

ALSC Member Profiles

Keary Bramwell



Keary Bramwell is School Librarian at Grace Lutheran School in River Forest, Illinois.

Every year, ALSC offers a mentoring program. Here's a look at some of the latest participants.

Maeve Brewer, Children's Services Manager, Frankfort Community (IN) Public Library

What drew you to ALSC in the first place? I first learned about ALSC when I started working as an early literacy programming assistant. It looked like a great place to find resources and connect with others who work with children.



What is your favorite part about working with youth? There are so many great things, but if I have to pick one, I would say that it is talking to them.

What is your favorite book to read aloud? *Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney.

What is your favorite award-winning title and why? The one that has been stuck in my mind for a while now is *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander. This book is alive with action and emotion. For me, the words seem to move on the page and push you, or pull you, along with them. Alexander tackles tough topics that kids can relate to, and he does it through poetry.

What is your favorite library event, program, or outreach initiative and why? Pre-COVID, our library did an event called Read, Play, Grow that is based on Every Child Ready to Read and S.T.E.A.M. for ages 18 months to 5 years, but older siblings, and younger ones as well, were welcome. It started with storytime, then broke out into stations that were set up in different areas of the meeting room and ended with a group gross motor activity. I love that we were getting families to engage and play together.

What are you most passionate about in Children's Services? Reaching out to our underserved population. If I could have it all, I would create more outreach programs to be able to service the children out in the community. If we can't get them to come to us, then we need to go to them.

Mary R. Voors, ALSC Blog manager; Retired Children's Services Manager, Allen County (IN) Public Library

What drew you to ALSC in the first place? My first supervisor in Children's Services spoke highly of the networking, growth, and



educational opportunities. Because I respected her and her opinion, I joined both ALA and ALSC. This decision absolutely enhanced the trajectory of my career.

What's your best ALSC memory? Receiving a letter early in my career asking me to serve on the Newbery committee. I was so very honored, nervous, overwhelmed, and frightened at the prospect of being part of such an esteemed group of people. (Frankly, my first thought was that maybe I had gotten the letter in error.) I accepted the invitation and began a wild, year-long journey involving reading, thinking about books, more reading, taking notes about books, and – always – figuring out how I could make more time for reading.

Why did you want to be a mentor/mentee? I retired from a long-term position (which I loved!) as the manager of a large Children's Services department in 2020. I felt this opportunity would be a great way to continue to grow and learn, as well as a way to give back some of what I've learned and experienced in my career.

What is your favorite part about working with youth? I appreciate the creativity and desire to learn experientially which is exhibited by kids—particularly the very young. Child-directed learning can open the door for such a wide variety of programming, reader's advisory, and discussion opportunities, especially when librarians can focus more on "process" rather than "product" as they work with kids.

What is your favorite book to read aloud? My hands-down favorite is *Duck! Rabbit!*, written by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld. I love the message that there's always more than one way to look at an issue. The fact that it is perfect as a title to be read by two voices, the humor, and the bold illustrations are other positive attributes.

What is your favorite award-winning title and why? I served on the Newbery committee which selected *New Kid* by Jerry Craft as the winning title. I am so proud of this historic selection not only because it is a distinguished contribution to American literature but also because it was the first graphic novel selected in the history of the Newbery Award, helping to demonstrate to many parents and teachers that reading graphic novels is *really* reading. I love not only the content of *New Kid* but also the fact that it is a book that opens the door to reading for so many kids.

What is your favorite library event, program, or outreach initiative and why? I have always loved coordinating or participating in Mock YMA (Youth Media Award) discussions and elections. They never fail to be awesome opportunities to learn about great new children's books and to discuss them with other children's literature aficionados.

What are you most passionate about in Children's Services?

I am passionate about being a strong advocate for children. Modeling this advocacy makes it easier for others involved in children's work to become advocates for kids themselves.

Krissy Warrenger, Youth Services Librarian, Derby Neck Library (CT)

What drew you to ALSC in the first place? Like most people, I've felt a little adrift these past couple years, and I've been yearning for connections personally and professionally. Joining ALSC and other ALA and local librarian communities has certainly helped with this.



Why did you want to be a mentor/mentee? Shifting from part-time staff to a full-time manager during a pandemic has been so daunting. I was hoping to meet someone with more experience who could help me find my footing and share their wisdom and experience with me.

What is your favorite part about working with youth? The fact that my job is based around connecting youth with media and experiences that enrich their lives. I love the feeling of knowing that I have brought some joy into a young patron's day, whether it's by sharing a great book with them, helping them finally complete that challenging assignment at school, teaching a new favorite fingerplay or song, or beating them silly in a game of Magic: The Gathering. And let's not forget the face every kid makes—no matter how old—when you combine vinegar and baking soda!

What is your favorite book to read aloud? *This Jazz Man* by Karen Ehrhardt and illustrated by R.G. Roth. It's an absolute joy of a book where little ones can be encouraged to count, sing, and clap along. I've even developed a method to incorporate numbers in American Sign Language with it!

What is your favorite library event, program, or outreach initiative and why? We actually just started a new program/outreach initiative at our library using Twitch. My assistant and I play video games, sometimes with patrons, and stream the action live. I love it not just because it's immensely fun, but it also provides so many different ways for patrons to interact and create connections, whether it's by actually participating, engaging with the chat, or just watching. &