

Finding Fresh Starts

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If you're of a certain age like I am, surely you remember one of the most dashing and debonair gents in all of television history: Ricardo Montalbán's Mr. Roarke from *Fantasy Island*. (Just Google "Smiles, everyone! Smiles!" You know you want to.)

Were you looking for a change? Mr. Roarke was your guy. For seven exciting seasons in the late 1970s and early '80s, he welcomed hopeful guests to a tropical paradise where possibilities were endless and fresh starts abounded. It's no wonder the show was crazy popular. Who wouldn't love an adventure like that?

And man, did Mr. Roarke have connections! He could make things happen and get stuff done. Never mind that things didn't always turn out the way his guests expected. Finding fresh starts was Mr. Roarke's specialty, and he always delivered.

So maybe we can't really visit an idyllic getaway and ask Ricardo Montalbán to grant us our library wishes. But that doesn't mean we can't create our own brand of magic in 2016. Instead of making one-time New Year's resolutions to step up our Everyday Advocacy efforts, let's look for ways to make fresh starts throughout the year. After all, we're children's librarians. There's a little Mr. Roarke in all of us.

Fresh Starts throughout the Year

Whether you're a newly minted Everyday Advocate looking to dip your toes or an experienced professional who wants to amp things up, here are five ways to make a fresh Everyday Advocacy start at any point during the year:

1. **Think seasonally.** I'm talking beyond winter, spring, summer, and fall. How about academic year "seasons" like back-to-school, science fair, and standardized testing? These are great times to dust off your elevator speeches (yes, you should have more than one) and let stakeholders know how your public or school library improves outcomes for students.
2. **Capitalize on celebrations.** As you're thinking seasonally, don't forget about annual celebrations like Summer Learning Day, Children's Book Week, and Maker Month. Can you think of better times to plan awesome programs that not only showcase the value your library brings to youth and families but also create opportunities to share talking points with community members? (Nope, I can't either.)



Jenna Nemeć-Loise is Member Content Editor, ALSC Everyday Advocacy Website and Electronic Newsletter. Everyday Advocacy empowers ALSC members to embrace their roles as library advocates by focusing on their daily efforts to serve youth and families. Each lighthearted column features easy-to-implement strategies and techniques for asserting the transformative power of libraries both within communities and beyond them. Contact Jenna Nemeć-Loise at everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com with comments and ideas for future topics.

3. **Aim for moments, not momentous occasions.** No need to wait for National Library Legislative Day or a visit from the mayor to make your case. Everyday Advocacy can happen anytime, anywhere. An informal conversation with a parent in the stacks or a chance meeting with a school board member at the coffee shop can be just as impactful as something you've scheduled. Be ready.
 4. **Focus on starting points.** As you're snapping up those anytime moments, remember that Everyday Advocacy is an ongoing effort. Saying, "Let's talk about next steps" and asking, "Where do we go from here?" are solid strategies that let administrators, policy makers, and other stakeholders know the conversation is just getting started. There's truth in that old adage: You reap what you sow.
 5. **Look toward tomorrow, but embrace today.** It's never too late to get into the Everyday Advocacy groove. Maybe you missed out on an opportunity earlier in the week, month, or year, but the next hour or even the next minute can mean a chance to turn things around. A phone call, an e-mail, or a quick sit-down with a co-worker can make all the difference in your attitude and approach. Do it now.
- **Commit** to completing eight consecutive Take Action Tuesday challenges on a designated theme;
 - **Collaborate** with your EAC cohort over the eight-week period, sharing successes and troubleshooting issues via e-mail and online sharing tools;
 - **Write** a post for the ALSC blog about your EAC experience; and
 - **Nominate** a colleague to participate in the next EAC.

Just fill out the form on the Everyday Advocacy website (<http://ow.ly/RUwIh>), and we'll be in touch with all the details. Trust me—there's no easier or more fun way to make a fresh start this year!

"Welcome to Everyday Advocacy!"

Sure, it'd be great to have Mr. Roarke at our beck and call, making sure everything turns out awesome for us as we take our next steps toward Everyday Advocacy. He may have ruled Fantasy Island with an unsurpassed charm and grace, but it turns out we don't actually need him here in Library Land. We can make our own fresh starts anytime. The choice is ours. We just have to make it.

That won't stop me from channeling Mr. Roarke one last time, though, as I leave you with these (sort of) iconic words:

"My dear Everyday Advocates. I am Jenna Nemece-Loise, your host. Welcome to Everyday Advocacy!" 🐾

The Everyday Advocacy Challenge

Looking for a concrete way to activate your inner Everyday Advocate and motivate your colleagues to do the same? Then volunteer to participate in one of our next Everyday Advocacy Challenge (EAC) cohorts!

We're seeking groups of ten to fifteen participants to take one of the quarterly eight-week challenges we've got planned for 2016. Here's the scoop on what we'll be asking of you: