Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

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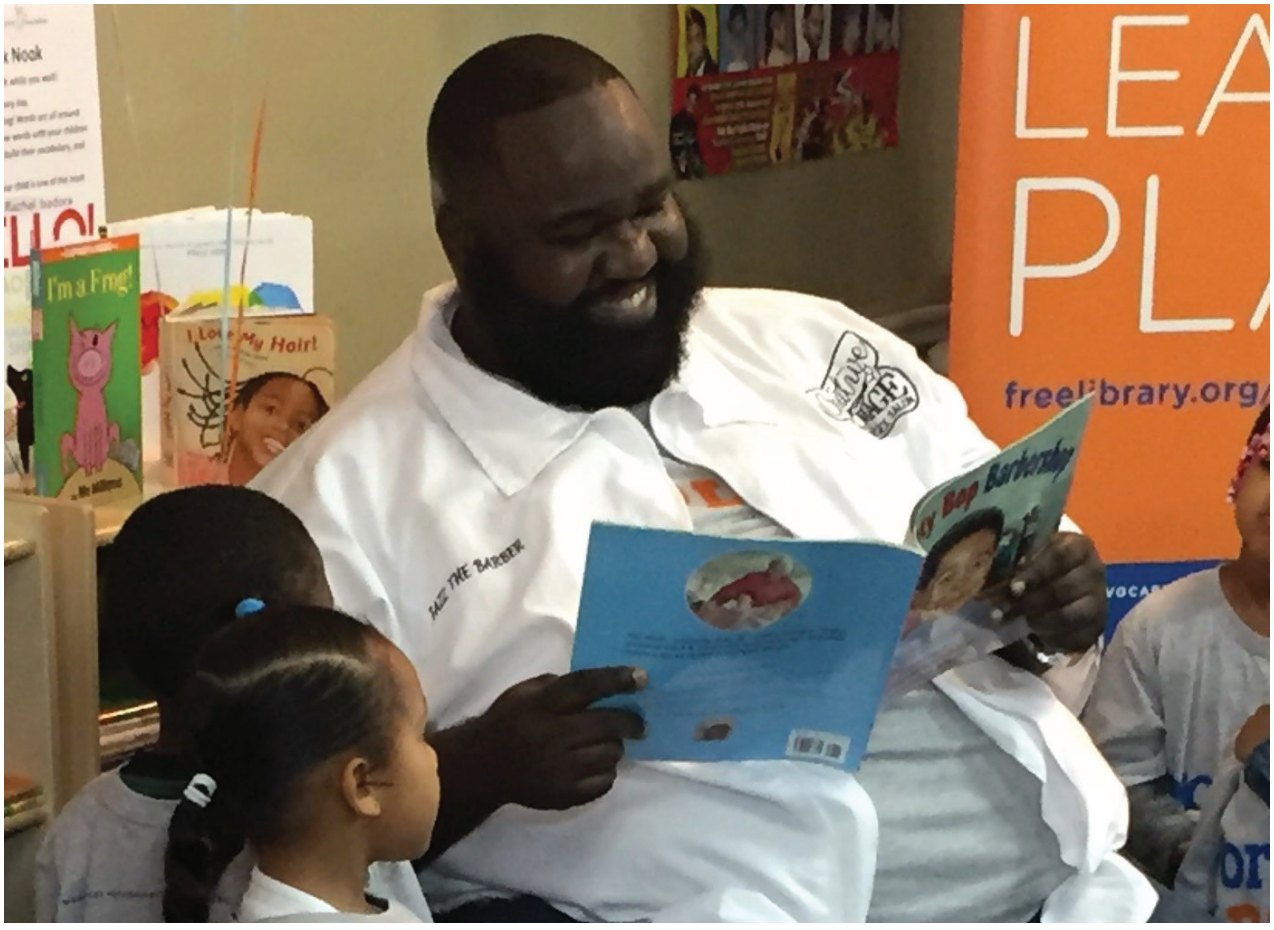

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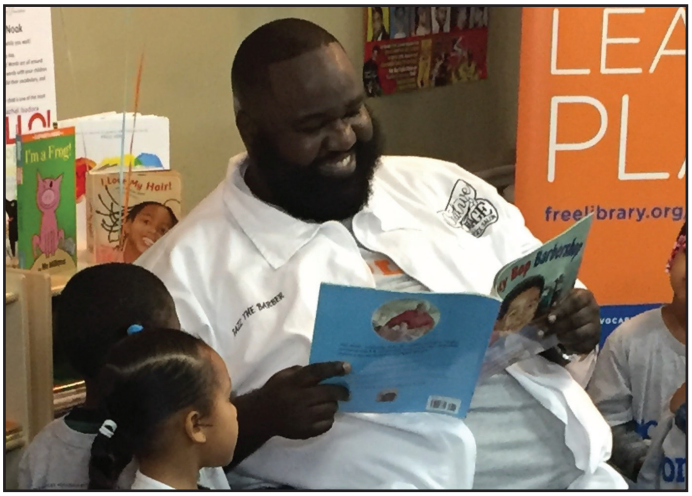

ON THE COVER: North Philadelphia barber Jasmond "Jazz" Schoolfield reads to children at Creative Image Unisex Salon, where he has a book nook as part of the Free Library of Philadelphia's Words at Play Vocabulary Initiative. See related story on pages 38—39. Photo by Curt Hudson.

2016 APEX® AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

Editor's Note

By Sharon Verbeten

In a world full of political uncertainty, when even friends (and not just some Facebook "friends") are spouting their full-charged opinions on social media, I find it comforting to be a librarian. And an a-political one at that.

Oh, I don't mean I don't vote or I don't have an opinion; I do. And I share it when appropriate.

But in the midst of all the upheaval and uncertainty in January, especially after inauguration day, I was happy to have something bigger and better to focus on—the Youth Media Awards! And, of course, as we all know by now, it was certainly a momentous day with John Lewis' *March: Book Three* sweeping the awards, well deservedly so.

And it was uncertainty about weather in the Frozen Tundra of Green Bay, Wisconsin, I call home that grounded me from even getting to the YMAs this year—the first time in fifteen years I've missed it in person. Thick fog and ice cancelled two of my flights, and I was unable to fly out of three of the closest airports. Thankfully, I watched live online and cheered with you all, but there's nothing like being in the room.

A female author wins the Newbery. An African American nabs the Caldecott. And a civil rights icon leads the charge. Of course, ceilings have been shattered before, and we've been making much progress in recognizing diversity (and seeing more of it in award-worthy titles). But, still, it was just a great time to be a librarian—to champion freedom of speech and the expression of diverse views. I don't expect that to change anytime soon, and that makes me even more proud.

See you in Chicago . . . I promise there won't be any fog or ice to keep me home! &

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Children and Libraries is the official journal of ALSC, a division of the American Library Association. The journal primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current scholarly research and practice in library service to children. It also serves as a vehicle for communication to the ALSC membership, spotlighting significant activities and initiatives of the Association. (From the journal's "Policies and Procedures" document adopted by the ALSC board, April 2004, revised, 2014.)

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More than Just Summer Reading

The Shift to "Summer Learning"

CHRISTINE CAPUTO AND CHRISTY ESTROVITZ

Yay summer! At the end of every school year, children are excited to begin their summer vacations. During this time off many students also look forward to a summer enrichment camp, traveling with their families, visiting local museums and historical sites, or many other experiences.

For many others, especially children and teens from low-income communities, their summer vacation is not full of learning opportunities. Research over the last several years indicates that children who do not participate in learning experiences over the summer year after year have an academic achievement gap that grows throughout the elementary and middle school years. This summer learning loss can add up to about two-thirds of the gap in reading achievement by ninth grade.[1]

Libraries are at the center of the communities they serve, from storytimes to afterschool activities to outreach to schools and more. For more than a century, libraries have offered summer reading programs to both encourage children to read for pleasure and to borrow books, as well as to avert the "summer slide" that occurs because of lack of opportunity in some communities.[2] Over the last several years, libraries' summer reading programs have begun to transform into summer learning programs. What's the difference? Why does it matter?

Summer learning is an approach to engaging children by providing active learning experiences that are positive, experiential, educational, but most importantly, fun! Summer learning activities can include reading and literacy activities, so it's really an expansion of what librarians have been doing for decades. Want to share stories and create art projects with children? Summer Learning! Read a book together and host a discussion? Summer Learning! Look at informational books about water and do floating and sinking experiments? Summer Learning!

Many libraries that have transitioned to add more diverse hands-on-learning experiences have found that they are reaching new audiences who may not have been as interested in traditional summer reading programming in the past. Children who struggle with reading may not be comfortable coming to libraries for reading programs, but can feel more welcome in a hands-on activity that has a more experiential approach. Slightly changing or enhancing programming can reach many more families than traditional reading programs (see "Summer Learning in Action @ San Francisco Public Library").

Christine Caputo *is the Youth Services Administrator at the Free Library of Philadelphia and a member of the ALSC Board. She is also the Chair of ALSC's Summer Reading and Learning Task Force.* ***Christy Estrovitz*** *is the Manager of Youth Services for the San Francisco Public Library and Chair of ALSC's Public Awareness Committee.*

In addition, one area that children can struggle with as they are learning to read is comprehension. Some children are very fluid readers and can read aloud very well, but when they are asked a question about what they have read, they are not able to answer. One of the reasons they may struggle is because they may not have experience with the topic to relate to it on a personal level. As children move from learning to read to reading to learn, comprehension becomes even more critical to their education. By providing experiences that can scaffold children's understanding of the words they are reading, libraries are not only providing fun experiences for children and families, but they are helping children build personal experiences and supporting their academic learning and comprehension levels.

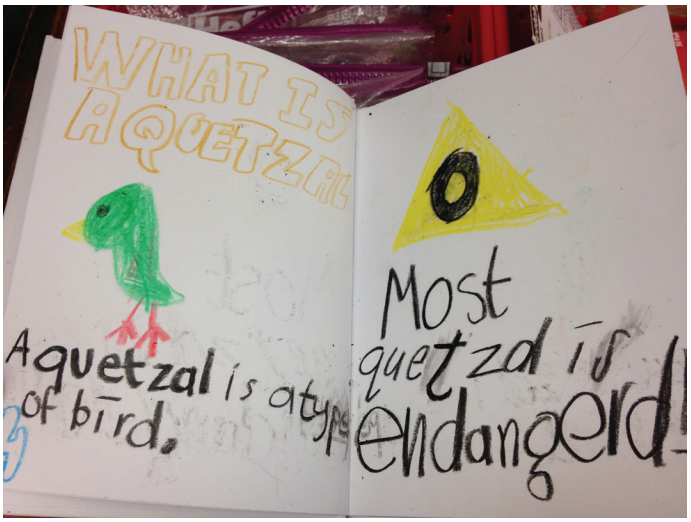
As the online and in-person discussions over the last year or two about summer reading and learning have increased, and librarians across the country have been rethinking what their programming could look like for children, teens, and families, the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) has taken note.

At the 2016 American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting, the ALSC board considered summer reading and learning as an area of significant strategic relevance. The board recognized that summer reading and learning is an area of focus for many members and decided to expand and strengthen the ways in which ALSC supports members in this work.

Last year, ALSC appointed a task force to explore and make recommendations to the board regarding ways in which ALSC can expand and strengthen its support of members in their summer reading and learning work.

During 2016 the task force solicited feedback from ALSC members through an online community forum, a conversation at the ALA Networking Uncommons, blog posts, and general conversations with colleagues to better understand how members would like ALSC to support their work. After hearing the feedback and reviewing existing research, the task force made several recommendations over the course of the year. These recommendations included both short-term and longer-term goals. Short-term goals included working with other ALA units to discuss mutual areas of interest, meeting with other national organizations that are also focusing on summer learning, and requesting an ALA council resolution declaring the role of libraries in summer reading and learning.

Longer-term goals include creating opportunities throughout ALSC's portfolio of existing professional development for members to share and learn best practices, including webinars, conference presentations, and a preconference later in the timeline.



A Jumpstart Camp student-created endangered animal book.

The task force also recommended that ALSC evaluate the possibility of creating an organized service model for summer learning that libraries could use in both summer and school year learning programs, like Every Child Ready to Read does for early literacy programming. The task force is working with the ALSC leadership, ALSC staff, and existing ALSC committees to update and move the recommendations forward.

ALSC is already working on summer initiatives including the annual summer reading lists and the ALSC Baker & Taylor Summer Reading Program Grant. Recently, ALSC received a grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and awarded twelve $5,000 Strengthening Communities through Libraries minigrants to provide children's programming that strengthens community opportunities for STEAM learning during school breaks.

As part of this project, ALSC is also developing additional resources that will be shared widely to support the out-of-school time programming of libraries and other community organizations.

References

1. Karl L. Alexander, Doris R Entwisle, and Linda Steffel Olson, "Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap," *American Sociological Review* (2007): 167–80.
2. David Von Drehle, "The Case Against Summer Vacation," *Time*, July 22, 2010.

Summer Learning in Action @ San Francisco Public Library

Christy Estrovitz

Tracking Tree

San Francisco Public Library is serious about summer learning opportunities and outcomes. Inspired by Urban Libraries Council's Accelerate Summer findings, attendance at the National Summer Learning Association Conference, and participation in ALSC's Summer Learning Task Force, the team dropped the traditional Summer Reading model to make way for Summer Stride, a community engagement focused summer learning program for all ages and abilities.

We simplified the message and requirements and focused on active learning experiences, a vibrant citywide campaign, weekly raffles, and more than nine hundred free programs. Teaming up with award-winning illustrator Christian Robinson, Chronicle Books, and National Park Service (NPS) Centennial, the stars aligned for small changes and big impact. The City of San Francisco, Oakland Public Library, and San Mateo County Library System adopted the library's tagline and graphics to present a unifying and powerful message to our shared communities.

For Summer Stride 2016: Read, Create, Explore, we made strategic shifts to increase engagement at every level. In comparison to the previous year, Summer Stride yielded 27 percent more participants, 68 percent more reading, 33 percent more programs, 80 percent more teen volunteers, 3,760 lunches for youth, 50,720 raffle entries, and best staff engagement in the history of the library.

Here's what worked and will continue in summer 2017 with a bigger focus on closing the achievement gap.

- **Early Start**. The library started before school ended to increase engagement with teacher librarians. We provide each with a set of tri-lingual Summer Stride posters and a Reading Ranger badge (the prize) to help them promote directly to students during the final weeks of school. Teacher librarians raved about the goodies and opportunity to actively champion the program. We also filmed a PSA with the Superintendent of Schools (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsWlAe0mj-E).

- **Free Excursions**. In collaboration with National Park Service, we expanded the program menu to provide free shuttles from the ten libraries to ten national local parks. Summer Stride launched during NPS's Junior Ranger Jamboree. Our partners provided extra shuttles to ensure every person, stroller, and wheelchair had a safe journey. To learn more, read Cristina Mitra's blog post for ALSC at http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2016/06/summer-learning-national-parks/.

- **Data Tracker**. We provided a Tracking Tree summer learning activity log to every Pre-K to fifth grader at San Francisco Unified School District, our local public school system. With a unique number on each Tracking Tree, we knew what gameboards went to which school and how many returned to the library. This was a new data point we wanted to track to inform our outreach in the following year.

- **Staff Reward**. In addition to embedding "why summer matters" into the staff training, we created a staff incentive program. Every library that exceeded the previous year's registration by 10 percent received a gift card to Safeway grocery store for a party of their choosing. Our internal data team posted the stats weekly. It's no surprise several branches surpassed their goal by 100 percent.

- **Simple Survey Monkey**. We needed clean data and an easy entry portal. Staff and teen volunteers used Survey Monkey to input registration and finishing information. We included a quick survey to capture even more data. We learned 59 percent were first-time participants, 90 percent read more, 84 percent visited a local park, 84 percent learned something new, 54 percent attended a program, and 98 percent plan to return to the library after summer learning.

Summer Learning in Action @ Free Library of Philadelphia

Christine Caputo

The Free Library of Philadelphia continued its mission to advance literacy, guide learning, and inspire curiosity during its 2016 Summer of Wonder program. The goal of Summer of Wonder is three-fold: to support and enhance twenty-first-century literacy skills for all ages with hands-on learning activities and opportunities; to foster a love of reading and learning in all Philadelphians; and to help combat summer learning loss, a real concern for children and teens in many of the most challenged communities in Philadelphia.

Summer of Wonder took place for eight weeks at neighborhood libraries. Promotional and programmatic materials featured the artwork of illustrator Lauren Castillo, whose whimsical urban illustration set the stage with a city theme. The early childhood portion of the Summer of Wonder emphasized the five Every Child Ready to Read skills and offered opportunities for interactive programs and workshops at every neighborhood library. The school-age portion encouraged participants to create comic strips, write a letter to a favorite author or book character, and engage in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) activities. Libraries also hosted LEGO Clubs, dance classes, story times, music and film workshops, and Spy Clubs. Summer of Wonder 2016 reached more than thirty-six thousand children, teens, and adults.

The activity bags, Wonder Kits, were packed with enriching activities with themes related to city in the summer. Each library received eight kits for the summer, which gave library staff an opportunity to provide a rich tapestry of programming, both in libraries and in community organizations and summer camps. Themes included Philadelphia, nature, mail, art, bridges, transportation, buildings, and mapping.

Summer of Wonder partnered with organizations to bring art, science, social sciences, and literacy to libraries throughout the city. The Philadelphia Museum of Art and Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership brought art programs to fifteen neighborhood libraries. The Franklin Institute Science Center brought Science in the Summer, a free science-education program for school-age children, to twenty-six neighborhood libraries. The program

Summer LEGO club.

is sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline (now just known as GSK) and hosted in communities around the country.

As part of the city's Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Read by 4th, The Free Library of Philadelphia provided professional development, read aloud books with handouts of active learning experiences for kindergarteners through third graders, and books for independent reading to more than one hundred summer camps to better support summer learning for children across the city. In addition the Library hosted a Jumpstart Back to School camp at the end of August to provide more learning opportunities for children whose camp experience ended before school started in September.

In working to expand the reach of summer learning, a new online platform was used to engage children and families in earning badges for completing online learning tracks that supported explorations at home and in the community. Summer teen employees also supported rich experiences in neighborhood libraries through near peer mentoring of younger students and exploration of creative activities, working to discover new ideas together.

For more information on the Words at Play Vocabulary Initiative at the Free Library of Philadelphia, visit https://libwww.freelibrary.org/programs/words-at-play/.

PEER-REVIEWED

A Hook and a Book

Rewards as Motivators in Public Library Summer Reading Programs

RUTH V. SMALL, MARILYN P. ARNONE, AND ERIN BENNETT

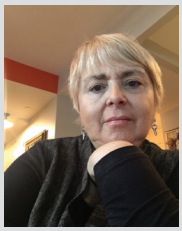
Summer reading programs (SRPs) in public libraries have been a stalwart of programming for youth for more than a century.[1] These programs are intended to encourage students to continue reading throughout the summer, practice communication skills, and develop a lifelong voluntary reading habit—a love of reading—in the context of a safe and friendly learning environment.[2]

Research by Bogel, Matthews, and at Dominican University indicates these programs not only contribute to boosting students' reading skills but also help moderate the summer reading setback (a major part of summer learning loss) that often occurs, particularly in students living in poverty.[3]

Summers offer students myriad ways to spend their time, from day and residential camps to local community and organizational recreational and cultural programs and from school-based learning activities to public library reading programs. To compound this problem for public libraries, they find themselves in competition with commercial enterprises, including bookstores, restaurants (e.g., McDonald's), and even banks (e.g., TD Bank) that offer attractive incentives to "hook" young readers during the summer.[4]

As a result, in recent years some public librarians have formed the belief that to compete, they must offer students a variety of incentives just to attract their attention and motivate them to register for library-sponsored summer reading programs. To measure participant success, libraries often frame that success quantitatively; i.e., the number of books or pages that summer reading program participants read, the amount of time students spend reading, and sometimes they might even give students some type of reading assessment (both before and after participation) as evidence of vocabulary and comprehension gains. This gives a picture of quantity but does little to highlight the quality outcomes of such programs (reading motivation, enjoyment, and satisfaction), related to impact on their young constituents.

In addition, public libraries may provide students with a system of rewards, first as a recruitment vehicle to attract students to their summer programs and then extending those rewards throughout their participation. For example, a San Francisco Public Library advertisement stated, "Everyone who reads at least forty hours gets one entry to the 'super raffle,' where the prizes include an iPad 2s, Kindles, and $100 Sports Basement gift certificates."[5]



Ruth V. Small *is the Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professor and Founding Director;* ***Marilyn P. Arnone*** *is Professor of Practice, Associate Research Professor and Co-Director, both at Syracuse University in New York; and* ***Erin Bennett*** *is Information Services Librarian, Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, New York.* *This research was funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.*

All around them, children today have become accustomed to and even have come to expect rewards for anything they do (e.g., parents paying them for reading books, schools implementing reading programs like Accelerated Reader [AR] that provide a range of prizes for achieving set reading goals). These incentives and extrinsic rewards have become commonplace in almost every context of children's lives, including libraries.

This article takes a closer look at the types of library summer reading program (SRP) incentives and rewards offered by two urban public library system summer reading programs in New York and Ohio during summer 2013 and describes their impact on participants' reading motivation and behaviors. We interviewed young participants in the program, their parents and also surveyed public librarians from across the country to gather a broader perspective on reading incentives and rewards and SRPs in general. Finally, we use the results of our findings to provide some recommendations for when and how to motivate participants' engagement in summer reading programs with and without rewards.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the enthusiasm to engage in a task for its own sake out of interest or enjoyment; it is the basis of authentic human motivation. Intrinsic motivations are more individual, longer lasting, and more meaningful because they are personal to each individual. The rewards of intrinsic motivation are typically personal feelings of accomplishment or satisfaction at the completion of a task (e.g., reading a challenging book or the complete works of an author). It energizes and sustains behavior resulting from the satisfaction felt as a consequence of accomplishing a task and attaining one's personal internal goals or expectations.[6]

Intrinsic motivation contributes to the development of lifelong learning. Producing students who are motivated by their own sense of pride in their learning accomplishments and achievements, rather than by some external reward, is one of the overall goals of education.[7]

Decades of research on intrinsic motivation, notably by Deci and Ryan at the University of Rochester, has identified three major requisites to creating learning environments in which students are intrinsically motivated—autonomy support, perceived competence, and relatedness. When autonomy support is provided by a learning environment, learners are given choices and independence to explore and discover, based on their needs, interests, and curiosity. Perceived competence is developed in an environment in which there is the opportunity for learners to successfully build the skills needed to participate in such programs and activities. Relatedness refers to a learning environment in which learners can interact with others who positively reinforce and impact their attitudes and behaviors for learning or performing a task or activity.[8]

On the other hand, extrinsically motivated learning environments are those that are formed by external consequences,[9] typically some type of tangible reward system or prize, such as candy or money or even a grade. These reward systems focus the learner's attention on a product that results from specific learning performance and accomplishments, often disregarding effort or progress toward accomplishing their learning goals. As a result, the goal becomes the prize, rather than the learning, and when the prize is withdrawn, the learner becomes de-motivated and may not even participate.

Rewards and Incentives for Reading

B. F. Skinner's and other behaviorists' research on reinforcement found that when a reward follows a behavior (e.g., ring the bell, get the treat), that behavior is likely to be repeated.[10] If reading were simply a mechanical, repetitious skill, then this behaviorist approach might have some positive, long-term outcomes. But reading and other learning tasks are much more than that; reading is a personal activity that should result in aesthetic pleasure, knowledge gain, or both.[11]

Furthermore, giving extrinsic rewards for reading sends the learner a message that the task or behavior is not, in and of itself, interesting and valuable; rather it says that the task must be in some way unpleasant or disagreeable, since a reward is required to make them do it, and also that reading becomes the means to an end (the reward) rather than its own reward.[12]

Most of the research on the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation has demonstrated the following:

- Extrinsic rewards intended to control behavior are ineffective and can undermine students' self-esteem and motivation.[13]
- When there is little intrinsic motivation to begin with (e.g., the task is boring or repetitive), using extrinsic rewards can be effective initially for helping a student internalize and identify with the value of such tasks.[14]
- Extrinsic rewards have a short shelf life and should be used thoughtfully and judiciously.[15]
- Some activities provide their own inherent reward, so motivation for these activities is not dependent on external rewards.[16]
- If rewards are used, they must be ones that students find interesting and relevant to the task or else the desired behavior will never occur, or falter quickly, when the behavior is achieved.[17]
- Children who receive rewards for reading subsequently have less interest in reading, unless the reward is a book.[18]
- Quality-dependent extrinsic rewards could increase rather

than decrease feelings of competence and thus be less likely to suppress intrinsic interest, thereby reinforcing the positive behavior of the intrinsically motivated student.[19]

- If a person is already intrinsically motivated, once the rewards are removed their intrinsic motivation is actually likely to decrease.[20]
- Unexpected rewards can be highly motivating.[21]
- Expected rewards can reduce motivation when the person is already intrinsically motivated for the task.[22]

Research by Cho and Krashen found several factors that influence the development of a long-term reading pleasure habit for second-language learners, including identified access to books, having a time and place to read, being able to select what they read, and absence of external incentives.[23] In a reading context specifically, "a program that turns vacation reading into something one has to do to obtain a reward is hardly likely to produce children who have 'learned to love books.' Quite the contrary."[24]

However, this issue is not truly black or white; that is, we're not always totally intrinsically or totally extrinsically motivated. While many people believe that in a particular situation, one is either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, Ryan and Deci found that people vary in the types and amount of motivation they exhibit and that a person can fall anywhere on a continuum from being truly self-regulated (highly intrinsically motivated) to being totally externally controlled (highly extrinsically motivated).[25] Their research also revealed that, while intrinsic motivation is a very personal trait, it is subject to external influences (e.g., social conditions), which can be either supportive of or destructive to the development of intrinsic motivation.

For example, a student can be highly motivated to read out of curiosity and interest (intrinsic), or because he wants to receive the prize the library is offering (extrinsic), or somewhere in between. If a participant in a summer reading program reads because she understands that reading will likely result in improved reading skills, even when prizes are offered, it may be considered more intrinsically than extrinsically motivated. When a librarian unexpectedly provides a reluctant reader with positive verbal feedback (praise) about his reading competence, although the praise is extrinsic, it is based on authentic competence and quality rather than on simply time spent on the activity or even just showing up for the activity. In this case, "providing feedback" (based on performance) is likely to fall into the more intrinsically motivated "camp."[26]

In this study, we explored how incentives and rewards for participation in public library summer reading programs affect the intrinsic reading motivation of middle school student participants. This exploration was part of a larger study, conducted by researchers at the Center for Digital Literacy at Syracuse University, on public library summer reading program outcomes for youth in two public library systems in the state of Ohio and New York.[27]

That research, among other things, found that program participants believed their reading competence was positively affected by their participation. The current study looks at the affective side of summer reading programs and the impact of incentives and rewards on participant motivation for reading.

Methods

We investigated the effects of extrinsic rewards on young participants (entering sixth through ninth graders) in public library summer reading programs in two library systems in different states. Twenty-two of sixty total participants volunteered to be interviewed, and twenty-four parents of those sixty participants volunteered to participate in a survey using SurveyMonkey, an online survey creation and analysis tool.

To not influence the experience of participants during the programs, researchers waited until the conclusion of the programs in both library systems to conduct the participant interviews and to administer the parent surveys. In addition, to gain a broader perspective on the use of extrinsic rewards on public library summer reading program participants from public librarians nationwide, public librarians were recruited for an online survey made available via the publib@oclc.org professional electronic discussion list. (Because the librarians from the two participating library systems in this study had been privy to the purpose of the study and other information that would bias their responses, they were excluded from participating in the online survey.) A total of 292 public librarians nationwide voluntarily completed this survey.

Results

The results of this research revealed that both library systems' programs participating in the study used incentives to attract students to their programs, and additional extrinsic rewards were used to keep them motivated throughout the program. Of the 126 different types of rewards provided to participants in the two summer reading programs in this study, the data revealed that 105 (83 percent) were unrelated to reading (e.g., baseball tickets, bracelets). It was also discovered that, while most participants received at least one reward, several received none. Rewards reflected a wide variation—pencils, erasers, books, journals, tickets to sporting events, small toys, sweets (e.g. ice cream, candy), cancellation of penalties (e.g., library fees and fines), water bottles, posters, t-shirts, plaque, flashlights, restaurant gift certificates, and trinkets. As the results of this study will demonstrate, the impact of these rewards on participants' enjoyment of and motivation for reading also varied widely.

Participants

Interviews were conducted and recorded via telephone with a volunteer sampling of twenty-two (of sixty) young participants

(grades 6–8) following completion of the summer program and subsequently transcribed for analysis purposes. A content analysis of interview data revealed participants have a wide variety of reading interests, from mysteries to science fiction to fantasy. Most respondents indicated they enjoy reading for pleasure and often read to satisfy their curiosity about a topic. When investigating a topic of interest, a few respondents mentioned going online and searching websites for information and one even mentioned listening to podcasts on an iPod. There wasn't much interest in watching TV for information, except for sports, and in one case, a respondent mentioned watching History Channel documentaries.

When asked whether they would start in the fiction or nonfiction section in the library when researching a topic, most said nonfiction because they like to start out by looking at the facts and real events. Some also showed an interest in reading fictional books about a chosen topic as well, but fiction was not always their first choice.

Participants were asked to describe their library's reward system. Below are some of those responses in order to demonstrate the variation of rewards and typical criteria for success in those reward systems. Some of the responses seem to indicate a continuum for rewards from cumulative rewards directed at reaching one's goals to reading a certain amount (of pages, of minutes) to simply reading.

> You would set yourself a goal, and you read a certain amount of books and then you would log onto the computer, and you would go and find your name and they would look you up and they would tell you how many prizes you had won for the week and, if you reached your goal for the week, you would receive your prize. Then you would put your name on a raffle ticket and put it in a can of your choice in which you wanted to win every week.

> I thought it was reasonable that for every chunk you did you got a small prize, but once you got a big part of it done, you got a bigger prize. So every time you did a little thing you got a little prize and every time you did a big achievement you got a big prize.

> Well actually . . . you just had to read and show that you did read; it didn't matter how much. So as long as you read, you got a prize because there was a prize of the week. Anyone could get that prize.

Participants were then requested to offer their opinions about the impact of the library summer program's reward system on their reading attitudes and behaviors. Responses reflected a range of attitudes about rewards and summer reading programs. For some participants, the focus was on the rewards and the effects on their reading behaviors related more to the amount of reading and attitudes related to an interest in reading, rather than selection or resulting satisfaction.

> I guess I'm reading a little bit more [interested] now because like I said before I got into different choices of things like now I'm kind of interested in old classics, like different things like that. Like classical famous books.

> I think that it worked well because it kind of got me to read more because I wanted to get the prize. . . . I'm pretty sure you didn't have to read that much to get the prizes, but either way I still tried to read before I got prizes.

For others, the rewards seemed to affect how participants felt about themselves, indicating the rewards made them feel like they were accomplishing their goals, as in these examples.

> After getting the reward I felt very proud of myself that I won the prize out of everyone who participated, I also felt that prizes are a great incentive to get children to read and participate in the summer reading program (it certainly got me to join).

One participant simply stated, "The rewards made me feel accomplished."

Although positive toward the rewards in general, one participant expressed concern when the library ran out of rewards (stickers) Some participants thought rewards were a nice add-on to what already was a pleasurable activity and encouraged them to read *more*. For example:

> I thought they [rewards—books, candy, or trinket] were fun. I thought the rewards were definitely an incentive to read. My mom's never really had to push us to read because we all like it, all of my sisters and I. So, but I thought that it was also just a nice incentive to do what I like to do. It definitely helps me to read more when I had an incentive to read that why I would spend twenty thirty minutes a night just going through a book. So that definitely increased how often I read.

> I don't think they ever affected my enjoyment of reading because I mean I really like reading but I think they affected like my motivation maybe I kind of thought I would set like a time I would read for an hour and try to like to finish like maybe 10 chapters or something so it was kind of like it gave me priority and kind of set my schedule almost.

Others expressed mixed or negative feelings about the rewards.

> I thought they [rewards] were ok. I really just love to read; [reading] is the best part for me.

> I received a coupon for a free slice of pizza at the local [pizzeria]. . . . Getting a reward wasn't really that special; I would have read with or without the summer reading program at my library. I thoroughly enjoy reading, so the prizes don't really "entice" me, they are just an extra for reading that I could do without.

> When you get the prize, people are just reading to get the prizes and when you reading just to read, you are reading for a reason.

Finally, participants were asked if they would have participated if the summer reading program had there been *no* rewards. While most participants said they would participate because they already love to read and were avid readers, some also mentioned other factors about the summer reading program that motivated them. Here are some of their responses.

> Definitely, because I sometimes have a hard time judging like what books I might want to read and I sometimes have hard times finding books so that but then with suggestions from kids and people who read books suggested for my age or someone my age, it really helped to limit what books I should read and what books I shouldn't read or would be more interesting to me.

> Yeah I probably would have because I just like to read and I like I just like to track the reading and everything about it . . . the prizes don't even have to be there for me.

But a few students felt differently about participation if rewards were withdrawn. Here are a couple of examples.

> I probably would have [participated] yes, but I probably wouldn't have read as much or done as much stuff.

> No, I would not have [participated], I just would have read, because I read no matter, if I'm being rewarded for it or not. I just read.

In summary, when asked about the impact of extrinsic rewards on their participation in the summer reading program, some participants liked receiving rewards and others found the rewards nice but irrelevant to their motivation to read. Some said they would have participated without the rewards because they love to read, while others indicated they probably wouldn't have participated in the program if there were no rewards but would have read anyway. So, while the rewards were viewed positively, in most cases they seem to have had little or no impact on whether the child read over the summer.

Parents

After both summer reading programs were concluded, parents of the interviewed participants were invited to complete an online survey that included a question about the appropriateness of giving rewards to participants in summer reading programs. Two-thirds of the twenty-four parents of participants who were surveyed thought giving rewards was *always* appropriate (sixteen) or *usually* appropriate (four), while three considered it *somewhat* appropriate, and one believed it was *not at all* appropriate.

Parents were asked their perceptions about the benefits of their child's experience in the summer reading program. All parents felt their children had enjoyed participating in the program and 94 percent (twenty-two) believed their child thought summer reading was important. The importance of choice as a prerequisite for intrinsic motivation was supported by 94 percent (twenty-two) of parents who acknowledged that it was their child's choice to participate and all (100 percent) agreed that their children had the choice of what books they read over the summer. One commented, "Book selection was independent of librarian's influence for the most part." In addition, two-thirds (67 percent; sixteen) felt their child had read more over the summer due to their participation in the program. One stated,

> Summer reading allowed the children to find new authors and areas of the library as one year there was a scavenger hunt type assignment where to complete the task the book had to be from a particular section or genre. It was a great way to discover all of the resources beyond the age appropriate section. Proved to be very helpful in years to come!

Sixty-one percent (fourteen) believed it was *very true* or *usually true* that their child's reading skills had improved as a result of the program. One parent noted, "My [son] had trouble reading until he started reading Star Wars books," while fifteen (63 percent) thought their children felt *more confident* about their reading ability as a result of participating in the summer reading program. One parent described in a somewhat humorous manner how her son's summer reading experience made a difference in his attitudes toward reading:

> My middle child is a very reluctant reader. . . . In encouraging (or forcing) him to read, he has come across some books that he has enjoyed. Much to his surprise he discovered that not all books were horrible. He is still not an enthusiastic reader, but he will admit that not all books are terrible and will voluntarily read, and re-read certain authors and series. He may never be a book enthusiast like the rest of us, but as long as he continues to improve his reading skills and is able to find something he enjoys sometimes, I'll consider it a win.

When asked about rewards and incentives offered through the program, some parents acknowledged that their children *enjoyed* receiving the rewards. One stated, "My seven year old boy . . . enjoys the prize chest to pick from after reading ten books" while another said, "My youngest son is not a strong reader and he loves getting free books to take home and read."

Fifty-four percent believed their child read more *because of* the rewards and the same percentage indicated that their child would have read the same amount *despite* the rewards and incentives. When asked if they thought the types of rewards offered to their children for summer reading were appropriate, 84 percent (twenty) agreed that they were *always* or *usually* appropriate.

Finally, parents were given the opportunity to share any stories or anecdotes that help illustrate any difference the summer reading program made in their child's reading behaviors and attitudes. The following comments describe the impact of summer reading programs on their children:

> Even after ten years plus of participation my son still looks forward to joining the summer reading program. It is an official part of the summer ritual! The trinkets become part of the fun, chilling out aspects of the summer days! It becomes reading for enjoyment, not as dictated by school! Eager anticipation for my son which fosters his enjoyment and appreciation of the library and its place in the wider community it serves.

And one parent simply stated, "The program has kept (my children's) love of reading alive."

Librarians

Three hundred sixteen public librarians who directed summer reading programs volunteered to take the online survey; of those, twenty-four were deemed unusable (e.g., incomplete, resided out of United States) and were eliminated from the analysis. Thus, 292 of those online surveys were analyzed for this study. Participating librarians serve in urban, suburban, and rural libraries across the country, representing a wide variety of library communities and geographic locations by US time zones (see table 1).

Four questions (out of twelve) on the online survey sought the perspectives of public librarians on how incentives were used in their summer reading programs.

Q4. How do you/your library attract participants to your summer reading program? (check all that apply) (*n* = 285)

One of the nine choices was "Incentives (e.g., prizes)." Eighty-six percent (244) of librarian respondents acknowledged that their libraries used incentives to attract participants to their summer reading program. One librarian described an end-of-program event was used to entice at least one young participant.

Q7. If your summer reading program provides incentives for participants, what do participants have to do to earn them? Rewards are based on (select all that apply) (*n* = 270)

The most common responses to this question were quantitative in nature. "Amount of time spent reading" (70 percent; 188) and "number of books read" (49 percent; 133) were cited as the most common ways participants could earn rewards during the summer reading program but "participating in activities" was also cited by 36 percent (105) of respondents. Ten percent (twenty-six) responded "Other." Only 1 percent (two) of respondents chose "Not Applicable (No rewards given for participation in our summer reading program).

Table 1. Public Library Survey Participants by Location and Community Type (*N* = 385)

	Pacific States	Mountain States	Central States	Eastern States	Total
Urban	9 (13.24%)	11 (16.18%)	22 (32.35%)	26 (38.24%)	68
Suburban	12 (8.82%)	13 (9.56%)	45 (33.09%)	66 (48.53%)	136
Rural	5 (6.17%)	12 (14.81%)	32 (39.51%)	32 (39.51%)	81

Q8. Below are two examples of rewards that have been offered at summer reading programs. Choose the one you think participants in your program would be most likely to choose. (*n* = 263)

When asked whether their young participants would likely choose a reading-related (e.g., free book) versus a nonreading related (e.g., coupons for ice cream treats) reward, 57 percent (150) indicated that their participants would more likely choose a free book, while 43 percent (113) indicated that coupons for ice cream treats would likely be the preference. One librarian said, "Last year, a mother approached me and told me her son was reading below grade level at the beginning of the summer reading program, but the motivation of prizes and library visits encouraged him to practice his reading much more. By the end of the summer, his reading level ability had increased three grades. She attributed it all to SRP."

Recommendations for Best Practice

The use of incentives and rewards has become commonplace in public library summer reading programs. Consequently, it is important for librarians planning and implementing these programs to understand the potential short-term positive effects and long-term negative effects that these kinds of incentives and extrinsic rewards can produce.

Based on participant data, parent data, and the motivation literature and supported by responses (ninety-seven) to the final, open-ended question of a survey for public librarians nationwide (**Q12: Are there any stories or anecdotes that you can share that help illustrate the difference the summer reading program has made in one or more participant's lives?**), this final section provides some recommendations for best practice regarding the use of rewards in public library summer reading programs.

1. **Relevant rewards given to students with low intrinsic motivation can have long-term positive impact.** If rewards are based on quality (e.g., challenging her reading level or selecting a genre he never read before) and are not controlling and the rewards are gradually removed, shifting the emphasis to the individual student's progress and accomplishment, students can begin to move from an extrinsic to more of an intrinsic orientation.[30] While about half of the parents of those participants in summer reading programs in this study said they believed their children read *more* because of the prizes, none said they read *better*' therefore there was a perceived quantitative difference but no evidence of a qualitative difference. While reading *more*

certainly can lead to higher reading skills, there are other factors that may play a role (e.g., the challenge of that reading, how interested the child is in the story or subject of the book). Below is a librarian's comment.

> In 2009, we began offering the choice of a free book to children in preschool through fifth grade after they read twelve hours. I watched a ten-year-old girl go through the prize selection at her branch. She asked the librarian for something else, so the librarian brought out the entire supply box and the girl looked through that box too. Finally, she found the book she wanted. She hugged the book to her chest and bounced on her toes with excitement, and I felt she was truly rewarded!

2. **Provide choices.** Give participants opportunities to choose books to read that are relevant to their interests and to set personal reading goals.[29] Both of these factors were mentioned by program participants, as well as the fact that the summer reading programs helped them discover new authors and genres. A librarian said, "More than one child has said, 'You mean I don't have to take a test? I can read anything I want?' The schools here use AR (Accelerate Reader, a commercial school reading incentive program), and judging by these comments, summer reading is probably one of the few times where the kids feel free to follow their own interests."

3. **Build variety into a program that meets the reading and information needs of participants.** Variety captures attention and fosters engagement in an activity.[30] The young participants mentioned how much they were engaged by the game-like style of their summer reading program. Creating summer reading programs that include activities that capitalize on current trends and popular interests, rather than relying on rewards to engage them, can have a stronger impact on intrinsic motivation.

> I have many kids that tell me that they "don't like" reading and thus would not participate, but then their eyes light up when I tell them that's it's more than just reading. We have a LEGO design contest each summer, and we give awards out for the most creative. Usually I put out a display of LEGO books at the same time and they fly off the shelves with these same kids that "don't like" reading. I think it's something important to remember when we think about "reading." Most kids don't differentiate between reading for fun and reading for school.

4. **Design programs that stimulate students' curiosity and interest.** Fostering students' curiosity in ways that trigger situational interest can lead to deeper-level, well-developed individual interest that doesn't require rewards for participation.[31] An initial activity that sparks students' interest and involvement can be used to motivate continued interest and participation. Some parents mentioned that librarians had introduced their children to books that they were interested in reading and this increased their reading behaviors. One librarian cited an activity that exemplifies such a program.

> We had a night creature expert from a local camp provide our opening SRP, which was very well received with parents and children. Many found books to read on the subject, and the children are still coming in the library in December and looking for books on nonfiction subjects to satisfy their curiosity. Usually some of the children are reluctant readers, and it would be hard to find a book they want to read, but now they will ask or go searching for their book of interest on their own. Improved library skills and reading skills.

5. **Create connections between public libraries and schools to motivate participation in summer reading and other public library programs.** This requires open channels of communication that facilitate interactions and the forming of common goals.[34] Coordinating and collaborating between school and public librarians can create links between what students experience in school and the activities available during a summer reading program at the public library, making those activities and rewards (if any) highly relevant and motivating. In the example below, the librarians describes how the unexpected recognition this young girl received for her participation in her public library's summer reading program helped her feel good about her accomplishments.

> A fifth-grade girl, who said she was not interested in reading any books over the summer, came because of the activities for her age group that she heard about during a classroom visit. She was challenged to read just three books over the summer so that she could come to the final celebration. She didn't want to read but wanted to attend the program. She loved the first book of the recommended series and ended up reading the rest of the series. She was honored as one of (the library's) Super Readers, and all of her family congratulated her after her mother posted her award picture on Facebook. She was very proud of herself.

6. **If rewards must be given, provide rewards related to reading.** As demonstrated in much of the participant data above, when rewards are not related to the task, students do not connect the two and therefore the rewards have little to no long-term impact on reading attitudes and behaviors. They also can have a negative impact on students' intrinsic motivation for reading. Some examples of relevant rewards used in summer reading programs (cited in survey responses by public librarians) include books, bookmarks, small toys or trinkets directly related to what the participant is reading (e.g., a small toy dinosaur when the child chooses to read books about dinosaurs), a public library card, a certificate of achievement from the library, a trip to see a play based on a book everyone has read.[33]

Final Thoughts

Our society is replete with rewards and incentives for just about everything. In sports, we have medals and trophies. In the workplace, we have bonuses and prizes. In schools, we have reading incentive programs that control what children read and only provide prizes to those who can demonstrate they read within their category, rather than be the most creative and passionate readers. Libraries and librarians not only have an opportunity to support young readers' skill-building but also they can become reading advocates and role models to foster students' creativity and lifelong reading habits.We refer to this as becoming "creative readers."[34]

This study looked at the impact of giving extrinsic rewards to potential young participants to get them to participate. Results indicate a mix of opinions from participants, their parents, and surveyed librarians regarding the use of prizes and other incentives to read. However, in this study, because there was no follow-up, more quantitative data collection effort after the summer reading program had ended to determine the positive or negative impact of rewards on participants' reading behaviors and attitudes, we are unable to form any scalable, generalizable conclusions.

It is clear, however, through their summer reading programs, public librarians can stimulate young participants' curiosity and capture their imaginations through exciting and engaging programming that introduces them to new ideas and perspectives through the wonderful world of children's and young adult literature. Perhaps librarians involved in these activities could create a survey just for potential and former participants in summer programs to help them better tailor their program's activities to their needs and preferences. This strategy allows potential future new and repeat participants to have a say in what their program might be like, attracting them to participate. They also might include, on any national-level survey for participants who complete a public library summer reading program, questions about the impact of the incentives and rewards on students' reading attitudes and behaviors.

If rewards are considered necessary to *entice reluctant readers to the program*, librarians might have a raffle and make the prize relevant to reading, such as a set books of the author or genre of their choice or an e-reader (e.g., an Amazon Kindle). Furthermore, to *maintain participation in the program*, rather than spend money, time and effort on offering prizes and rewards that have little or no link to the joy of reading, librarians might think about other types of rewards that are more relevant to the activity, such as a book signing party with a local author or illustrator, mystery events where students must follow clues to discover a newly published book, author or series, brief videos with some of their parents who talk about their favorite book as a child, or a culminating (and relevant) event that sounds so exciting, no one will want to miss it.

We recommend expanded research on the use of rewards in summer reading programs, collecting data that can lead to more generalizable conclusions that will continue to inform and advise those who work so hard to provide exciting summer reading programs to our nation's youth. Working together, summer reading program participants, their parents, and their librarians can design summer reading programs that focus on helping youth not only read *more* but read *better*, and become passionate, creative readers who begin/continue to experience the joy of reading and cultivate a lifelong reading habit.

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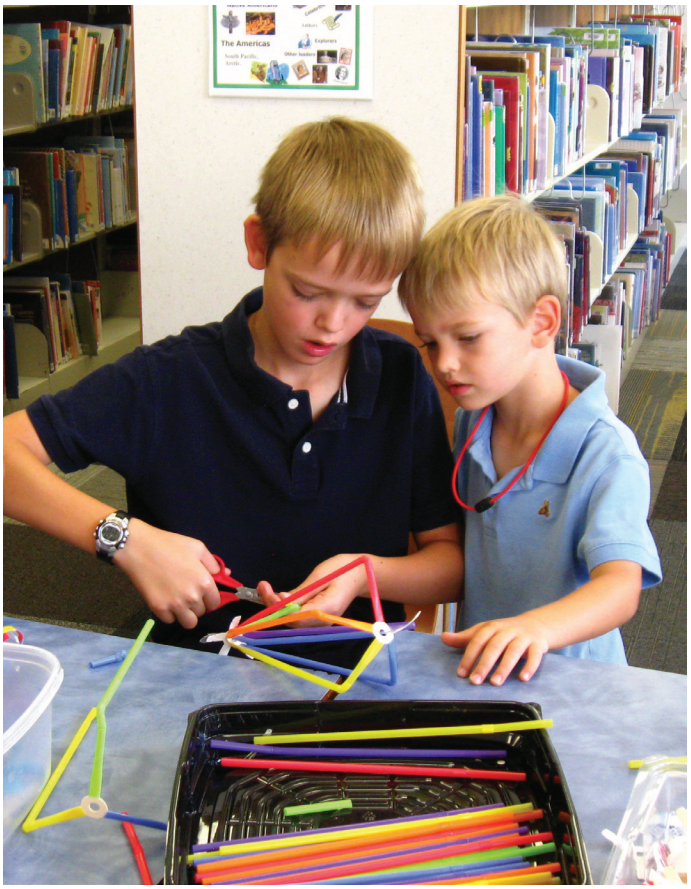

On entering our children's programming room on a Thursday afternoon, you'd be surprised at what you see: a room filled with parents and children embracing the maker movement.

Envision one group dismantling electronics on a tarp in the corner, while others add baking soda to colored vinegar and watch the colors explode. Others are planting seeds in egghead planters. Still more are testing their paper airplane catapults to see how far they can fly and if they can hit a target. Another group is working on string art and experimenting on making different designs. The last group is completing a building challenge with large plastic cups and craft sticks.

They're all attending our popular Elementary Make/Tinker Lab, which was designed to embrace the maker space and technology of our twenty-first-century library and also fill a gap in our programming. Our library system of fourteen branches in the Colorado Springs region has plenty of programming for babies through preschoolers and also for tweens. So we chose to aim this program for five- to eight-year-olds.

We run it concurrent with our tween programming to allow families to attend both more easily. Our program began with the same concept as our tween programs—one activity for the entire group. As the first program approached, we realized that one activity could not fill the time or meet the needs of this group of attendees. Their abilities and interests were just too diverse.

The Logistics

We plan six activities for each program and set them up as stations. The children (and often their parents) enter the room as the program starts and sit in the center. They get a brief introduction of each of the day's activities. They are always eager to

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Building with pool noodle "Lincoln Logs."

get started. We currently meet from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of each month during the school year.

To keep costs down, we use many recycled materials. Involving the community and library staff to help collect things also gives people a sense of ownership of the program. It seems we are always collecting toilet paper and paper towel tubes, water bottles and lids, old CDs, plastic containers, and so much more.

Our regular purchases include baking soda, vinegar, balloons, food coloring, craft sticks, and other inexpensive items. Last year, the program operated for less than $20 per program—with up to seventy attendees per session. This year, we're hoping to run it on a significantly lower budget.

The Planning

The Internet is full of great ideas for this program. Pinterest is especially helpful as it allows us to organize ideas by month and topic. Our library's book collection offers more ideas, as do both children's and parenting magazines. Common searches for both Pinterest and library catalogs are "STEM," "science," "tinkering," "science experiments," "outdoor science," "coding," "art," and "spy science." Our department's staff easily collaborate as we each search websites and blogs, many of them specifically aimed at preschoolers and boys. We vary the activities each program among science, arts, and discovery, but almost always include something that flies. Some of our popular activities have included

- marble mazes
- name garlands
- dancing foods (think raisins, candy hearts, and spaghetti suspended in liquids and bobbing up and down)

Playing giant Jenga made using twelve-pack soda boxes.

- baking soda and vinegar experiments (expanding balloons and exploding colors)
- Alka-Seltzer experiments (35mm film canister rockets, chemical lava lamps, and such).

This popular program can easily be adapted in a variety of settings and applications, such as outreach situations, internal field trips, and library tours. Its basics can adjust for older and younger audiences.

We've put together a binder of projects—both ones we've used and those to be considered. Thumbing through it gives us plenty of ideas for tours and outreaches. As an outreach or tour approaches, we can consider the audience, cost, and space available. We can take one simple activity for children to participate in. This worked with the fitness theme of the 2016 Summer Reading Program. Each child in a grade-level group could do the "In a Heartbeat" activity where they insert a toothpick into a mini marshmallow and place it on their wrist pulse point. They can observe their heartbeat with each twitch of the toothpick.

We can also do an easy experiment in front of a group. We can demonstrate the chemical reactions of sugar and yeast to inflate a balloon. Storytime crafts can be transformed into experiments and observations. In addition, many activities can be used with multiple age groups, from toddlers to teenagers.

Creating with Strawbees.

Building with paper tubes and straws.

The Response

Our patrons are very supportive of this program. We have many regular attendees, and word has traveled quickly by word of mouth as well as by postings on our library website and in the community events section of our local newspaper. At the end of one session, a patron said, "I just wanted to say thank-you. It was an awesome experience, and I'm so glad you guys do that here!"

As teachers have learned about the program, we have been invited to do school outreach programs. Some schools have also brought their students to the library for tours and field trips. It's creating a positive image of our library throughout the community and increasing library usage. And the parents are having as much fun as their children!

What We Learned

- **Choose the best space.** We found this activity works best in a contained space when we're at the library—either inside or out. Our children's programming rooms and community rooms are popular locations.
- **Contain and clean.** We try to keep clean-up simple. Tables are covered with plastic tablecloths, and we put out rags to contain and clean up spills. (Baby wipes also work well.) Before the session, we put out recycling tubs and trash cans. When there is no sink in the room, we pour waste water into a recycling container for later disposal.
- **Recruit extra help.** It took time to building up a teen volunteer base for the program. But once volunteers participated, they had as much fun creating as did the kids. Our volunteers have brought additional ideas and variations on each project. We email the Tinker Lab teen volunteers or their parents at the beginning of each month, asking for their help that month and requesting they let us know if they can come. Most of the time, several teen volunteers are available to help at each program.
- **Include the parents.** Parents are not obligated to stay in the program, but many do. While it may be our specific patrons, many of the parents also have as much fun as their children. Since many of our families have children of varying ages, we welcome younger children in the program. Often we set out DUPLO blocks or some other toy to help entertain them. Parents are responsible for corralling their younger children for safety.
- **Control the end time.** At about 5:10 p.m., we give a five-minute clean-up warning, asking children to finish the project they are working on. We start cleaning up at the less-busy stations to allow others time to finish.

Beyond the Computer Age

A Best Practices Intro for Implementing Library Coding Programs

STEPHANIE C. PRATO

At the Fayetteville Free Library (FFL), we are working to develop a comprehensive plan for supporting computer science education and coding for every age through the public library's informal learning platform.

We introduce young children to programming logic, we teach elementary and middle school children coding languages, and we support adults in skill building and career shifts. In January 2016, President Obama announced the "Computer Science for All" initiative, which identified STEAM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning and computer science as national priorities for all age groups.

Libraries hold a unique position in our communities as informal learning platforms, and so we are perfectly positioned to bring our communities together around these topics. This is our moment to play a critical role in providing year-round, all-age access to STEAM-focused, participatory learning opportunities with substantial learning outcomes.

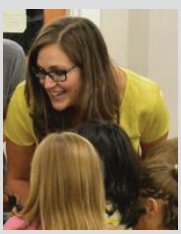
We offer many different types of coding programs for kindergarten through fifth grade. We usually think about our coding programs in three main categories. First, there are introductory coding programs that hook kids and get them interested in computer science by teaching programming logic. These sessions often utilize software and tools that enable kids to start coding right away, without learning a specific programming language's syntax. These are sometimes called "visual programming languages" and feature intuitive software with drag and drop commands that get kids off to a fast and fun start.

This type of introductory coding is ideal for stand-alone programs because participants can accomplish a lot in a single session, even if you only have half an hour together. Second, we offer coding classes that teach specific syntactic programming languages like HTML and Python.

They are a little more challenging, because kids learn a specific syntax of symbols and rules as they write lines of code, as opposed to dragging and dropping preprogrammed blocks of code like "move forward" or "turn 90 degrees." These classes are often a series, spread over four to eight weeks with each week building on the previous one. The last style of program is a meetup style event or self-guided environment that focuses more on bringing kids together, but allows them to practice peer-to-peer learning or work on their own projects at their own pace.

Coding with Robots

When we welcome a group of kids to a coding class, we often start by asking them for a definition of computer programming. We get lots of great answers, but the simplest one is that we are



Stephanie C. Prato *is the Director of Play to Learn Services at the Fayetteville (NY) Free Library. With experience in youth services, community outreach, leadership, instruction, and technology, she has developed innovative programs for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children. She is a member of ALSC's Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee.*

A second grade class visited the FFL for a field trip and they learned to program the library's Dash robots. Each group wrote a story and then programmed Dash to act it out, combining English/Language Arts and STEM skills.

writing a set of instructions to perform a task. Robots are a great visual expression of this idea and make for a very interactive coding experience. In fact, these tools are so easy to learn that every member of our professional staff has facilitated a coding program using one of these bots.

Dash Robots

Sounds like "ay yai yai" and "yippee!" fill the room when we code with the Dash robots. These bots from Wonder Workshop quickly come alive in the hands of our kindergarten through fifth graders. Dash is a robot that can move around, make sounds, light up, and even respond to stimuli in the environment when its sensors detect a sound or an obstruction. The robot, which costs about $150, is controlled via Bluetooth by a free iPad app called Blockly. The app allows kids to drag and drop blocks of code like "Forward 50cm Fast" and "Say Hi."

This tool is great for younger and older kids alike because it has an intuitive interface and it is instantly gratifying to see Dash act out your code. You can also start to introduce some more advanced concepts, like conditionals, in a relatively simple way. We have used a single Dash robot with groups of up to five students, sometimes around prompts like "tell a story with Dash as your main character and have him respond to three things around him." This helps kids to begin thinking about more complex code, like "If Dash Obstacle In Front" then, what should happen?

LEGO Robots

If you do any kind of LEGO Robotics programming at your library, you are already coding! We own both the LEGO Mindstorm and WeDo kits, which we offer kids a hands-on introduction to robotics, engineering, and computer science. Unlike Dash, the LEGO robots come in pieces, and participants have to build their bot before programming it. Most kids already know the LEGO brand, so the building part is familiar, even though the coding might be new. We typically follow a set of instructions to create a certain type of robot, and then work together to program it to do something.

The software features block commands (similar to Dash) that you drag, drop, and string together. Then, the robot plugs into the computer, allowing you to upload and execute your code. These are some of our most popular coding programs with up to twenty-four participants in each session.

We use LEGO WeDo kits with kindergarten through second graders and typically put them in teams of two. The third through fifth graders build the LEGO Mindstorms and work in teams of three or four. Last year, more than one hundred students participated in our LEGO Robotics programs, developing skills around teamwork, creative problem solving, coding, and engineering.

Ozobot

Ozobot is a tiny robot about the size of a ping-pong ball. It doesn't make sounds or have animations, but it is unique in the way it is programmed. Ozobot follows lines on paper, detects colors, and is programmed by drawing. Kids can draw paths for Ozobot, which will change color depending on what color marker you use. It knows four colors—black, red, blue, and green, and different patterns of colors indicate different commands. Ozobot reads short dashes of color and responds accordingly. A dash of red, black, and red, for example, means "slow," while blue, black, blue means "fast." You can also download free apps Ozobot, and OzoGroove to use with this bot, but so far, we've stuck to pen and paper with our kindergarten through fifth graders.

Free Coding Resources

Code.org: https://code.org/

Codecademy: https://www.codecademy.com/

Code School: http://www.codeschool.com/

Free Code Camp: http://www.freecodecamp.com/

W3Schools: http://www.w3schools.com/

CS Unplugged: http://csunplugged.org/

Scratch: https://scratch.mit.edu/

Thimble HTML editor: https://thimble.mozilla.org/en-US/

Coding with Computers

Scratch

Scratch is a mainstay of kids' coding programs, and if you're just getting started, it's a great place to dive in. Developed by MIT specifically for kids, Scratch can be used to write code for interactive stories and games. Scratch is a visual programming language like those mentioned above, so it also uses drag and drop chunks of code. This allows kids to think more about programming logic, and worry less about syntax.

Scratch is a free, web-based program you can access from any computer with an Internet connection. We have used Scratch with kindergarten through fifth graders to make games, write stories, and create animated greeting cards. Basic operations are simple enough, but there is a lot you can do with this tool if you have an older or more experienced group.

Syntactic Programming Languages

We currently teach three syntactic programming languages: HTML, Python, and Java. Teaching these languages requires a bit more knowledge on the part of the instructor, and they provide a great opportunity to engage community participants and volunteers. In fact, all three of these programs are supported by community experts who volunteer their time to support coding at the library. HTML is used in web development, and we have spent between four and twelve weeks teaching kids to build their own websites. Python is a multi-use programming language that allows you to automate all kinds of things. It's a popular beginner language because it emphasizes readability and simplicity, but it is powerful enough to be used for large scale programs.

Lastly, we teach is Java, the language used in Minecraft development, and we work specifically to develop Minecraft mods or code that allows you to alter the game. All of these languages are powerful and can be very complex, so we usually stick to the basics and some very specific goals. We try to help kids (and their parents) understand that, just like learning a foreign language, it takes hundreds of hours to become fluent. These syntactic languages are more challenging, so we target these programs for third grade and up.

Geek Girl fourth-grade girls learn to build their own websites in HTML using Thimble (https://thimble.mozilla.org/).

Unplugged Coding

Offline coding can be a great alternative if you are looking for a low cost, low risk way to get started. There are numerous offline activities that you can do with simple tools (like a pen and paper or plastic cups) that teach the same principles. These activities are less flashy, but can be just as fun, as long as your participants understand it's a tech free program, before you begin.

This summer alone, more than two hundred families participated in coding programs at FFL. These opportunities are in high demand, and we frequently have to open up new sections to accommodate our waiting lists. This response isn't surprising if you consider "nine in ten parents want their children to study computer science, but only one in four schools teach computer programming." Now is the time for librarians to step forward and help to meet this growing need in our communities. &

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PEER-REVIEWED

A Sound History

Audiobooks Are Music to Children's Ears

MARIA CAHILL AND JENNIFER MOORE

Mr. Gutenberg came along and suddenly we had the book. But long before that, we had the oral traditions, we had storytellers sitting down and weaving a plot and presenting characters," so says adult author Michael Lamb in a National Public Radio interview.[1]

Indeed, the power of a good story is hard to deny, and the unprecedented growth of audiobooks in recent years, with marked increases among children and young adult titles suggests that this oral tradition is still very much valued by children and adults alike.[2] Given the continued interest in this form of information receiving and a renewed focus on listening within education, it is important for librarians to know the history of audiobooks and recognize components that make audiobooks distinct.[3]

Since the late nineteenth century, the audiobook selection and production processes have progressively become more complex and systematic. Yet only a small fraction of titles published each year are deemed worthy for audiobook production, and even fewer still are recognized as outstanding.

Previous reviews of audiobooks have focused on readers' advisory, the role of audiobooks in supporting literacy development, and the use of audiobooks with children. This article complements and builds upon those reviews by providing an historical overview of audiobooks, detailing the components of audiobook production, and identifying the most notable audiobook awards in the United States.[4] Implications for libraries and library service are then discussed.

History of audiobook production

Audio recordings of texts have been in existence for nearly a century. As early as 1877, Thomas Edison envisioned the phonograph as an oral book reading device, and his very first recording on the phonograph, a recitation of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" might generously be considered the first children's read-along.[5]

While Edison's first recording was a nursery rhyme, the earliest attempts at audio production of books involved only highly regarded adult literature. Even Mark Twain embraced the idea

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of audio, and he began recording his novel *American Claimant*. However, after about three hours of recording, which filled four dozen cylinders, he abandoned the project. Indeed, it was because of these technological limitations in the early twentieth century that books were often read aloud on the radio rather than recorded. Again, though, this practice involved esteemed adult literature as attested by the fact that Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* was the first serial reading of an entire novel on the air.[6] It was not until the 1931 passage of the Pratt-Smoot Act, which provided federal funding for recorded books for the blind, that audiobook production in the United States intensified.[7]

Yet it took nearly thirty-five years for publishers to recognize the niche of the oral book market. With its premier recording of poet Dylan Thomas reading his own work in 1952, Caedmon Records established itself as the first publisher devoted exclusively to spoken word recordings.[8]

Production of children's books in audio format has a shorter history but still spans nearly a century. Harper Columbia was the first producer of commercially available audiobooks for children with the series *Bubble Books*.[9] *Bubble Books* consisted of print books and corresponding records, and millions of copies were produced and sold commercially in the United States and Great Britain under various labels between 1917 and 1930.[10]

In 1952, Congress extended the National Library Service for the Blind and Handicapped to children.[11] One year later, Mort Schindel founded Weston Woods, a company dedicated to "translating the best in children's picture book literature into audiovisual media."[12]

Shortly thereafter, Anthony and Helen Ditlow launched Listening Library, a publisher committed to creating unabridged recordings of children's and young adult literature for school and library markets.[13]

Since those early days of audiobook recording, a number of other publishers have entered the business. With the growth of the industry have come new organizations and a unique vocabulary to communicate the nuances of audiobook production. In 1987, the Audio Publishers Association (APA) formed to serve the common interests of audiobook producers and related distributors and suppliers, and there are currently more than forty publishers with membership in the APA.[14] The term audiobook came into use in the 1970s, with the advent of the audiocassette, and became the industry standard in 1994 after adoption by the APA.[15]

Production process

Publishers take extra precautions when selecting titles for audiobook production. Only a small percentage of traditional print books are produced as audiobooks. Of the nearly ten thousand annual submissions, Recorded Books, one of the larger audiobook producers, records only about seven hundred titles per year; approximately 120 of those are for children or young adults.[16]

When selecting books for audiobook format, the publisher considers numerous factors: the popularity and past success of the author; the qualities of the text, including the distinction of the character's voice that would make it successful in audiobook format; and the element of flexibility within the text that would allow for a reader to enhance the experience aurally.[17]

Books that are exciting and suspenseful in written form tend to transfer well to the audiobook format.[18] Conversely, weaknesses in a print book become more obvious when transferred to audiobook format.[19] Particularly difficult issues for producers include handling transitions between time and/or place and translating extraneous materials and text such as maps, illustrations, and footnotes in a manner that enables a smooth listening experience while also accurately conveying intended purposes.[20] Because nonfiction for children and young adults is often dependent on visual features such as charts, figures, and maps, it sometimes does not translate well to audiobook format.[21]

Although audiobooks could theoretically serve as the sole format of a text, in almost all cases they are an alternate presentation of a book available in a text-based format, both paper and electronic.[22] Once the decision has been made to produce a book in audio format, the publisher will typically try to release audiobook and print editions simultaneously.[23] Increasingly, publishers are bundling e-book and digital audiobook formats of titles and offering syncing technology which allows readers to pick the text up in one medium in the exact location where the reading ended in the other medium.[24] Though it is plausible that audiobooks could differ from their print counterparts in terms of popularity, they tend not to do so—popular sellers in print tend to be popular in audio; books not well received in print tend not to be well received in audio.[25] Typically, sales of audiobooks are about 10 percent of their print counterparts.[26]

Narration

Throughout the professional literature on audiobooks, the terms "narrator" and "reader" are used interchangeably. Audiobook narration is a specialized craft that differs from both acting and standard reading, but it does integrate the two activities. A good narrator ensures congruence of voice with the traits of the characters and manipulates the voice to bring a text to life and to draw in listeners.[27]

When selecting readers for audiobook narration, producers look for certain qualities. Special attention is paid to ensure that the voice of the narrator does not interfere with the meaning of the story or information and that the reader uses proper pronunciation given the context of the book.[28] Additionally, the audiobook reader's voice should match closely with the character's age, making selection of the readers of children's audiobooks significantly more difficult than that of adult books

and sometimes resulting in producers hiring children or teen readers.[29]

In an interview with Mary Burkey, audiobook producer and director David Rapkin said, "In audiobooks for young people, it's important to imbue the production with a sense of innocent excitement, without an adult sensibility, in the way the actor approaches reading the book and the characters. It's a very delicate kind of energy that is easily extinguished if ham-handed adultness is permitted to enter the process. It has to do with the lightness of voice. It has to do with a kind of enthusiasm. It has to do with keeping emotions close to the surface. In an adult book many things can be implied but in a young person's audiobook the subtlety can be relaxed so that the feelings can emerge."[30]

A narrator's decisions about tone, voice, and emphasis can be the determining factor in a listener becoming engrossed in or disengaged from the listening experience. Just as meaning is conveyed through voice, so too is it communicated through pace.[31] The narrator's pauses convey meaning just as the words do.[32] The narration must flow with the pacing of the action in the text; suspenseful and action-packed dialogue and scenes must be read with appropriate speed while those portions of the text meant to be savored or that evoke strong feelings need be read more slowly.[33]

Audiobook producers tend to use professional actors who are members of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists as narrators.[34] Clarity, strength, and stamina are the necessary voice components for quality narration.[35] According to voice coach Johnny Hellerer, "Vocal acting requires a deeper rapport with the text than is needed for stage or screen acting. Casual readers can gloss over punctuation, but voice actors don't have that luxury."[36]

The Deyan Institute recently opened in Northridge, California, as a training facility for audiobook narrators and voice actors because its founders, Bob and Debra Deyan, wanted to ensure that newcomers to the expanding audiobook industry maintain quality production.[37]

Audiobooks are also frequently narrated by authors. When asked if it made a difference if a work were read by an actor or author, Barbara Holdridge, co-founder of Caedmon Records, replied, "The author is actually recapturing the emotions experienced when first the book or poem was written. It doesn't matter whether he or she reads as an actor would. The actor is interpreting the author's intent. The author is interpreting his or her own intent—not someone else's work, but his or her own, in the authentic intonation, emotion, and accent."[38]

Sherman Alexie's agent demanded that Alexie be the narrator of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, and though his voice is not one that would typically be selected for audiobook narration, it works for that text because it is his story.[39] Similarly, autobiographies and memoirs are often read by the subjects themselves. For instance, Barack Obama served as the reader for his title *The Audacity of Hope*, and reviews praised his delivery. However, memoirs don't necessarily have to be read by the writer and can be top quality audiobooks even when narrated by another reader. In fact, Keith Richards' *Life* was awarded the 2011 Audiobook of the Year by the Audio Publishers Association, and Richards himself only read the first and last chapters.[40]

For many titles, the author is not necessarily always the best choice as narrator. Though authors understand the intended mood and theme of the text, they may not understand the nuances of audiobook narration, such as pacing and verbal interpretation of each of the characters.[41] Additionally, with a vested interest in the text an author may overact parts that are special significance.[42] In discussing his role as the narrator of the memoir *My Life in Dog Years*, Gary Paulsen confessed, "I approached the recording sessions with a sense of dread . . . each night I walked away totally exhausted. I've run sled dogs for miles and not been that wiped out. I felt like I was back in the army marching in the desert with packs of rocks on my back—it was that hard."[43]

Indeed, the role of the narrator is not an easy one, and it requires both preparation and practice. A poor reading of a text can negatively impact a listener's opinion of a book.[44] Though narrators usually only receive a book or galley about one week in advance of recording, they are expected to conduct their own research before production commences.[45] To prepare for the Jacky Faber series, Katherine Kellgren worked with a singing coach to ensure that songs and sea shanties were accurate and sounded appropriate sung in both male and female character voices. Kellgren also acknowledges that as part of her preparation for audiobook narration, she conducts searches for images of objects described in a text that she herself has never seen.[46]

Tom Opdyke, who narrated a serial podcast, explained,

> Narration requires character insights and emotional nuances to carry off voices and paint scenes. When I prepare to read a narrative, I make the same kind of scene-blocking notes I would use if I were reading a script for a stage play. To carry off a scene with credibility, I need to know where the characters are on this imagined set at all times: Am I a character yelling across a parking lot to another character or am I the narrator standing to the side, describing a mother at the bedside of her critically ill son?[47]

Proper portrayal of characters with accents or dialects can be particularly tricky for audiobook narrators. When portraying a regional accent, a narrator must consider both the geography and the historical period.[48] Similarly, identifying correct accents for characters of specific countries or ethnic groups is essential, and the narrator must interpret each of the characters appropriately and consistently.[49] To ensure that character voices are consistent throughout a book or series, some audiobook readers will make digital samples of the voice used for each character that can then be referenced when needed.[50]

Good narration can come with big rewards. Jim Dale, narrator of the *Harry Potter* series, holds the Guinness World Record for Most Character Voices in Audiobook, and in 2003, Queen Elizabeth II awarded him Member of the Order of the British Empire for his narration of the first five *Harry Potter* books.[51]

Some critics claim audiobooks diminish a reader's ability to bring a book to life. These critics contend it is a narrator, not the listener who interprets the story, but other scholars recognize the value of audiobooks and their advantage over the print format in certain instances. As Matthew Rubery explains, "Words susceptible to skimming on the printed page cannot be hurried past when read aloud. There is no 'speed listening' equivalent to 'speed reading.' Spoken narrative restores the rhythm and cadence of prose in ways reminiscent of early storytelling."[52] Though voracious readers tend to rush through books, audiobooks force the process to be drawn out, thereby making the experience different from that of reading. A proficient reader might gain a different perspective by listening than by reading.[53] Award-winning novelist Neil Gaiman concurs:

> I don't think the experience of reading a book and the experience of hearing a book are the same. I tend to think the experience of hearing a book is often much more intimate, much more personal: you're down there in the words, unable to skip a dull-looking wodge of prose, unable to speed up or slow down (unless you have an iPod and like hearing people sound like chipmunks), less able to go back. It's you and the story, the way the author meant it.[54]

Joyce Saricks, a veteran audiobook reviewer, furthers the value of the format with the argument, "Books filled with dialect are almost always easier to understand heard than read. (In fact, listeners may not even realize that the written word might not be familiar, because when heard, the words are instantly understandable)."[55] It is precisely for this reason that scholars find multicultural audiobooks so valuable in classroom contexts where the teacher might otherwise feel uncomfortable reading aloud unfamiliar dialects, vernaculars, or words from foreign languages.[56]

Narration styles

According to audiobook reviewer Kristi Beavin, the narration style of an audiobook can take one of four forms: fully voiced, partially voiced, unvoiced, or multivoiced. A fully voiced reading employs a different delivery for each of the characters and is the most common style used. Fully voiced narration is especially suitable for books containing characters with very distinct personalities or traits. In partially voiced narration, one character's (or a small number of characters') voicing is unique and emphasized while the other characters' words are read in a somewhat less discernable manner. Multivoiced readings employ a cast of narrators to represent the characters. Finally, an unvoiced reading is one in which the narrator delivers the text in a single voice without noticeable variation of characters.[57]

Sound elements

In addition to narration of the text, many audiobooks contain music and other sound elements. Background music in audiobooks is intended to enhance the feelings and pace associated with the story or information conveyed.[58] Music can amplify the mood or level of intensity associated with a particular scene or event, underscore the pacing of the narration and action, or support the cultural significance of a text. Music is also used to guide the listener through transitions such as chapter beginnings and endings and shifts in place and time or events in the storyline.

Recognizing the important role of music in the listening experience, producers sometimes hire musicians to research and either select or compose music congruent with the culture and historical period of the books.[59] For example, Daniel Kraus's Odyssey-Award-winning book *Rotters* included music that was created by the real band Vorvolakas, which was the name of a fictional band in the book.[60]

Final production steps

Once all of the elements of an audiobook are selected and recorded, final production begins. Sound editing of an audiobook is a four step process that begins with properly ordering all of the segments of the text which had previously been recorded at various times and stored as individual files. Next, an editor adjusts the pacing, ensuring that there are no long pauses between segments or extraneous noises in the foreground or background. Once the production nears the final stages, a team of editors confirm that the spoken and written texts of audio and print books match perfectly. Finally, music and sound effects are added and the full text is broken into tracks.[61] On average, one hour of an audiobook takes approximately five and a half hours to produce.[62]

Audiobook awards

Awards recognizing outstanding audiobooks, having first commenced for titles produced for children and/or young adults, are a relatively recent phenomenon compared to similar recognitions for their print counterparts. Similarly, while both the commercial and the professional sectors select the best-of-the-best audiobooks for adults, young adults, and children, the number of recognitions conferred are relatively few in comparison to those for print titles.

With the exception of the Grammy Awards, audiobook awards are relatively new in both the commercial industry and in the professional sector. The Recording Academy first established the Best Performance, Documentary or Spoken Word category in 1958, and nominees and winners have included comedy albums, storytelling performances, poetry readings, documentaries, drama recordings, and non-musical recordings.[63]

The category name has changed several times since the award's inception, most recently to Best Spoken Word. Since 1966 with the conferring of the award to *John F. Kennedy As We Remember Him,* audiobooks have received the award a number of times, but the term "audiobook" was only added to the official category title in 2006. To date, neither a children's nor young adult audiobook has received a Grammy Award.[64]

The APA identifies its award, the Audie, as the "premier awards program in the United States recognizing distinction in audiobooks and spoken word entertainment" and has been issuing awards since 2001.[65] Most Audie awards are presented to adult titles, although there are a few categories for children and young adult literature.[66]

Several divisions of the American Library Association (ALA) bestow recognition to audiobooks deemed exceptional. *Booklist* collaborates with ALA in selecting and recognizing print and audio award and honor books. Since 2008, it has been recognizing one outstanding audiobook reader as the "Voice of Choice" during National Audiobook Month in June.[67] Three divisions of ALA have also established lists recognizing outstanding selections in audiobooks. Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) first began recognizing audiobooks for adult audiences in 2012 with the establishment of the *Listen List*.[68]

The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) releases a list of "notable audio recordings significant to young adults" each year. Originally titled Selected Audiobooks for Young Adults and first released in 1999, the list was renamed Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults in 2009, and since 1996, the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) has released the Notable Children's Recordings list which "includes recordings for children 14 years of age and younger of especially commendable quality."[69]

Together, ALSC and YALSA developed the Odyssey Award, first issued in 2008, to recognize "the producer of the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States."[70] As eloquently stated by Mary Burkey, the inaugural award year chair of the Odyssey Award Committee, "a truly touchstone audiobook eliminates the awareness of the format and allows the listener to fall into a direct sensory experience of story. This phenomenon restores the earliest form of literature, the oral tradition, and brings the audiobook listener back into the virtual warmth of the storyteller's circle."[71] Recognition of books produced at this level of quality is the goal of the *Odyssey Award*, and as one producer confessed, the presence of the award has indeed advanced the quality of audiobook production.[72] A recent analysis of Odyssey titles found that the productions vary greatly on a number of factors.[73]

Promotion of audiobooks for educational use

Educators and literacy proponents advocate the use of audiobooks for literacy development purposes. Early childhood literacy expert Susan Neuman encourages parents to use audiobooks with preschool children to develop reading and listening skills; children's literature scholar Frank Serafini created a guide for teachers' use of audiobooks in the classroom; and librarians Sharon Grover and Lizette Hannegan wrote a book centered on using audiobooks for literacy development.[74]

Teachers can find further support for incorporating audiobooks in the classroom at the ReadWriteThink Website, a collaborative project of the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English aimed at providing resources directed at producing "the highest quality practices in reading and language arts instruction resources" to educators, parents, and afterschool professionals.[75] In fact, ReadWriteThink has more than sixty lesson plans that include the use of audiobooks.

Articles touting the benefits of audiobook use with children of various ages are found in numerous education publications, and children's and teen librarians have also endorsed the use of audiobooks with children of all ages.[76] Advocates of audiobooks have lauded the format for its role in motivating reading, developing children's language, developing children's vocabularies, and promoting comprehension.[77] Scholars also recognize the significant value of multicultural audiobooks, particularly in the classroom context in which a teacher may not feel comfortable reading aloud a book with unfamiliar dialects or unknown words in a foreign language.[78]

Interestingly, despite the endorsements of audiobooks from librarians, teachers, and scholars, the availability of scholarly research exploring and explaining the benefits of audiobooks is limited.[79] Thus studies further investigating audiobook use would clarify for librarians, classroom teachers, and literacy professionals what the best practices with audiobooks are and the specific skills they promote.

Implications for libraries

Currently, the audiobook production industry is not only financially viable, but it continues to grow in leaps and bounds. Since 2011, there has been an 83 percent increase in the number of audiobook titles produced each year.[80] Though children's and adolescents' engagement in reading activities has decreased overall in recent years, there have been significant increases in the number of children and young adult audiobooks sold, suggesting an increase in adolescents' and children's engagement with audiobooks.[81]

The audiobook industry has developed considerably over the years in terms of selection, production, accessibility, and award recognition. Audiobook publishers recognize the commercial value in producing audiobooks for children, young adults, and adult audiences, and libraries too can and should capitalize on this interest in audiobooks. According to recent research, about 14 percent of American adults use audiobooks, and almost a quarter of these listeners fall into the eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old range.[82] Of those Americans who physically visit a library or library bookmobile, 17 percent do so for the purpose

of accessing audiobooks, and many adult audiobook listeners also report that their children listen to audiobooks.[83]

With the exception of age, the use of audiobooks tends to be similar across demographic groups. The percentages of male and female audiobook user is about equal which contrasts with that of print and e-book use, which are dominated by women. Similarly, percentages of audiobook users are constant across race and ethnicity. Teens, college-aged adults, and senior adults are less likely than other adults to engage with audiobooks.[84]

Of great importance to libraries is the fact that most audiobook listeners prefer to borrow titles from the library rather than purchase them. This contrasts sharply with the preferences of print and e-book readers, the majority of whom prefer to purchase their books.[85] Indeed, it is essential that libraries lend audiobooks for both adults and children as this format might otherwise be financially out of reach for many. Interestingly, teen audiobook users are less likely than their older counterparts to have checked out an audiobook from a public library, perhaps because of access to school libraries.[86] Finally, despite the rise in the number of children and youth with access to mobile devices, gaps still exist between demographic groups; therefore libraries should continue to make audiobooks available in both digital and CD formats.

It is important for librarians to consider whether reviews of audiobooks and readers' advisory of audiobooks are congruent with the needs of audiobook consumers. Audiobook sales tend to mirror those of their print and e-book counterparts suggesting that similar interests drive audiobook and print book use.[87] However, audiobook reviews differ considerably from their print counterparts. While print book reviews tend to focus on the quality of the writing and plot, audiobook reviews focus on the quality of the narration and production elements.[88] Certainly, it is necessary for the quality of a production to be taken into account when advising a listener; however, content of the production seems to trump narration for listeners, perhaps reviewers should consider that as well.

As one audiobook reader testified, "Audiobooks changed my life. I can listen to them anywhere and I can enjoy new stories and new types of books without the trouble of having to carry around a lot of stuff with me or fighting with confusing words or font sizes, and I rarely have to worry about getting to my book when I want because the book is usually available."[89] It is important for librarians and educators to recognize the impact that audiobooks can have on listeners of all ages and to support their needs through continued access to this unique format. &

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Presenters show off the 2017 Youth Media Award winners at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta. L to R: Sarah Hill, YALSA President; Andrew Medlar, ALSC Immediate Past President; Julie Todaro, ALA President; Selina Gomez-Beloz, REFORMA President; and Dr. Pauletta Brown Bracy, chair, Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee.

Play & Read

Lessons Learned from Early Literacy Outreach

CLAIRE PARRISH AND TESSA MICHAELSON SCHMIDT

Library storytimes and services become more accessible to non-users and irregular users when offered at the local farmers' market.

This past election season, the Early Ed for President campaign, championed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), brought civic attention to a topic that has steadfast traction in the library world—early literacy. Unlike other educational initiatives that come and go, early literacy is a winning investment.

The Spring 2015 issue of *Children and Families* featured the piece *Early Literacy in Wisconsin: Sharing a Statewide Harvest*. Early literacy efforts have continued to grow in our state and have yielded a new program: Play & Read. Our state library and education agency was approached by the state agency in charge of AmeriCorps about a grant to support early literacy in select counties (see sidebar).

With a ticking deadline for funds with an expiration date, a team of literacy, library, early childhood, and service learning experts was assembled. Together, Play & Read was designed as a family-focused early literacy empowerment program led by AmeriCorps volunteers, based in public libraries in counties with high poverty rates. With $415,000 grant funds secured for a pilot year, Play & Read was launched in the summer of 2015.

Managed by two consultants at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and coordinated by a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Library and Information Studies, Play & Read required careful consideration of both the overall project goals and the needs of local library host sites. As a pilot project, AmeriCorps members and library host site staff had to be flexible regarding structure and outcomes. The format and frequency of play groups was anticipated to look different in the seven host site communities because of library hours and locations, lifestyles of participating families, and availability of transportation. For example, some sites offered evening and weekend playgroups while other sites opted for weekday sessions.

As the pilot year unfolded, there were surprises, challenges, and expectations fulfilled. Play & Read was new for everyone involved—project staff, library staff, AmeriCorps volunteers, and families—so there were many conversations about how things could/should work. In some ways, the project was not groundbreaking; after all, playgroups were essentially small, intimate storytime sessions for registered participants. In other ways, it offered new ways of doing things, such as the role of

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trained, committed volunteers who embedded themselves in the community as early literacy and library ambassadors.

What follows are lessons learned from three of the Play & Read sites in regard to outreach initiatives; specifically what developed when libraries leveraged the AmeriCorps members to establish or enhance efforts to connect with young families who were not library regulars.

Lessons Learned

Brewer Public Library (Municipal Population: 5,186)

The Brewer Public Library in Richland Center, the smallest of the library host sites, saw a significant difference in how people perceived the library, specifically the children's department, because of the outreach conducted by the Play & Read AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members were required to go out into the community to encourage parents and caregivers to sign up for the play groups. Registration efforts included visiting day care providers and school programs, posting fliers at businesses around town, and other marketing techniques.

In Richland Center, AmeriCorps members went on a local radio show to promote the play groups, which resulted in a parent and child, who were not regular library visitors, to come to the library to sign up. This outreach was beneficial for the library as a whole, because Play & Read in turn encouraged library card sign up and use of other services.

The AmeriCorps members also began utilizing the library's Facebook page more effectively and frequently, which demonstrated that the library was regularly holding programming, doing new things, and wasn't stuck in the past. They also spent a lot of time sprucing up the children's section and storytime rooms, adding signage, rethinking book placement, and creating displays that appealed to families as soon as they entered. Both rooms are in the basement, and lacked the inviting appeal that they now have. The children's librarian and two AmeriCorps members worked diligently to put together fun events for families, like Super Saturday Craft Days, and to build connections with other organizations in the community, which included a partnership with the Farm to School program.

Beloit Public Library (Municipal Population: 36,792)

AmeriCorps members at the Beloit Public Library realized that if they wanted to make a lasting impact, they needed to think broadly to engage the entire community. In addition, they chose to think beyond the grant pilot year in terms of sustainable programming.

Casting a wide net proved to be an effective technique for the Beloit Play & Read team. Outreach efforts to bring community organizations to the early literacy table started slowly, but the

Small intimate playgroups allow for close connections with kids, families, and books.

AmeriCorps members pushed forward. The first meeting had only one representative from the Stateline Literacy Council and the AmeriCorps members, but they were able to come up with a name for their initiative (All Beloit Children) and brainstorm ideas about how to impact Beloit families through early literacy play groups.

The next meeting was more successful, with AmeriCorps members, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) staff, and Stateline Literacy. Then the YMCA joined. By the time the group met in April, they had added another five representatives from the school district. Currently, the All Beloit Children (ABC) task force has representatives from Stateline Literacy, YMCA, Community Action (housing), the City Manager's Office, School District of Beloit, Beloit College, and the Optimist Club, in addition to the library director and youth services manager.

In fall 2016, Beloit Public Library began offering ABC Playgroups in three elementary schools, two local daycares, and in the library. They will also have family literacy engagement sessions on Saturdays held at participating elementary schools. The group is working with the city manager's office and their neighborhood revitalization grant to identify local community centers in each neighborhood as potential sites for playgroups. The Optimist Club and School District are willing to sponsor family projects, such as building bookshelves and making youth literacy activity kits for families to use at home.

Play & Read Project

Play & Read was an AmeriCorps and Serve Wisconsin service project facilitated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in 2015–16. The focus of this service project was improving rural communities by building on children's early literacy skills to position them for academic and social success. Specifically, the project emphasized the following:

- increasing literacy among three and four year olds, as measured by pre- and post-assessments
- growing capacity and comfort of families to engage in literacy activities with their children
- helping libraries better connect with families of young children through outreach efforts, especially to non-library users

Play & Read placed nineteen AmeriCorps members in seven public libraries throughout southern Wisconsin. Teams and single members built on children's preexisting literacies by facilitating play groups for three and four year olds. Play groups included shared reading, writing, and intentional vocabulary development. Children participated in the program weekly, and families also took part in at least two one-on-one literacy check-ins with the AmeriCorps members. As a grant requirement, members also administered early literacy assessments with the participating children to gather data highlighting gains in literacy. In addition to the play groups, members collaborated with library staff to offer support for additional early literacy efforts.

None of this work would be possible without the commitment of volunteers to help run the programming. AmeriCorps members have already trained over twenty volunteers to continue outreach programming on behalf of the library and continue to attract more volunteers.

A local technical college has also approved the program as a work study opportunity for early childhood education students seeking volunteer and internship opportunities. Also, a volunteer organization from the University of Wisconsin–Rock County has committed to supporting the project. Play & Read AmeriCorps members were able to leverage multiple community assets to build a self-sustaining program.

La Crosse Public Library (Municipal Population: 51,992)

An outreach success in La Crosse was reestablishing the library's relationships with local daycare, preschool, and Head Start providers. Through Play & Read, AmeriCorps members and library staff were able to schedule and provide regular storytimes at fifteen childcare settings.

Library staff and members saw a change in the daycare providers' behavior; they began coming into the library more often to utilize their resources which became an opportunity to "teach the teacher." Members also hosted a family night at a local day care center to demonstrate practical applications of early literacy skills and discuss ideas for promoting and implementing early literacy skills in the classroom and at home.

The AmeriCorps members also saw success in providing storytimes at the local Farmers' Market. On days when the weather would cooperate, around thirty children and family members would participate in the Farmers' Market storytime. The AmeriCorps member who ran this event successfully engaged families who may not otherwise have utilized the library.

These storytimes offered fun, interactive activities that promoted early literacy skills, including take-home information for families. This was the first summer for the Farmers' Market storytimes, but both the library and market organizers look forward to continuing the partnership. Through these initiatives, La Crosse Public Library is seeing more families coming into the library and taking part in library events.

What we Learned

Play & Read came to fruition under the alignment of several stars. Like many pilot projects, there are plenty of items on the "do differently next time" list.

For example, the timeline of the project was fast and furious. The start date was rigid, along with hiring dates, which made getting everyone on board with a brand new project, a bit challenging. Specifically, we found, in hindsight, that the AmeriCorps members needed additional training in regard to child development and early literacy basics. In addition, the required early literacy assessments proved to be vexing on philosophical and managerial levels—the tests were awkward to administer and were received with mixed feelings by library staff and some families of three- and four-year-olds.

However, one of the greatest hopes for the project was to develop a structure that could be supported with or without grant funds as well as be replicable in other parts of the state. The lessons learned from the host site libraries indicate that committing staff time to training volunteers, identifying library non-user populations, and allocating time and resources to community outreach yields rich results.

The process might be messy and vary from one locale to the next, but it is worth the effort. Ultimately, the relationships we want young children and their families to develop with reading and the library requires intentional cultivation by the library and all members of the community. &

The Astronomical Event of the Decade

Library Opportunities with the Coming Total Eclipse of the Sun

ANDREW FRAKNOI AND DENNIS SCHATZ

On August 21, 2017, we will be treated to the first total eclipse of the sun visible in the continental United States in almost forty years. Because the total eclipse can only be seen in the United States, it is being called the "All American Total Solar Eclipse." In this kind of eclipse, the Moon gets in front of the sun in the sky and blocks its light.

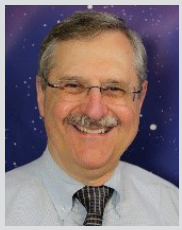
The spectacular *total* eclipse, with the sun fully covered, will only be visible in a narrow band about sixty to seventy miles across, stretching diagonally across the country from a beach in Oregon to a beach in South Carolina. The last time an eclipse path crossed the continental United States was in 1918, truly remote for the children who come to the library these days.

Observers must be in that narrow path of dark shadow to see the glory of a total eclipse—the sky going dark in the middle of the day, stars coming out, and the faint atmosphere of the sun revealed as a flickering glow.

However, everyone in North America will see a *partial* solar eclipse, where a big "bite" will be taken out of the sun. Because part of the sun continues to shine brightly into our eyes during a partial eclipse, observers must protect their eyes with the right kind of filters or look at a projected image that is too dim to hurt. Inexpensive, but certified, paper-framed eclipse glasses are available.

Poster design by Tyler Nordgren (University of the Redlands).

This will be the first US eclipse of the Internet age, and information is likely to be dispersed in a much wider range of ways. However they learn about the eclipse, most people will need clear reliable guidance for when and how to safely observe it. Libraries can play a key role in getting this information



Andrew Fraknoi *is the Chair of the Astronomy Department at Foothill College in the San Francisco Bay Area and a former Executive Director of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Poster design by Tyler Nordgren (University of the Redlands).* ***Dennis Schatz*** *was formerly the Senior Vice President of the Pacific Science Center, the science museum in Seattle, and is the author of twenty-three science books for children. He was program director for science education at the National Science Foundation from 2011 to 2015.*

out to families and their communities. To get up to speed on the full eclipse story, download the free eight-page, nontechnical eclipse guide published by National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) at www.nsta.org/solarscience.

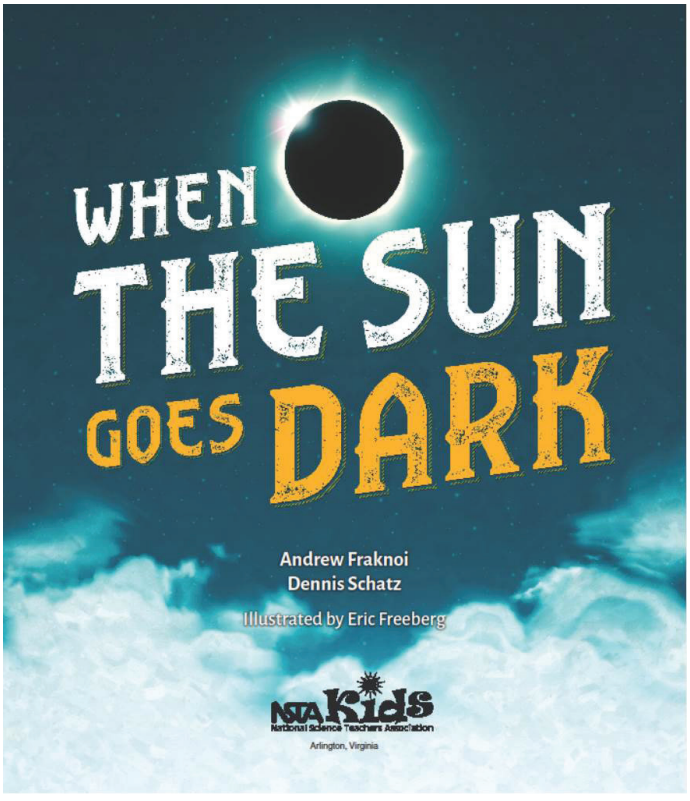
This will give you all the basic information—what causes eclipses, where and when you can see the 2017 eclipse, what time it will happen in each part of the country, and how to help your patrons observe it safely. And this booklet can be distributed or printed without any restrictions.

For explaining eclipses to children, you may want to consider ordering a copy of *When the Sun Goes Dark*, a children's book we wrote for the National Science Teachers Association Press.

A number of other books and websites are also available. For adults, you can find a guide to published and web-based eclipse resources at www.astrosociety.org/eclipse.

If you have not already done so, you and others in your library will want to determine how to incorporate the sun, moon, and eclipses into your 2017 program planning. Here are some suggestions for preparing for understanding and observing this remarkable celestial event:

1. Connect with your local college or university astronomy department, high school physics (or astronomy) teacher, or science museum to see what they are planning for the eclipse and whether someone might give a public talk or do a training session for the staff at your library. Training via video will also be available from several organizations as the eclipse grows closer.



2. Connect with your local amateur astronomy group to see if they will be doing outreach connected with the eclipse.

Eclipse Education Resources

Networks

STARNet (http://www.starnetlibraries.org/), a national network sponsored by NASA and the National Science Foundation, provides science-technology activities and resources for public libraries. They will be a central eclipse-information clearing-house for libraries in 2017; it is free to join the network.

Written Material

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Espenak, Patricia. 2015. *Total Eclipse or Bust: A Family Road Trip*. Astropixels. A family goes on a trip for the 2017 eclipse. http://astropixels.com/pubs.

Branley, Franklin. 1988. *Eclipse*. HarperCollins. An illustrated book for younger children.

Mass, Wendy. 2008. *Every Soul a Star*. Little, Brown. A young adult novel (middle school level) about three kids who meet at an eclipse gathering; has a lot of good astronomy.

Pasachoff, J. and N., eds. January 2017. Special eclipse issue of *Dig into History*. For kids ages 9–14.

Online

"What is an Eclipse?" NASA. http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/5-8/features/nasa-knows/what-is-an-eclipse-58. For students in grades 5–8.

"Solar Eclipses for Beginners." Mr. Eclipse. http://www.mreclipse.com/Special/SEprimer.html. By NASA's Dr. Fred Espenak.

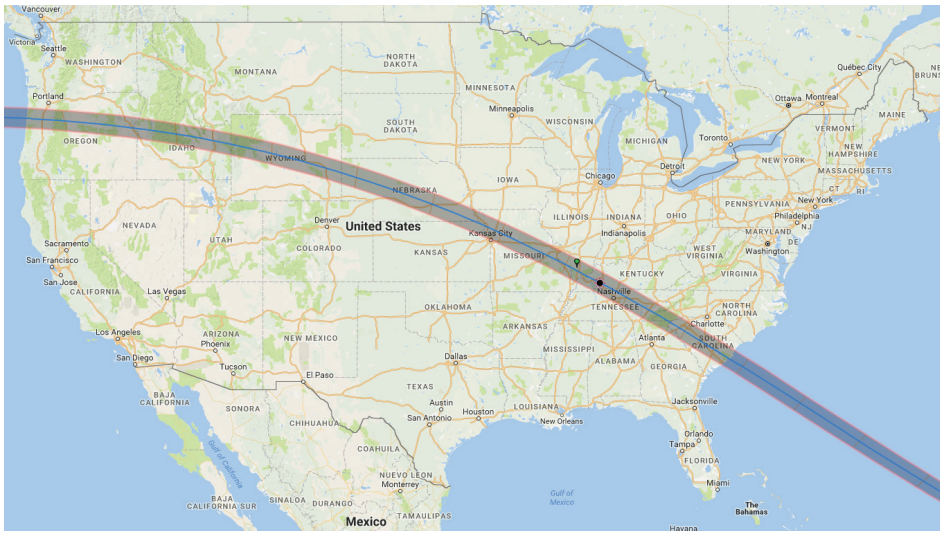
"NASA EDGE: Solar Eclipse 2017 Preview Show." YouTube video. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DDICymjhg0.

Check out the Night Sky Network (http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/clubs-and-events.cfm) to locate any amateur astronomy groups near you that like to connect with the public. Their members are likely to have eclipse observing experience they can share.

3. Put together a collection of eclipse materials for display and make information available on how to find copies.

4. During the months and weeks leading up to the eclipse, host public programs where you share ways to safely observe the eclipse or have patrons build pinhole sun projectors. Follow the instructions in the NSTA Observing Guide to have binocular stations to project images of the sun and/or to sell eclipse viewing glasses.

5. A grant from the Moore Foundation will help libraries obtain a package of free eclipse glasses and information. Register for the program through the STARNet website; see the sidebar, "Eclipse Education Resources."



The best viewing arc for the eclipse. Source: http://xjubier.free.fr/en/site_pages/solar_eclipses/TSE_2017_.GoogleMapFull.html.

6. On the day of the event, host an eclipse observing party at your library that includes information, demonstrations, and safe observing strategies.

No matter what you decide to do, we wish you a cloudless, safe eclipse in August 2017, and much success helping your community enjoy it safely.

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Lessons from Lititz

Jenna Nemec-Loise

Everyday Advocacy empowers ALSC members to embrace their roles as library advocates by focusing on their daily efforts to serve kids 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 Nemec-Loise*** *at everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com with comments and ideas for future topics.*

If you've never been to Lititz, Pennsylvania, you should totally go, and make haste. About ninety minutes from Philadelphia and forty minutes from Harrisburg, Lititz is a not-be-missed treasure of Lancaster (pronounced "LANG-kiss-tur") County in the heart of Amish country.

You'll want to stay at Lititz House Bed and Breakfast, where innkeepers John and Heidi will welcome you like family. What's even better than relaxing in a gorgeous room and eating a delicious morning meal, you ask? Playing with John and Heidi's beagle, Sally. (She's a charmer—even if you don't like dogs.)

Not enough to tempt you? Then I've got two words that can: Wilbur buds. Everyone's mad for these melt-in-your-mouth chocolate drops, close relatives of the famed Hershey's kisses. Sure, you can buy Wilbur buds online, but why would you want to when you can visit the retail store on Broad Street and stock up in person?

I could go on about the charming storefronts nestled together on Main Street, the Lititz Watch Technicum (i.e., Rolex watch repair school), and Rock Lititz (a monolithic state-of-the-art rehearsal space for musicians and entertainers), but let's be honest: None of them holds a candle to the town's true gem—the public library.

This past November, I had the privilege of presenting a hands-on workshop called, "Why YS? Advocating for the Youth Services Profession" at Lititz Public Library. On that glorious autumn day, fifteen Youth Services staff members and I made advocacy magic that's sure to elevate the Library System of Lancaster County to a whole new level of awesomeness. Now I want to share my six Great Big Takeaways from that workshop with you and all the other Everyday Advocates looking to up their game.

1. Step outside your comfort zone. At the beginning of our workshop, I asked participants to look at a simple graphic comprised of two circles—one small and one large—placed some distance apart. Inside the smaller circle were these words: *Your comfort zone*. The words inside the larger circle? *Where the magic happens*.

When it comes to Everyday Advocacy, you don't get anywhere when you stay in that smaller circle. Yes, you might stay safe and cozy, but you also stay complacent. That just won't do. Take a deep breath and step into that space between the circles where you're willing to tolerate ambiguity and be uncomfortable. Be bold from your fingertips to your toes. It's the only way to channel your inner Everyday Advocate and keep the action moving forward for kids and families.

2. Listen to understand, not to respond. Next, we talked about the difference between listening to respond and listening to understand. While the two aren't mutually exclusive, they're definitely not the same thing.

Think about it. When you're listening to respond to someone, your mind is anything but silent. It fills up quickly with all the things you plan to say while the other person is still making his or her points. If you're already having a

dialogue in your head, are you really, truly hearing your counterpart?

Listening to understand means more than just letting someone else speak. It involves letting go of preconceived notions and the urge to respond right away, especially in difficult or heated situations. There's empathy rather than judgment, authenticity instead of artifice. It's in those silent moments that others teach you how to be their best and brightest Everyday Advocate so you can speak out for them when the time is right.

3. Temper passion with reason. To wrap up our morning, we went Greek and talked about persuasive communication using Aristotle's rhetorical triangle. The art of persuasion involves balancing between appeals to *ethos* (you and your credibility), *logos* (evidence presented through logic or reason), and *pathos* (an emotional appeal to your audience).

When making your case through Everyday Advocacy, tempering passion with reason can be the most critical part. Get too worked up about your issue and you come off as "emotional." Err too much on the side of reason and you risk appearing cold or insensitive. Much of your ethos hinges on your ability to craft statements that blend the perfect amounts of logos and pathos, so knowing your audience members and what will resonate with them is key.

4. Be the pebble. In my workshops, I frequently call on my experiences teaching LIS 777: Issues of Access, Advocacy, and Policy in Youth Services at Dominican University. You've heard of smart cookies? I've got a jar full of inspired students who never cease to change me in all the ways that matter.

During our fall 2016 semester, student Aleksandra Podraza connected the dots between access and advocacy by comparing the efforts of Youth Services librarians to a pebble in a pond. Toss the pebble in, and the ripples reach out farther than you imagine or expect. "Be the pebble" became our mantra that semester as we empowered one another to embrace our roles as Everyday Advocates. Thanks to Al, my students and Lititz advocacy workshop participants recognized how their seemingly small efforts can have huge impacts on kids, families, and libraries.

5. Open doors wider. Another one of my smart cookies, Hal Patnott, stopped us all in our LIS 777 tracks that same semester when he said, "We already open our doors to welcome patrons of all backgrounds into our libraries. We need to figure out how to open them wider." Brilliant, right?

Great Big Takeaway Summary

1. Step outside your comfort zone.
2. Listen to understand.
3. Temper passion with reason.
4. Be the pebble.
5. Open doors wider.
6. Advocate, don't justify.

Opening our doors wider through Everyday Advocacy means engaging with your library communities to find out who's not using the library and why. You can't be the pebble that does that unless you step outside your comfort zone and listen to understand. See how all these Great Big Takeaways are connected? My workshop participants in Lititz did, and it was magical to see their confidence growing and their resolve deepening as our day drew to a close.

6. Advocate, don't justify. My final words of wisdom in Lititz? When it comes to the Youth Services profession, advocate, don't justify.

What happens when you justify instead of advocate? You feel and sound defensive. You and others get the sense you've done something wrong and need to answer for it. Well, Everyday Advocates, hear this now: You don't have to justify your existence as a Youth Services librarian who wants to improve outcomes for the kids and families you serve. You need to advocate for it. And how do you do that? By stepping outside your comfort zone, listening to understand, tempering passion with reason, and opening doors wider.

With a few tweaks in your mindset and approach, you can make good on all these Great Big Takeaways. You—yes, you—can be the pebble that keeps the action moving forward for kids, families, and strong and meaningful Youth Services librarianship.

Reaching Outside the Library Walls

Sarah Stippich

Sarah Stippich *is the Early Literacy Coordinator for the Free Library of Philadelphia. She is a current member of the Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee and the EarlyChildhood Programs and Services Committee, and was a member of the 2015 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Selection Committee.*

It truly takes a village to raise a child. When we think about getting parents involved in their child's early literacy, it's a good idea to start thinking outside the box and outside the building. Librarians are not the only ones who are invested in a child's success; we need to embrace the whole child, the whole family, and the whole community.

With the Words at Play Vocabulary Initiative, we have implemented creative ways to reach outside library walls to empower parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and others with whom children interact in their daily lives.

Words at Play

Words at Play Vocabulary Initiative is a community-wide initiative by the Free Library of Philadelphia, funded by PNC Grow Up Great. We are currently in our third and final year, and are looking at ways to continue the work of the program after our funding ends. Words at Play Vocabulary Initiative is a community-wide initiative aligned with the five practices of Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR); the grant's focus is families with children ages birth to five years. Through playing, singing, and reading at "play parties," families discover new ideas to help strengthen their child's vocabulary while playing with their children. In addition to the library, organizations collaborating on this initiative include The Franklin Institute interactive science museum, the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Philadelphia Zoo. Words at Play is one cohort of the PNC Grow Up Great multi-year initiative to help prepare children—particularly underserved children—from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

Our service area is one of concentrated low literacy levels and chronic poverty. The communities served by these libraries are predominantly Black and have a high poverty rate.[1] In addition, high school dropout rates are above 40 percent.[2] The 5,279 children under the age of five who live within this community are considered at risk for falling behind at an early age.[3]

Neighborhood Ambassadors

With Words at Play, we have activated a network of community stakeholders to spread the message in their own words, in their own neighborhoods. We have identified the most enthusiastic and well-connected attendees of our Saturday Play Parties and enlisted them to be the face of the Words at Play program. They are given a small stipend and in return they take fliers to community hot spots, make phone calls to parents to encourage them to attend programs, and to share their stories. Neighborhood Ambassadors welcome families at our programs, offer administrative support behind the scenes, and actively participate in our programs. They assist with Pop-Up Play Parties and help identify new inroads to connect families to our resources.

Barbershops and Book Nooks

Barbershops have long been neighborhood touchstones, providing a familial environment and gathering place, typically for men. Why not leverage this community spirit to be a central point to spread the importance of early literacy?

We have established eight Book Nooks in community spaces like barbershops and laundromats by providing each location with a small bookcase and a collection of new books. But the most meaningful aspect is that we ask the proprietors to attend a small, casual workshop at their nearby library about early literacy and vocabulary development, provided by the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children. This gives them a chance to get to know us a little better and to see that they can reinforce children's early literacy in simple, practical ways at their workplace. For example, talking about all the different tools they use exposes children to new words and new concepts.

Jazz the Barber at Creative Image Unisex Salon, featured on the cover of this issue, is a particularly strong advocate of early literacy in our North Philadelphia community. He and his staff encourage children who are in his large, welcoming storefront location to grab a book while they wait for a parent or for their own turn in the chair. And has even initiated a special promotion to customers: free haircuts for children who read to him during their turn in the barber chair.

What community sites do people gravitate towards? How do they gather, and how can you harness their sense of community to spread the word about early literacy?

Celebrating Our Families

Our program celebrates the role of parents and other adult caregivers in their child's vocabulary growth, while we also acknowledge that many parents may not feel well-suited to be their child's first teacher. To address this, we make sure that every program we plan is fun, interactive, and non-judgmental in its approach.

In our predominantly Black neighborhoods, books and activities are chosen with care, ensuring that children see their own beautiful faces reflected back at them in the books we share and that their diverse backgrounds are respected and celebrated. This means not only that many of our books star Black characters and single parent families, but that we actively encourage caregivers to become part of the story. This is truly the "talk" part of ECRR in action.

Adults are asked to share family recipes, to repeat songs, to tell stories in their own words, and to reflect on their own knowledge and skills. Each giveaway book comes with a vocabulary tip sheet with lots of fun, easy ideas for adults to extend learning at home. This way the learning can extend outside the confines of our time together in the library.

Who lives in your neighborhood? How can you empower them to share their stories with the children in their lives? Who in your community can help you spread the word? How do kids read, write, sing, talk and play out in their neighborhoods? Look around you to see if you can harness some of the energy and dedication that your community members have. After all, they want the same thing as you: that every child is ready to read!

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Index to Advertisers

Eloise Comes to Life at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art

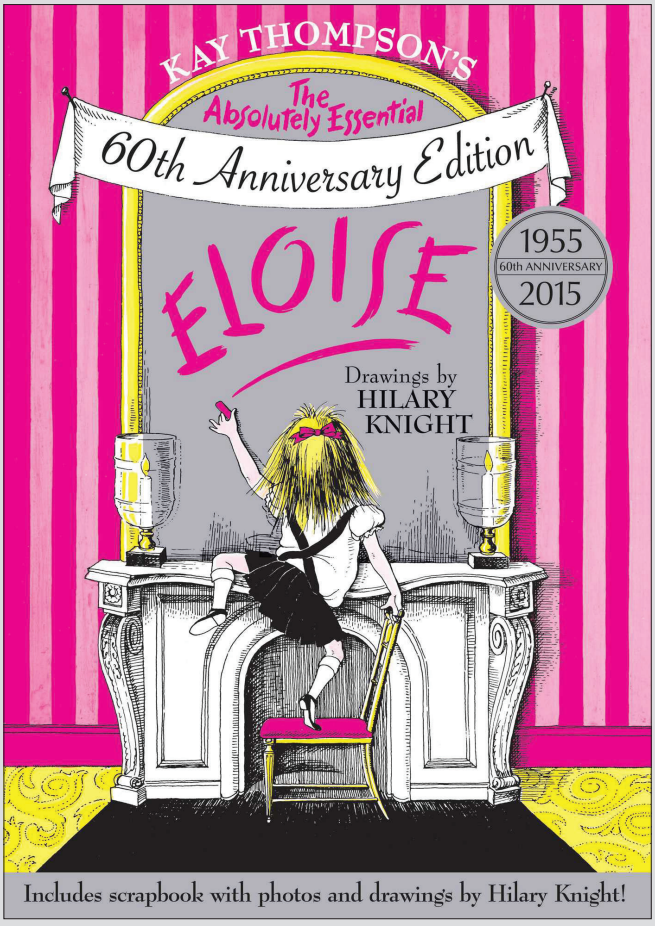
Eloise has been called a force of nature: brazen, ill-mannered, and utterly appealing, the six-year-old terror of the Plaza Hotel. The girl Kay Thompson created in voice and Hilary Knight brought to life through illustration is at the heart of a new exhibition at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts, "It's Me, Eloise: The Voice of Kay Thompson and the Art of Hilary Knight," on view through June 4, 2017.

The first major retrospective of Knight's work showcases more than ninety objects, from Eloise illustrations to art from the rest of his prodigious career as a children's book artist, poster designer, magazine illustrator, and painter. Among the many treasures on display are Knight's 1954 trial drawings for the first Eloise book, two *Eloise in Paris* sketchbooks, a suite of final art from *Eloise In Moscow*, and the 1993 Eloise watercolor for New York Is Book Country. Knight's original 1956 Eloise portrait is also on view.

In addition to the Eloise franchise, Knight has showcased his pictorial skill in *Hello, Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle* (1957), *The Christmas Nutshell Library* (1963), *Beauty and the Beast* (1963), *Where's Wallace?* (1964), and *Sunday Morning* (1968).

Knight's filigree lines gave Eloise an unmistakable image, but it was Thompson's words that gave her a unique voice. Eloise was the author's alter-ego, a comic riff with which she amused her friends. If Eloise has been called a force of nature, Thompson was the eye of the storm. In 1966, Knight created an illustration for *Vanity Fair* in which the iconic cover of the original Eloise book has been altered: the chair kicked out from under her, Eloise fallen to the floor, as the melodramatic Thompson writes "I AM ELOISE" on the mirror above the fireplace.

The mission of The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, a non-profit organization in Amherst, is to inspire a love of art and reading through picture books. The only full-scale museum of its kind in the United States, The Carle collects, preserves, presents, and celebrates picture books and picture book illustrations from around the world. In addition to underscoring the cultural, historical, and artistic significance of picture books and their art form, The Carle offers educational programs that provide a foundation for arts integration and literacy.



Eric Carle and his wife, the late Barbara Carle, co-founded the Museum in November 2002. It houses more than 13,000 objects, including 6,600 permanent collection illustrations. The Carle has three art galleries, an art studio, a theater, picture book and scholarly libraries, and educational programs for families, scholars, educators, and schoolchildren. For more information, call (413) 559-6300 or visit the Museum's website at www.carlemuseum.org.

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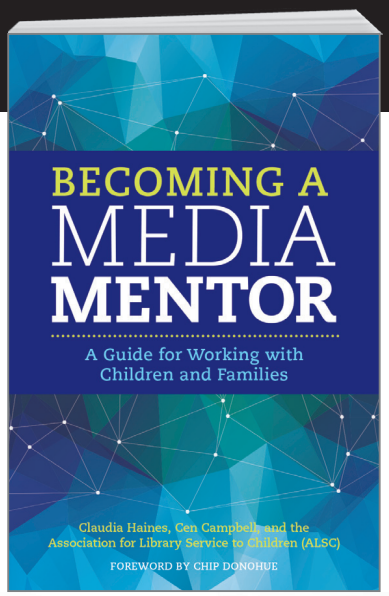

BECOMING A MEDIA MENTOR

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Claudia Haines, Cen Campbell, and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)
Foreword by Chip Donohue

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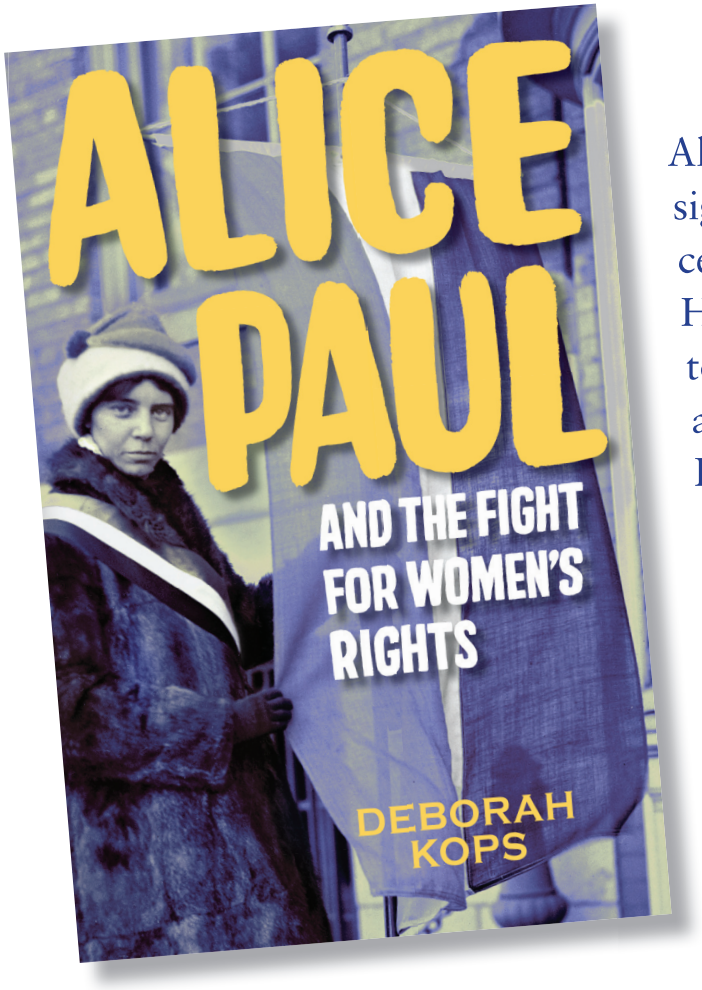

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—*Booklist*, starred review

CALKINS CREEK BOYDS MILLS PRESS Highlights