

Newsletter 2020

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BCALA NEWS

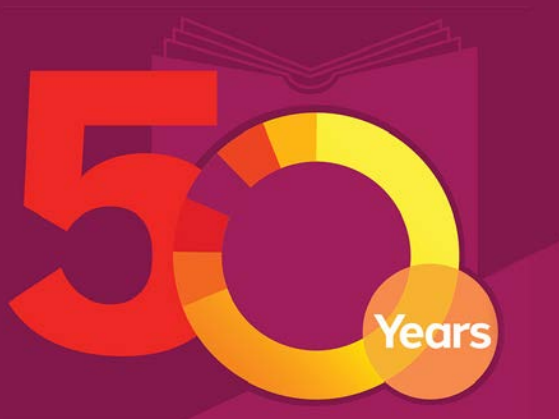
Black Caucus of American Librarian Association INC.

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THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

Shauntee Burns-Simpson, President
Black Caucus of the American Library Association 2020-2022



Greetings Colleagues,

I am pleased to share a quick update on my first three months in office, in an effort to be transparent and keep you informed. In a nutshell, it has been an extremely busy time. In July, I stepped into this role at a pivotal time. From being in a pandemic to protesting for Black lives, we were dealing with situations that were both new and unfortunately not so new. We know the Caucus was formed to address all social and racial injustices against people of African descent and of color. So I immediately scheduled myself, to meet with the Committees and the Executive Board to establish resources and programs to educate and support the work ahead.

The first resources established were booklists, in partnership with the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) and Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (GNCRT). Community, Connecting, Cultivating and Constructing Conversations through Literacy was created with ALSC, as a response to current events. The goal was to help foster feelings of joy and high self-esteem of Black children, while providing opportunities for parents, educators and library workers to talk to children about what they may be experiencing, and answer questions that they may have. Next, Black Lives Matter Comics Reading Lists aimed to draw attention to the Black experiences of the past and present, to demand a new future. It is our hope that these lists will continue to grow and serve as important resources going forward for educators, parents, and readers of all ages. Thank you to the members of the School Librarians subcommittee and the Public Librarians subcommittee, chaired by Karen Lemmons and Tamela Chambers of the Services to Children of African Descent committee, for their work on these projects.

We also partnered with the New York Public Library and Prince George’s County Memorial Library, to do programming that helps heal and support conversations with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. We are establishing additional partnerships to create an electronic guide of programming for library administrators/staff to have as a resource. I’m also proud to highlight the work we did with Netflix on their project, Bookmarks: Celebrating Black Voices. The series focused on race, identity, and social justice in children’s literature.

Thank you to Rudolph Clay & Andrew Jackson, Committee Chairs of our newly consolidated Membership & Affiliates committee. The committees worked so closely with each other that we decided to bring them together to make an even stronger team. Together, they were able to offer a complimentary year of BCALA membership, to students. This supports my virtual tour to library schools across the country, where I meet students and inform them about the Caucus, including its history, mission, & upcoming webinars/events.

We have been offering a wide array of virtual programs and webinars. Huge kudos to our Professional Development committee, chaired by Ana Ndumu & James Allen Davis Jr. These current times, when everything needs to be virtual, that committee’s work has been vital to the organization. Every webinar from the Black Caucus has been successful and I am truly thankful for all of their hard work at this Zoom intensive time.

I would also like to celebrate our IMLS grants’ recipients. Thank you to members Dr. Ana Ndumu & Dr. Shaundra Walker on iBCALA. iBCALA is so critical to our overall strategic plan of creating the future leaders in the library profession. We have a history of leaders within the Caucus and we will continue to support our members to lead out loud. An additional thank you goes to Dr. Deborah Robinson, & Dr. Grace Jackson-Brown on Black History Month (BHM) programming. We are so happy to support programs that tell our story, from our perspective, and help libraries promote the contributions of African Americans.

I would also like to celebrate our article in the latest American Libraries and acknowledge the members who were interviewed in it:

- Stanton F. Biddle
- Dolores Brown
- James Allen Davis Jr.
- Jermaine Dennis
- Rhonda Evans
- Makiba Foster
- Andrew P. Jackson
- Em Claire Knowles
- Victor Simmons
- Shaundra Walker

I would also like to acknowledge/introduce our new team members to BCALA:

- Zakia Ringgold, Organizational Director
- Tiffany Mack, Grants Manager
- Dylitchrous Thompson, Program Assistant (BHM)
- Amber Bryant, Research Assistant (BHM)
- Judie Hawley Conley, Legal Counsel

I work with so many amazing people to get this work done. Thank you to everyone who sent me well wishes and messages of support when I took office and when I had my second son. It was during that time, our amazing Vice-President/President-Elect Nichelle M. Hayes stepped in and I appreciate all of her contributions to uphold the mission of the organization and understand my vision.

My vision that I shared when I took office was to stay true to our roots. Establish an Advocacy committee to focus on supporting library staff in combating unfair treatment of Black and Brown people. As well as, work to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions. Second, I want to see BCALA establishing great reading materials for our communities. Creating booklists, working closely with authors and publishers to support and promote diverse books, and help our communities gain knowledge through reading. Lastly, I want to support our members in becoming the next generation of leaders within the library profession. This sounds like a lot for one person to tackle and you are right. It will require the support of all of you--The Members.

I welcome all the members to join in the efforts. Recently, we shared on the listserv, a committee survey. The survey is the first step to get everyone involved. I want everyone to have the opportunity to serve on a committee. If you would like to help guide BCALA through the coming years – please respond to our Strategic Plan surveys (that will be coming out soon). This is your organization, so let’s build it up. Together we are strong! And together we will make a difference!!

Shauntee Burns-Simpson, President
Black Caucus of the American Library Association 2020-2022

“Commitment to Excellence”

Letter From The Editor

by Nichelle M. Hayes | MPA, MLS



The year of 2020 continues to be one that is unprecedented in its upheaval and turmoil. Now as we enter the final quarter of the year we have shifted into this new normalcy of social distance, masks, rising Covid-19 cases, record unemployment numbers, rampant hunger and deaths that have rocked our country to its core. America encompasses 4.25% of the world's population, according to the United Nations Population Division data and an astonishing 19% of the global Covid-19 cases, according to CDC. America has the highest number of Covid-19 cases and deaths of any other country. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that our country has been hit very hard by this global pandemic. Each family has a different story of the impact that we've felt during this tumultuous year. Some families have been able to keep their jobs and health. Others have a very different story of personal and financial impact as well as loss. For people of African descent the mortality rate is significantly higher

than other groups.

As we move ahead we must redouble our efforts to slow the spread of this deadly virus and mitigate its impact. I encourage everyone not to become weary. Continue to practice social distancing of 6 feet or more. Use a mask either, paper or cloth. Dispose of paper masks carefully by discarding them in a receptacle and then washing your hands. Cloth masks should also be removed carefully and then washed daily. The masks should cover your mouth and nose. Continue to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently during the day. Avoid large crowds especially indoors. As we are approaching the holidays take care when making plans with family and friends. Keep the gathering small. Remain cautious and steadfast so that we can remain safe. Redouble your efforts to increase your health by getting enough rest, eating a balanced diet and getting in daily exercise.

As a people we are not strangers to difficult times. We

have weathered enslavement, war, Jim Crow, red lining and disparate treatment throughout our time on these shores. During this same time we have created the Blues, Jazz, Gospel, Gumbo, rent parties, the Dozens, novels and poetry. We have used our creative energies to rise above our circumstances and make it through to the next day where hope awaits. I encourage us to pay heed to our Mind, Body and Spirit. Each of these components need nurturing. It is up to each one of us to determine how to best attain that balance. During this trying time I have increased my time spent exercising, started a garden and re-read poets who have given me joy in the past. Times

such as this call for resistance and renewal.

We need not look very far to find inspiration and joy. As we navigate these challenge times let us also re-imagine a better world. Many local poets both past and present have an incredible body of work to draw from. Mari Evans, Ethridge Knight, Wendell Parker, Adrian Matejka, Allyson Horton, Too Black, January York, Manon Voice, Chantell Massey and Ethel McCane just to name a few. Take this time to renew yourself as we prepare for the challenging days ahead. We are a strong people, we have survived much and will continue to press on toward the mark. Maya Angelou said, “My mission in life is

not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style”

Mari Evans in her signature poem “I am A Black Woman” from the book of the same name says, “Look on me and be renewed.” Ethridge Knight in his poem “The Idea of Ancestry” speaks of his family by saying, “I am all of them, they are all of me, I am me, they are thee”. We are connected. In that connection find strength.

I see poetry in particular and literature in general as a means for resistance and renewal. Be well.

(This article previously appeared in the Indianapolis Recorder October 2020.)



A JOB WELL DONE

Retirement of Dr. Em Claire Knowles

by Linda Jolivet

This June, Dr. Em Claire Knowles retired after a 45-year career in librarianship and 30 years employed at Simmons University. When asked about her most important achievement, her response was, “contributing to areas of equity and diversity, as well as mentorship for many African American librarians and librarians of Color of the past four plus decades.” Her work to promote and secure financial support for the Spectrum Scholars is another important contribution she has made to the profession as well as other work with ALA committees and affiliate groups, and her ALA legacy gift, and serving as guest speaker at their leadership conference.



As the first African American faculty member in the School of Library and Information Science at Simmons and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs SLIS, Dr. Knowles worked hard to promote Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, throughout her tenure at Simmons. Dr. Knowles was responsible for student and alumnae affairs, and was a mentor to many students, staff and faculty. She helped to create a supportive environment for all students and created a series of diversity summits which helped to define diversity goals at Simmons University. She also was a key figure in establishing an anti-racist study group that facilitated trainings and programs throughout the community.

The Simmons Alumni Association recently awarded her the 2020 Priscilla McKee Award for her outstanding service to Simmons University. Simmons also created a scholarship in her honor (<http://igfn.us/vf/EMCLAIRE>) that will benefit the next generation of Library and Information Science leaders as they complete their Simmons degrees. Readers may contribute to the scholarship by following the above link.

Em Claire Knowles has been a leader within ALA and BCALA. She participated in numerous committees and presentations over the years. She has been a BCALA lifetime member since 1983; BCALA secretary, 1994-1996; BCALA Executive Board member, 1986-1993; 2000-2006; 2010-2013. Chair Orientation committee, 1984-1986, chair, Professional Development and Recruitment, 1988-1990; Chair, John C. Tyson Award Committee, 2000-2006.; BCALA representative to JCLC, 2015-2018; Chair, ALA Relations, 2018-2020; member, National Conference of African American Librarians Planning Committees:1994 -Milwaukee; 2002-Las Vegas; 2004- Fort Lauderdale. Recipient, 2007 BCALA Distinguished Service Award, 2007 and BCALA Professional Achievement Award, 2013.

Dr. Knowles also served as the secretary of the Massachusetts Black Librarians Network and wrote the article about

this group for the book Handbook of Black Librarianship (authors E.J. Josey and Marva DeLoach). She participated in numerous committees and presentations over the years.

When asked about her plans for retirement, her response was “settling in the Sacramento, CA area,” her childhood home), and reconnecting with family and friends. Also, future travel—more countries in Africa, in addition to other countries she has not yet visited. When asked about projects through retirement she said that she will continue working with the Advisory Board of IMLS sponsored grant, “Breaking Barriers” with Ana Adunu, Ph.D and Shaundra Walker, Ph.D.

One of the most memorable conferences was the IFLA conference she attended in South Africa. She was a co-planner for the planning a pre-conference of African and African American librarians. This was a very successful and memorable event for her. She met librarians from many countries and learned about how they served their communities.

When asked about what stands out for her about the profession, she responded, “The ability of librarians to constantly reinvent themselves—to change and adapt—to remain relevant and carve out new territory and new leadership roles. Embracing technology and bringing librarianship into the 21st century with innovation are important adaptations she has seen over the past four plus decades.

Dr. Knowles is a past member of the ALA Executive Board and recently served as ALA Councilor-at-Large. She has authored and co-authored articles on librarianship and has received many awards including the 2020 ALA Equity Award from which honors an outstanding contribution for the promotion of equality in the library profession. (Link to the article: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2020/09/01/2020-ala-award-winners/>)

Em Claire Knowles says she will miss the camaraderie with friends and colleagues and has fond memories of working with and meeting many amazing librarians.



“...we’ve got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love...”

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, Southern Christian Leadership Conference Presidential Address, August 16, 1967

Committee Survey



We want all of our members to have an opportunity to serve on a committee. This survey is that first step. Please complete the survey to indicate your current committee membership as well as where your interests are to serve on a BCALA Committee. Please complete our committee survey here: <https://forms.gle/zn6vUuSRcWh6YG6u8>



Virginia Librarians of Color

By Joslyn Bowling Dixon

Outgoing Chair of Virginia Library Association Librarian of Color Forum and Vice President/President Elect of VLA

I chartered the Virginia Library Association (VLA) Librarians of Color (LOC) Forum after attending my first VLA Council Meeting. I was running for Vice President/ President Elect of VLA and as a candidate, I had to give a campaign speech to the Executive Officers of VLA as well as the Forum/ Committee Chairs. As I looked out from the podium (shaking with nerves), I realized that everyone in the room representing every corner of the state and every corner of library service (Youth Services, Academic, State Legislative Representatives, Annual Conference, Scholarship, etc) was white, except for myself and the immediate Past President, the realization that the need for a VLA LOC Forum was acute, so that librarians of color from all over the very diverse state of Virginia would have seat at the vast high level decision making table and be in the room where things happen.

We started with an official interest group meet-up at the VLA

annual conference in 2018 in Norfolk, VA. From that group, we planned regional networking events in the Charlottesville, Northern VA, and Hampton Roads areas. Many of the librarians and library staff who attended are now officers and chair people regional coordinators, and help run our social media pages. This not only gets LOCs actively involved and participating in their state organization but also helps to further expand career development skills opportunities that librarians of color aren't often afforded.

I am starting a new position as Director of Newark Public Library in Newark, NJ. Olivia Hasan, Youth Services Manager at Hampton University has been there since the first interest group meeting and is the rising chair of the VLA LOC committee. I look forward to seeing the innovative ways she will take the reins and lead the VLA LOC Forum even further, including the exciting collaboration and affiliation with BCALA.



Olivia Hasan and Joslyn taken at Dine Around at the 2019 Virginia Library Association Library Conference. I am in black and white and Olivia is in all black. I am the charter Chair of the VLA Librarian of Color Forum and Olivia is the Rising Chair of the Committee who will be working with BCALA as the primary contact.



Virginia Library Association Librarians of Color Mission and Vision Statement:

The mission of the Virginia Library Association Librarians of Color Forum is to inspire and empower and connect librarians and library staff of color through knowledge, opportunities, and mentorship. Additionally, our aim is to provide allies with opportunities to support Librarians/ Library Staff of Color in professional growth, retention and overall success within the field.

The vision of the Virginia Library Association LOC Forum is to connect Librarians of Color by sharing national and local news of interest to promote information on scholarships, grants, and fellowships, committee and board appointment opportunities to ensure representation and inclusion, and to create formal and informal career mentorship pathways via social and continuing education events.

Leadership

- Chair: Joslyn Bowling Dixon, Prince William Public Library System, jdixon2@pwcgov.org
- Vice Chair/Chair Elect: Olivia Hasan, Hampton Public Library, olivia.hasan@hampton.gov
- Regional Coordinator: Belinda Blue, Loudoun County Public Library, belinda.blue@loudoun.gov
- Regional Coordinator: Mirna Turcios, Newport News Public Library, turciosme@nnva.gov
- Regional Coordinator: Demetria D. Edwards, Henrico County Public Library, demetria.edwards@sjsu.edu
- Social Media Chair: Cedric Clark, Prince William Public Library System, CPClark@pwcgov.org
- Academic Librarian Liaison, Alexandra Flores, William & Mary Libraries, adflores@wm.edu
- Award Committee Chair: Kimberly Knight, Chesapeake Public Library, kknight@alexlibraryva.org

A New Day

Greetings Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA)

Let me start off by saying, thank you for allowing me to step into this role at such a pivotal time. So much is happening in our country and around the world, that it may seem overwhelming. It's at this time you appreciate your family. The Caucus wants to serve as your professional family, where you can come to connect, cultivate, collaborate, and celebrate.

This year we are introducing a Membership Management System along with a productive partnership with Skill Type a talent management tool to help us connect in a substantial way. From mentoring to professional development we want members to get their needs met. Through programming, we want to cultivate our members in becoming the next generation of leaders within the library profession. Again, we want to make a positive impact in your career. We will have a series of programs focused on our history because you can't move forward if you don't know where you come from. Secondly, but this will take time, is our Leading Out Loud Symposium in partnership with ALA where participants will get a certificate of completion to add to your resume. A lot to get done and much more to look forward to.

BCALA will stay true to our roots and we will establish an advocacy committee to focus on collaboration and fundraising efforts that will influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions. This will involve updating our bylaws to allow us to get the important work done in these unprecedented times.

Second, we want to be at the forefront establishing great reading materials for our communities. Creating booklists, working closely with authors and publishers to promote positive images of African-Americans and help students gain knowledge through reading. The Services to Children of African Descent committee will heavily support this initiative. This year, there will be two subcommittees, School Librarian committee and the Public Librarian committee. Again, a lot to get done but with more members in the committee this helps to divide the work.

Last but certainly not least, it's BCALA's 50th Anniversary and we are supporting our affiliates and committees to celebrate all year long. So look out for opportunities to participate and celebrate our amazing organization. I look forward to celebrating our accomplishments, together. The work ahead is a lot for one person to tackle. It will require the support of everyone-- the Members, Committees, and our Executive Board.

A special thank you to Past-President Richard Ashby, Jr. for setting me up for success and another thank you to my Vice-President Nichelle M. Hayes for her help and support to get these things accomplished. Together we are strong and together we can make a difference.

Thank you,
Shauntee Burns-Simpson
BCALA President

Spectrum Scholarship

YALSA Needs You! Spectrum Scholarship! By Monica Porter



Are you a youth services professional? Are you a MLIS student that is specializing in working with the youth community? Are you someone that advocates for not only yourself but the community at large including youth? Here is your chance to take advantage of this opportunity!

YALSA sponsors two Spectrum Scholars who are interested in serving youth aged 12-18 in a library setting. If this is your interest and you would like to apply, please do so by visiting: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/spectrum/apply>. The application process runs from October to March every year.

What is the Spectrum Scholarship Program? It is a program that helps support diverse communities by (Indigenous, African American, LatinX, Middle Eastern, North African and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students) recruiting and providing scholarships to students obtaining a graduate degree and leadership opportunities within the profession as well as ALA. If you are interested or know of someone who would like to be a part of this program, please share!

How do I know I am eligible?

You should:

- Be a citizen or permanent resident of the U.S. or Canada
- Identify as Indigenous, African American, LatinX, Middle Eastern, North African and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Attend an ALA-accredited graduate program (<http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/accreditedprograms/directory>) in library and information studies or an AASL-recognized School Library Media Program (<http://www.ala.org/aasl/about/ed/caep/programs>)
- Be enrolled in an accredited program and begin no later than September 1st or Fall semester
- Have full or part time status
- Plan to maintain a minimum course load of two classes per semester while receiving your scholarship funds

This is your opportunity as an Information Professional to have a voice, right to advocate for and to make a difference when it comes to the profession of librarianship and implement the representation for our youth in communities of color. Change is necessary and never unwarranted.

Book Review



“I Am Every Good Thing”

by Derrick Barnes and illustrated by Gordon C. James

I was fortunate to receive an advanced copy from the publisher called, “I Am Every Good Thing.” This book is a definite winner and will be enjoyed by young readers when it is released on September 1, 2020. Barnes lyrically describes to the reader:

I am good - I am worthy - I am proud and deserve respect. I am a lot of things, all are good, and it is the good that you must see in me as I see in myself.

These are daily affirmations I can teach my nephew who I see represented in the story and illustrations. Here’s a excerpt that just made me melt:

“I am good to the core, like the center of a cinnamon roll.”

Working in K-12 education, oftentimes the beauty

African-American boys is lost because the focus is concentrated on academic achievement, athletic abilities and behavior. The book is scheduled for release on September 1st and it’s SO hard not to talk about the entire book and ruin it for others. I just can’t help myself, here’s a couple of stand-out excerpts from the story:

“Black boys are that ball of energy,” this description reminds me of a couple of my students and my nephew. They struggle with staying in their seat, they are thinking ahead of you, recognizing they can help in any situation and they want to be a part of the mix. They view themselves as a superhero with the ability to conquer any challenge they encounter with humor, a smile and bright eyes to match.

There’s another page where a man is peering at a



teenaged boy with a quizzical look on his face. Because of the racial times that we live in, I find myself reinforcing the same messaging to my African-American male students that parents engrain in their minds. Be polite, courteous, a gentleman and scholar at all times, especially when others are suspicious or don’t think you are worthy. The man featured on this page is staring at the teen could be interpreted as surprise, respect or suspicion, regardless this is a teen and he will make mistakes and is still learning about ‘people’ and how to navigate in this complex and racist society we live in.

Despite the negative narrative in our country, the illustration of a father and son is an accurate depiction of African-American fathers with their sons. The smiles and interaction is accurate while sharing what looks to be a common love: basketball. Sports can often serve as a bonding tool between father and son. I fondly recall my brother and late father watching Chicago Bears Football on Sunday’s after church. My mother and I were responsible for bringing snacks to both of them while they screamed and barked at the television set. This ‘good noise’ often interrupted my Sunday reading time but I wouldn’t trade it for the world. My brother was happy to get that uninterrupted time with my father as he schooled him on the game while cheering for Chicago Bear greats Gale Sayers, Walter Payton and William ‘Refrigerator’ Perry.

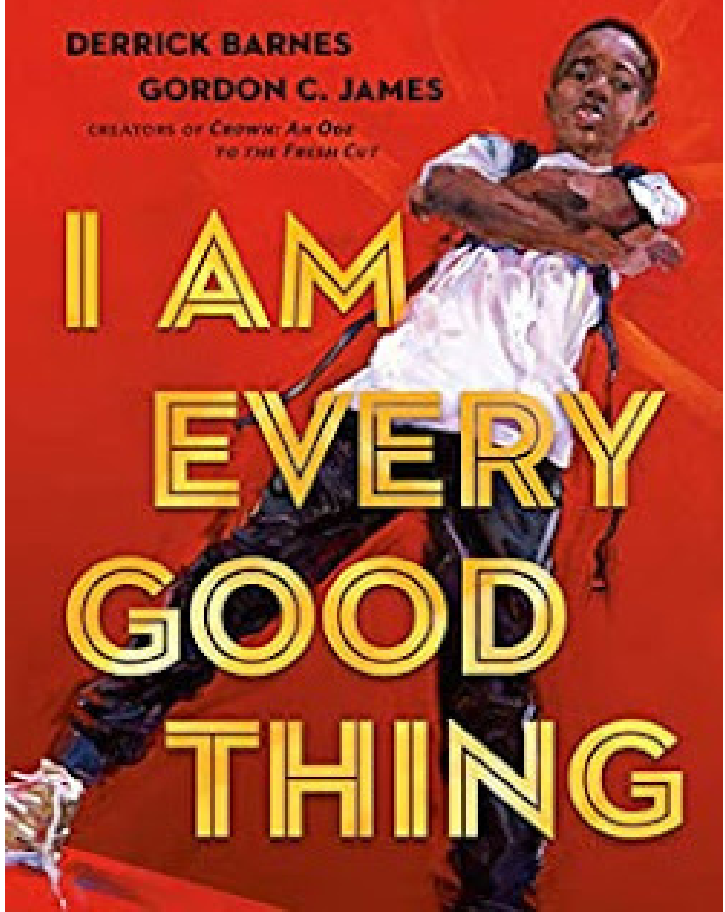
That interaction moved from the home to the field with my father yelling encouragement from the sidelines as my brother played pee-wee and high school football.

The story ends simply with:
“I am my ancestor’s wildest dream”
“I am worthy to be loved”

Simply said, my brothers thank you for writing such a beautiful book that celebrates the true essence of African-American boys. Barnes and James you have written a masterpiece that will be celebrated and loved for generations to come.

By K.C. Boyd

Reprinted from The Audacious Librarian Blogspot
<https://theaudaciouslibrarian.blogspot.com/2020/06/easy-like-sunday-morning-black-boys.html>



Advocacy For School Librarians

By K. C. Boyd

Library Media Specialists (school librarians) in the District of Columbia Public School System are faced with a new district policy that gives schools the option to cut school library programs. This policy makes Library Media Specialists “non-essential,” giving principals the option to eliminate school library programs for students.

“Over the past 10 years, DCPS has seen more growth than any other urban school district in three out of the four categories measured – 4th grade reading, 4th grade math, and 8th grade math. DCPS is also the second fastest improving urban school district in 8th grade reading. Since 2009, DCPS has increased the percent of students scoring proficient in every grade and subject, and decreased the percent of students scoring below basic.”

[District of Columbia Public Schools Website](#)

Despite these gains, the district permitted principals to dismiss library media specialists and close library programs. These closures

took place heavily in Wards 7 & 8 of the district where primarily African-American families reside. The loss of library media specialists and programming has a devastating impact on the growth and well being of the African-American school age children and young adults.

Some statistics for you to ponder:

- In Ward 3, every school has a full-time library media specialist.
- In Ward 6, 16 of 18 schools have full-time library media specialists; one additional school will have a part-time library media specialist.
- Of the 20 DCPS schools in Ward 8, more than half of all schools will not have a full-time library media specialist; seven schools will not have a library media specialist on staff and an additional four will only have the position funded on a part-time basis.

DC School Libraries are the equalizer in education and the community. Not only do readers score

higher on standardized tests, earn higher grades, and demonstrate more success in reading comprehension, fluency and writing, they also become better citizens. Self-identified adult readers volunteer more in their communities and vote at higher rates. If kids love reading, they will read more. Plans to staff library programs with teacher aides and volunteers is a disservice to the students. This action would demonstrate a gross inequity in education provided to a segmented group of learners who need the support a library media specialist can provide.

DC school children need and deserve a robust school library program staffed by a full-time certified library media specialist. Now it is up to everyone in the District and across the nation who cares about the future of education and literacy to speak up in support of DC students and school librarians. Please take a moment to sign the petition to support our advocacy.

Save School Libraries Petition

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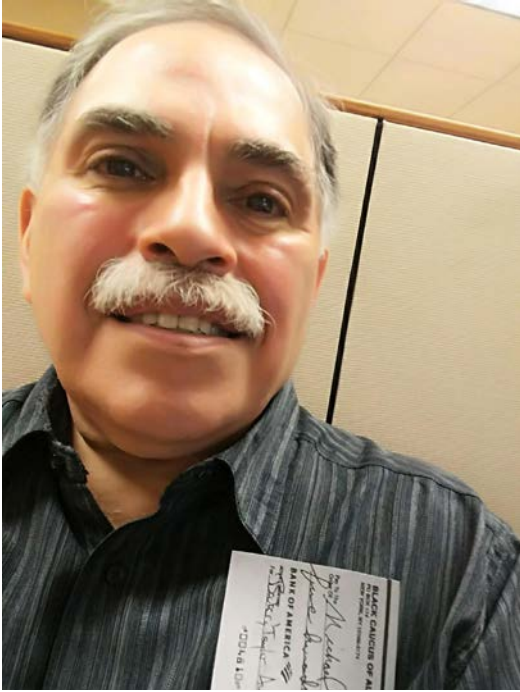
BCALA 2020 Library Support Staff Awards

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association announced the second BCALA/Baker & Taylor Library Support Staff Awards for 2020 in its most recent Virtual Committee Meeting on Sunday, June 28, 2020.

The winners of the award which includes a stipend, a

Live in Chicago is appreciated by users and especially children, and his work help the library have the “look and feel of a museum”.

The other awardee is Michael Torres who has been employed at the Indianapolis Public Library since 1997. Mr. Torres was commended for his concern



“

Mr. Torres was commended for his concern for better wages and working conditions for other Indianapolis Public Library employees evidenced by a two-year campaign of “courting” the Library Board and the City Council for AFSCME Council 62 for IN/KY

Awardee: Michael Torres

plaque and a year’s membership in the Association, were Lewis Addison, Library Associate at the Bessie Coleman Branch of the Chicago Public Library and Michael Torres, a Public Service Associate with the Indianapolis Public Library.

Mr. Addison is also a retired Chicago Defender photographer. His nomination indicated that his creative work and extensive knowledge of African American

for better wages and working conditions for other Indianapolis Public Library employees evidenced by a two-year campaign of “courting” the Library Board and the City Council for AFSCME Council 62 for IN/KY. Mr. Torres was also applauded for his consistent assistance with the Center for Black Literature & Culture. Kudos to Mr. Addison and Mr. Torres. The Association also thanks Baker & Taylor for its generous support of this award.

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CHANGE AS OPPORTUNITY

By Nichelle M. Hayes

Recently I had the good fortune to speak with the talented and accomplished Makiba Foster, Library Regional Manager leading The African American Research Library and Cultural Center (AARLCC), Broward County Florida. Foster is a member of BCALA as well as a former Editor of the BCALA Newsletter.

Foster has been very busy since assuming her position at the AARLCC a year and a half ago. A \$30,000 dollar grant has been secured to celebrate the famous Floridan Actress Esther Rolle whose 100th Birthday will occur in November of 2020. Rolle was from Pompano, FL. The grant was awarded from the Community Foundation of Broward to create an original play about Rolle and will debut in March 2021. The AARLCC will be creating content focusing on Rolle’s legacy as a ground breaker in Television as well as a cultural icon of Bahamian Descent.

In July of 2020 the AARLCC held a Virtual Book Festival. Foster is using the challenges of Covid to expand the reach of their programming outside their geographical boundaries for a broader reach.

The year 2020 has been one full of acknowledgments and triumphs for Foster’s intelligence, hard work and diligence. Foster was recognized for her work by Legacy South Florida, a magazine serving South Florida’s Black community. Foster’ work landed her on their list of “Most influential and powerful black professionals for 2020”.

Foster is leading an ambitious project that was grant funded \$150,000 by the Laura Bush 21st Century



Makiba Foster pictured.

Librarian Program to archive the Black Experience online in a partnership with NYPL - Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Auburn Avenue Research Library in Atlanta and the African American Museum and Library at Oakland. The formal title of the grant is “Archiving the Black Web: A National Forum to Map the Landscape, Define the Issues, and Plan a Strategy for Documenting the Black Experience Online.”

Asked about what she sees in the future for Librarianship, Foster mentions, “Covid-19 has created a paradigm shift. I do hope to see, for black collecting institu-



tions, we are here to serve the black community as a whole. The physical structures aren’t as important in this moment of distance. In trying to provide content not limited by geographic boundaries, we must find better ways to collaborate to meet the information needs of current and future members of the Black community.

Foster says the response to Covid-19 with regard to processing the separation, anxiety, and death has been “Elevated Black creativity and Black genius on display in online spaces. In terms of creating collective spaces of joy and community during these uncertain times, a lot of it was led by Black people. Through pain, Black people have always found resilience to create beauty. Unfortunately, that has been our story in this country, but imagine what Black folks could create if free from the constraints of racism, sexism, classism...”

In her final thoughts Foster challenges us to, “Process what this [global pandemic] means as we move forward in the future with respect to its impact on services, collections, and our communities. Things are never going to be quite the same and that’s not necessarily a bad thing.

Library Calendar 2021



Kwanzaa 2020

Saturday, December 26 -
Friday, January 1, 2021

January 18, 2020

MLK JR Day

January 20, 1924

E. J. Joesy’s Birthday
Josey was born Elonnie Junius Josey in Norfolk, Virginia

Jan 22-26, 2021

ALA Mid-Winter (Virtual)

Jan 2022

Indiana Black Librarian Network (IBLN)
20th Anniversary
<http://indianablacklibrarians.net>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCORE WEBINAR SERIES

by Monica Porter

Are you working remotely from home and would like to work on your professional and personal development? I have the series for you! The National Conference of Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education webinar series. This conference was scheduled Tuesday, June 23 - Friday, June 26 of this year in New York. However, NCORE, like many other conferences this year, was canceled due to COVID-19. In order to keep engaged, they started providing free and low cost webinars in place of the in person experience. These webinars are based on social justice, DEIA, and many other topics that we are facing today and more exposed by the pandemic.

What is NCORE all about? According to NCORE's website, "it addresses the resurgence of racist incidents in higher education. Since its inception, the conference has evolved into a vital national resource for higher education institutions, providing an annual multicultural forum that attracts Black/African Americans, American Indians, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latino/as, and European Americans representing campuses across the United States." So it is a highly successful group of professional staff, administrators, departmental chairs, faculty, both grad and undergraduate students, diversity officers, deans and many others. The webinars created can be for everyone in your organization: librarians, library staff, library students, administrators and the community at large. For more information please click here or use the link: <https://www.ncore.ou.edu/en/webinar-series/>.

For a listing of upcoming webinars, please see the following:

December 2, 2020

When They See Us: Experiences of Black Males Navigating Historically White Institutions - FREE

January 27, 2021

The Forgotten Constituency: Engaging Staff in Campus DEI Initiatives - \$25.00

February 3, 2021

ADOS, Sh*t-Hole Countries, and (Which) Black Lives Matter: Engaging Contemporary Intra-racial and Transnational Dynamics Surrounding Black College Students - FREE

February 24, 2021

The MIS-Education of the Black Male Student-Athlete: How Socio-demographic (Self) Identifiers Influence their Identity Development and their Involvement in College - \$25.00

March 3, 2021

Accepted to Assimilate: Implications for Racial Mismatch Between Education Ph.D. Students and Their Faculty - FREE

March 31, 2021

Using Autoethnography to Develop Race Cognizance in White Folks on Campus - \$25.00

April 7, 2021

Killing Me Softly: Suicide Among African American, Asian, Pacific Islander and LGBTQ+ Students - FREE

April 28, 2021

To Be Announced

FUN FACTS

Did you know that the University of Michigan, University Library participates in a summer youth employment program every summer? Yes we do! We have been participating in the program since 2015! University of Michigan, Library Operations has partnered with Washtenaw County Summer Youth Employment Program, which assists young adults, The program has been developed as first job opportunities to build job/interpersonal skills, networking, and understanding work cultures. The program runs from mid-June to mid-August. This past year, 2020, has been the 5th year that Library Operations has partnered with the program, which is now a part of the University of Michigan's Poverty Solutions pres-

the pandemic this year, the program was entirely virtual.

The virtual program consisted of the following:

Virtual Mentorship - Sharing our career story and introducing a young adult to potential career pathways by meeting with them once per week for 30 minutes for 8 weeks. We will be partnered with a



from the ages of 16-24 with summer employment. For more information about the program, please go to the following website: <https://www.mwse.org/summer19-youth-employment-program-builds-life-long-networks-careers/> identical initiative. This was gladly accepted based on our outreach initiatives being formed at the time. The youth employees are normally housed at various libraries throughout campus to experience other library cultures. However, due to

young person with the same education and career goals.

Virtual Job Shadowing - host a remote job shadow or virtual tour for young people interested in your

career field. We can meet with youth to show them what you do.

Guest Speaker/Panelist at Enrichment - Join the program at a virtual enrichment session to speak for approximately 30 minutes about your career path and experience as a professional.

We have developed many partnerships within the library in addition to myself and a core team of two colleagues that assisted with mentorship with the young people in the program. We even have a few of the youth employees from previous summers stay on and continue to work for the library while now being at other universities. It is very important to know that we partner our youth employees with our college student staff in the library. So they learn about college life through the eyes of our college student staff and in turn our college student staff develop their leadership and mentoring skills. This has been a big success for the library, our college student staff and the youth employees.

I also would like to mention that when it comes to the library profession, this is a win. The profession needs more diversity and what better way than to start at the high school age level? We are introducing future youth to understanding what a librarian does and understanding the library culture as a whole. Being a librarian, especially a librarian of color, and working with young adults is a beautiful position to be in at this time. Young people are the voices of today using social media platforms for social justice topics and libraries are a strong part of this.



So do you have a story to share? We would love to hear from you and for you to share with the rest of your colleagues about the wonderful things you and your library are doing. Reach out to our team!



BEING BLACK IN LIBRARIANSHIP

by Twanna Hodges

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are core values of librarianship, but we're still a long way from library staff reflecting the demographics of their communities: more than three quarters of librarians are white, and just 6.8% are Black. The American Library Association's Spectrum Scholarship program is one program working to change this, offering funding, mentorship, and support to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) library sciences students.



Here, 2013 Spectrum Scholar Twanna Hodge—diversity, equity, and inclusion librarian at the University of Florida—shares her experiences and advice about being Black in librarianship.

What has your experience as a Spectrum Scholar been like?

As a Spectrum Scholar, I am connected to the Spectrum Community and over a thousand strong supporters. It's been a positive experience. Spectrum allowed me greater access to leaders in the field, especially those that identify as BIPOC. I have been mentored and mentored others, collaborated with many, and had painful, therapeutic, emotional conversations with folks. Spectrum is one of the spaces that allows me to be able to be myself, no masks, code-switching, or having to prove or justify my existence or experiences. I can see myself reflected in these spaces, and I have role models. I can grow and develop myself and others. Through the sacrifice and support of others, I can be who I am to thrive and not just survive in this profession.

What inspired you to pursue a career as a librarian?

I wanted to become a librarian because I initially wanted to provide access to the wonderful worlds in books. Then in graduate school, it morphed into helping people find the right information at the right time to influence their lives for the better hopefully. It was also about empowering people to take their place in gathering, organizing, and disseminating their knowledge, information, and data.

Only 6.8% of U.S. librarians identify as Black. How would libraries be different if the profession better reflected the diversity of this country?

We should acknowledge that we have never been living up to our profession's Code of Ethics which states, "We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access;

and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.” By truly realizing workforce diversity on par with our communities, library services, programming, and resources will be more tailored, equitable, culturally relevant, and inclusive. Then libraries will genuinely be for all, and the question of our relevance and funding issues will be diminished. The people in libraries (workers and patrons) will feel comfortable. They won’t have to defend, explain, justify their existence, or that they deserve to be treated with human dignity and respect regardless of the darkness of their skin, and these socially prescribed and constructed identities and categorizations.

What advice would you share for Black people considering a career in librarianship?

Center Blackness. Center yourself. Learn about Black librarianship history and current events. Carefully research library schools. Choose the best library school for your needs (online, residential, part-time, full-time, and more) that meets your standards, connects with your values (social justice, equity, and inclusion), aids in your job attainment, and supports your career and professional development. Apply to ALA’s Spectrum Scholarship Program, Association of Research Libraries Kaleidoscope Program, and any scholarship and grants available through local, state, regional, and national library associations. Becoming a librarian is an emotional, physical, mental, and financial investment, so make sure you are ready. Ask yourself, what are you willing to sacrifice to become a librarian? Will the return be worth the risk? Know your worth. Learn how to advocate for yourself.

Gain experience in libraries if you can—conduct informational interviews with those in positions that interest you. Find a mentor. There are many areas and specializations within librarianship, and you are not



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Ask yourself, what are you willing to sacrifice to become a librarian? Will the return be worth the risk? Know your worth. Learn how to advocate for yourself.

relegated to just one in your lifetime. Know and understand the difference between having a job, having a career, and being in or a part of a profession. Know when you need to leave all or one of them. Your professional identity doesn’t come before your salient identities, needs, and wants. Critique your decision to become a librarian. Learn about vocational awe and savior complexes. Build support networks.

It’s a marathon, not a sprint, so pace yourself. Learn how to say no. As someone said to me, no is a full sentence. Join the relevant group from the National Associations of Librarians of Color (which include the American Indian Library Association, the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Chinese American Librarians Association, and REFORMA) if you can afford to do so.



How do you practice self-care?

Work-life separation. Taking breaks. Maintain support systems/networks. Reading fanfiction. Volunteering. Hanging out with friends. Putting my needs and wants first. Learning that my value and worth is not tied to what I do or how useful I am. Taking care of my body—walking, drinking water, getting annual checkups, taking naps, et cetera. Taking care of my mental health and taking care of my emotional health.

Is there anything else you’d like to share?

Become a Spectrum Supporter. Donate, if you can. Racial justice and racial equity are everyone’s job, especially if you are white or benefit from whiteness. Race is a social construct created to justify white supremacy and the standardization of whiteness. The impact of race and racism (systematic, structural, and institutional) is real and has been intentionally built into the United States of America’s fabric. There’s no leveling the playing field. It’s about educating ourselves, being transparent, holding ourselves and others accountable, eradicating anti-Black racism, and dismantling white supremacy.

Donate to the Spectrum Scholarship program to help build more diverse, inclusive, and equitable libraries. For resources and information around

#BlackLivesMatter in libraries, visit the [Libraries Respond Website](#).

Upcoming
✓ **BCALA**
Webinars

Working Together: How Can Public and School Librarians Support Each Other

✓ **Dec. 6, 2020**
06:00pm Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Register in advance for this webinar:
<https://bit.ly/3q5YOfY>
This webinar will explore the benefits of public and school librarians working together to strengthen their respective libraries and serving their communities. They will discuss unique programming, service, shared resources, and professional development opportunities through a formal presentation and informative dialog. In addition, attendees will see examples of successful public/school library collaborative programming, shared print/digital resources, and the development of advocacy efforts through marketing and branding.

Social Change Book Club: Creating a Brave Space to Discuss Community Issues

✓ **Dec 14, 2020**
02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Register in advance for this webinar:
<https://bit.ly/3pVWjZc>
For the past 5 years, staff from Denver Public Library have been hosting a non-traditional book club called R.A.D.A.: Read. Awareness. Dialogue. Action. R.A.D.A. strives to bring communities together by using books, such as Michelle Alexander’s The New Jim Crow, as a vehicle to discuss issues and possible solutions. Learn highlights of the program’s promotion, operation, and impact. Get tips on how you can form a similar book club at your library or organization. Presenters: Hong Ha, Jennifer Dewey, and Gregory Martin

BCALA is pleased to continue the Black Voices Series, co-presented with the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, Prince George’s County Human Relations Commission, and Loyalty Bookstores.

Call for Abstracts

2020 has been a bittersweet year. It marks 50 years since both BCALA's founding and the first publication of *The Black Librarians in America*. Yet, it has also been a challenging year in that many of us have experienced tremendous stress and pain. With this paradox in mind, BCALA extends chapter invitations for a forthcoming book: *The Black Librarian in America: Reflections, Resistance, and Reawakening*. We invite full chapters on the important role that Black librarians play in U.S. society. Chapters that draw on the achievements of African American/Black librarians to address ongoing social inequality are fitting. In light of persistent social and racial inequalities - for example, health disparities exposed by COVID-19 along with the racist murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and others - this monograph will contribute to ongoing conversations on ways of increasing anti-racism, empowerment, and representation in the LIS field and beyond. The editors also welcome critiques that rethink or probe Black librarianship.

Prospective authors should submit up to 1000-word abstracts to blacklibrariansbook@bcala.org by December 15, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern. Visit our website for additional information.

AWARDS

The 2020-2021 E J Josey Scholarship Award Committee of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association seeks essay submissions that address the following topic:

- ✓ Should librarians be neutral in social justice initiatives? Pick one side and write the reasons you have come to this conclusion.
- ✓ The E. J. Josey Scholarships are unrestricted grants of \$2,000 awarded annually to African American students enrolled in or accepted by ALA accredited programs.

PERSONS WISHING TO APPLY MUST:

Be an African American Citizen of the United States or Canada.

Be enrolled or accepted by an ALA-accredited graduate program leading to a degree in library and information science at the time of application.

The deadline for the essays is December 20, 2020.

Essays should be submitted in Microsoft Word to:

ejjoseyscholarship@gmail.com

The winning essay(s) will be announced on Sunday, January 25, 2021.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Include a cover letter providing the applicant's name, address, phone number, graduate program, and name of school and anticipated date of graduation.

Essay submissions must be in plain text, Microsoft Word format to be mailed electronically as an attachment.

Only essays submitted electronically will be considered. Please include E.J. Josey in the subject line of your electronic submission. The essay must be typed, doubled-spaced.

Please use the MLA style and include a minimum of six bibliographical references.

Essays will be judged based on good argument development, critical analysis, clear language, conciseness, and creativity.