

President's Address

Creating Stone Soup Together

AMY KOESTER

As I head into the final months of my term as your 2022–2023 ALSC President, I find myself reflecting on all of the activities that have taken place during my term and all of the gifts fellow members have shared to make them possible. You've got a sampling of those gifts in this and every issue of *Children and Libraries*—articles from colleagues across the ecosystem of library service to children sharing effective practices, exciting ideas, and words of encouragement and support for all of us and the work we do each day. It is never lost on me that ALSC is a member-driven association. Without the talents, time, and commitment of our members, we would have very little to show for ourselves as an association.

One of the responsibilities and privileges of being elected to serve as ALSC President is appointing members to a wide range of committees. That includes the many process committees that do ongoing work around advocacy, continuing education, and organizational support for our division. It also includes our prestigious award and media evaluation committees.

My work with advisory groups to make committee appointments has made it abundantly clear just how many talents, experiences, and opportunities our many members are eager to share for the betterment of our profession. And that's just one of the myriad ways members are involved in ALSC work every day.

There are also members who present at conferences and deliver webinars and online courses; members who mentor newer professionals, be it formally or informally; members who write letters of recommendation and support so that their colleagues may grow through new opportunities; members who share their thoughts for ALSC's strategic planning; and so many more ways members graciously share of themselves.

One of the culminating events of my term will be the annual Charlemae Rollins President's Program, which will be held Monday, June 26, at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. For my program, I asked two dedicated members to coordinate a panel on leadership in librarianship. The goal is a conversation that recognizes and inspires all the ways that every library worker serving youth is a leader. You can read more in an article by panel member Dr. Ling Hwey Jeng elsewhere in this issue. Thank you to planning co-chairs Amy Seto Forrester and Paula Holmes for coordinating this upcoming event and for making this article from a fabulous library leader something we can all experience. Thank you for sharing your gifts.

All of this reflection on what ALSC members share every day, and thinking about the leadership aptitude we all have inside us, has got me thinking about one of my favorite folktales—"Stone Soup." I know that the moral of the story is intended to be that it's possible to make and share something wonderful when everyone contributes just a bit—and that moral definitely applies to many aspects of the work of ALSC! But I also find myself thinking about how in the story, there is no chef dictating a recipe, shaping what the soup will turn out to be. Rather, the soup is a collective product of the contributions of all the townspeople.



Amy Koester, 2022–2023 president of ALSC, is the Learning Experiences Manager at Skokie (IL) Public Library.

I'm really liking that metaphor as I reflect on ALSC work. I may have the privilege of serving as your president through June of this year, but I'm not the chef; rather, we're building this soup together, person by person and ingredient by ingredient, none more or less vital than any other. That's how I see our division's work now and into the future: what we ultimately create and share is a product of what we each contribute as we are able, simply because we have that contribution to share.

Let me extend a very big "thank you" to every ALSC member for the contributions you share. Because of each of you, we do good work in ways that would be so much harder (and likely less meaningful) were we to go it alone. Thank you, thank you, thank you, for adding what you can to our cooking pot. Together, we feast. &



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