

# ALSC Member Profiles

Allison Knight



**Allison Knight** is Branch Manager, MidPointe Library System in Ohio.

## Erika Lehtonen, Youth Services Librarian, Timberland Regional Library, Belfair, Washington

**Why did you join ALSC?** I joined when I was awarded the ALSC Equity Fellowship in October 2020. I'm so grateful to learn from and connect with library workers throughout the country. I have always wanted to be more involved, but the cost to join was a barrier. I'm excited to apply for committees and attend open meeting.



**What's your favorite part about working with youth?** Seeing kids grow up. We have the privilege and opportunity to help them learn, grow, and succeed. Even if we only spend a few minutes with them every week, you never know how those moments will affect them for the rest of their lives. It's our duty to ensure that those moments, although fleeting, are meaningful.

**What is your favorite library event or outreach initiative?** I've had so much fun bringing drama programs to the community. They give kids and teens the opportunity to connect with each other in a safe space without having to pay for a class or go to the nearest county to perform in a show.

**What are you most passionate about in children's services?** Lifting children up. I want to inspire kids and teens to be the best versions of themselves. I want to teach them that all of their dreams are achievable, and I want to be their advocate. I want to be the bridge between kids and everything they want to learn and become.

## Tasha Nins, Children's Librarian, Ramsey County (MN) Library

**What's your best ALSC memory?** When I was an ALA Emerging Leader, my team and I worked on researching microaggressions in youth librarianship. It was interesting to do a deep dive into how librarianship has harmed our youngest patrons and how the field can and should make changes.



**What is your favorite part about working with youth?** When it comes to reference, they are much more open to the search for answers than adults. Adults are usually looking for one answer, and kids are excited to learn about all the answers! Kids keep the day interesting. They will ask to play UNO, want to know what the different types of love are, how many farts are in the world, how much a green Lambo costs, and bring me dandelions and beef jerky.

**What are you most passionate about in children's services?**

Giving kids space to try things out! Helping them find the resources and tools they need to do a deep dive into their interests is always a great experience. Unfortunately, the first step is always to try and undo some of the harm that has been perpetrated by library staff without much understanding of or patience for children, particularly Black and brown children.

**Sue Conolly, Elementary Librarian, Chiyoda International School Tokyo, Japan**

**Why did you join ALSC?** [Former ALSC President] Andrew Medlar asked me to consider serving on the Notable Children's Recordings (NCR) Committee, which was the best thing I ever did!

At a time in my life when I felt lost, I was found by my friend and mentor Junko Yokota, who went on to chair the Caldecott Committee in 2015.



**What's your best ALSC memory?** Serving on the NCR Committee; it was the most fun I had in professional development. It was a lot of work to build up my listening muscles to be able to listen to that volume of audiobooks, but it didn't feel like work.

**What is your favorite part about working with youth?** Our school is a troubled little international school in the middle of Tokyo, and as a relatively new librarian, this task seems enormous on my own. But my favorite part of working with youth is connecting them to authors that I met when I lived in America.

Sometimes, small experiences make the most impact. It is all about trying to find the best experiences for your students. This pandemic has been soul destroying for children, but even in these times (and in part enabled by these times) authors are willing to interact creatively with our students, inspiring them to take themselves seriously as readers and writers.

Making these connections and surfing the wave of student engagement is absolutely my favorite part of this job. &