Branch Manager of the Warren County Library's Southwest Branch.

Stephanie Middleton is Children's Librarian at the Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library in Sewell, NJ.

Keisha Miller has been promoted to the Head of Youth Services at the South Orange Public Library.

Melaina Squicciarini is now a Full Time Youth Services Librarian at the Highland Park Public Library, with a focus on Teen Services.

Emily Witkowski is the Teen Services Supervisor at the Hunterdon County Library starting January 9.

Stephanie Young is the new Adult Services Librarian at the Keyport Public Library.

Have a job change, retirement, or announcement to share?

Email **newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org**
to have it included in our next issue!

PEOPLE AND PLACES
CRANBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY NEW BUILDING OPENING

Library Board President Kirstie Venanzi (left) and Library Director Marilynn Mullen (right) after the ribbon cutting of the new Cranbury Public Library on November 19, 2022.

Marilynn Mullen will be retiring after a long journey to finally getting a free-standing public library for the town of Cranbury. **Brooke Basista** will be the new Director going forward. Come visit the new Cranbury Public Library at **30 Park Place West, Cranbury NJ, 08512!**