

# Helping Patrons Hold on to Their Dreams

Evelyn S. Field Library at RVCC builds an information station for undocumented patrons

By **Jennifer Sulligan**,  
 Adjunct Librarian, Evelyn S. Field Library, Raritan Valley Community College

On November 29, 2016, Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) President Michael McDonough issued an important message to students via the college newspaper, *The Raritan Valley Record*. The message, delivered shortly after the 2016 presidential election, addressed the wave of anti-minority actions occurring on college campuses and underlined RVCC's commitment to inclusion and diversity.

"We will not tolerate any acts of discrimination or hostility towards our students or towards our colleagues," it read. "We will celebrate the rich diversity of our student body and of our faculty and staff. We will encourage all students, regardless of age, income, national origin, gender identity or gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability to join our community and to feel safe and secure. We will promote acceptance



Jennifer Sulligan at the resource station for undocumented patrons at the Evelyn S. Field Library at Raritan Valley Community College [Photo by Jose Romero]

and civility. We will value critical inquiry, creative expression, and the creation of new knowledge. We will affirm that Raritan Valley Community College promotes the transformative values of accessible, affordable public education. We will imagine a campus and a community where all are honored and equal and where the possibilities of achievement are endless."

RVCC's Evelyn S. Field Library is unique in that it serves not only students and faculty but also members of the community, thanks to its lending agreements with both the Somerset and Hunterdon County Library Systems. The spring 2017 semester was just beginning at RVCC as the 45th U.S. president was settling into office, spreading uncertainty across diverse populations.

Carina Gonzalez, RVCC's outreach librarian, noted

that undocumented students—current and prospective—are in need of assistance. They want access to information: what

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# Message from the PRESIDENT

## Speak Freely

Hi! I'm Michael Maziekien, and I'm sharing below an excerpt from my address at the NJLA Leadership Luncheon at the 2017 NJLA Conference. But before you read it, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to those of you who have taken the initiative to speak out over the last few months. To all of you who have reached out to share your thoughts on our association, while raising greater questions about professional ethics and how we can truly be a force for good in our communities, I admire your courage and your conviction. I hope we will work together toward a better future for libraries and those we serve.

And I also want to thank all of you for being a part of this organization. I've learned more from you in 10 years than I ever expected to learn in a lifetime. My experience with NJLA has been positive and welcoming, and I don't regret a second of it. I want that experience for all of our members, and I will work with you to make that a reality.

And finally I want to thank the NJLA staff—for your dedication, your commitment, your expertise, and your coping with my various missed deadlines.

This year, I ask that you speak freely, lift up your voice, and take an active role in defending the rights of our users and laying the groundwork for the future of our profession.

As we reach a late stage of NJLA's strategic plan, I hope to hear feedback and new ideas for the organization's future. I will work with the executive board to further NJLA's goal of improving interaction and communication among its members, and to find new ways to measure and articulate the value of a strong and active professional association. We will continue to express the importance of library-supporting legislation, expanded access to library services, and the role of library media specialists in education. In addition to these

ongoing efforts, NJLA will provide a forum to discuss, evaluate, and codify the most essential principles of our profession, through the creation of a Core Values Task Force that will reach out to our entire membership.

Speak out. In this process, and in all aspects of your involvement with NJLA, I hope that you will speak freely, raise your voice and share your ideas and concerns.

Speak loudly. Libraries are places of reflection but not silence. We must send out a consistent message that our work is essential for an educated populace and a functioning democracy.

Speak volumes. Yet there's an ongoing narrative about the pending obsolescence of libraries. We need to be louder than that narrative. Libraries have survived thousands of years, wars, fires, plagues, and the fall of global empires. Through our outreach, advocacy, editorials, and publicity, we must make it clear: We're not going anywhere.

Speak for yourself. Each one of us contributes to a broad base of knowledge and experience. Together, we can work to create a truly inclusive environment for our users and in our profession.

Speak out of turn. There's no such thing as having too little experience, or being too out of touch, to take part in this dialogue. Every opinion deserves to be heard, whether you're celebrating your first job offer or your retirement.

Speak up for solidarity. We need all your voices. If you have a platform, use it, to create platforms for others who do not share your advantage.

Speak up for privacy. To defend those who place their faith in us.

Speak up for education. To create new opportunities for future generations.

Speak up for equality. While breaking

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Proposals will be due  
on or around February 1 (Spring issue); May 1 (Summer); August 1 (Fall); and November 1 (Winter).

## **Mission Statement of the New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter**

The *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter* is one of the official publications of the New Jersey Library Association and serves as a vehicle for communication of library issues and activities among the members of NJLA.

## **Editorial Statement of the New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter**

The *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter* shall provide news of NJLA and information about statewide, regional, and local library activities.

News shall be as current as possible within the constraints of the publication schedule and the publication will serve as an archival record of significant and lasting library issues and topics.

The *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter* shall provide reports from officers, committees, roundtables, sections, and other units of the NJLA.

It shall also publish reports on trends and practices in the library profession and articles on topics of interest to the New Jersey library community. Ephemeral issues and time-sensitive topics will be covered in the Listserv or the association website.

Inclusion of an article or advertisement in the *New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter* does not constitute official endorsement by NJLA.

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## Letter from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### You Can Speak Your Mind, but Not on My Time

The title of this column is taken from a line in a Billy Joel song called “My Life.” I think it has a great deal of relevance to the topic of free speech and its importance to librarianship.

There were two extremely disturbing incidents this summer that highlighted the complex nature of free speech in our society.

The first was the violence that occurred at the University of California, Berkeley surrounding the scheduled appearance of Milo Yiannopoulos. That speech never occurred—instead violence erupted throughout the campus. Unfortunately, I never saw any response from ALA.

Isn’t the support for free expression one of the core values of librarianship? Shouldn’t the library community be the first to condemn violence when it interferes with an individual’s ability to speak freely and openly? Were individuals denied the opportunity to hear his speech and evaluate its content? Doesn’t violence always have a chilling effect on speech?

It is not my intent to defend what he has to say, but I always thought librarians, who strive to uphold the highest principles of intellectual freedom, would have defended his right to do so. You don’t have to agree with his content to defend his right to say it. Peaceful protests are acceptable, but violence is not.

After this incident, Lulu Garcia-Navarro, who hosts NPR’s Weekend Edition program, interviewed Lee Rowland, senior staff attorney for the ACLU.

When asked what the case was for defending Yiannopoulos, Rowland replied, “Well, the case for Mr. Yiannopoulos is the same as it would be for any speaker, no matter how despicable or offensive we might find them, which is that the First Amend-

ment protects our right to speak out on matters of public concern, to talk about things that are as offensive as the things that Mr. Yiannopoulos says without censorship by the government. And ideally, as in his case, without people physically preventing him from speaking at a place where he had every right to speak.”

When Garcia-Navarro asked if hate speech was different, Rowland responded that “there’s no question that the things that Mr. Yiannopoulos says are unbelievably hateful in nature. But the phrase *hate speech* is a form of free speech. Again, in defending the rights of others to speak, whether or not we agree with them, we must all reach out and protect the speech that we most disagree with or else the First Amendment is just reduced to a popularity contest and has no meaning.”

The other troubling incident involved the neo-Nazi protest in Charlottesville. Unfortunately, this resulted in the death of a woman who had gone there to peacefully protest. As a response to this horrible incident, several tech companies banned, blocked, or deleted a list of websites and apps associated with neo-Nazis and white supremacist groups.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), a digital rights group, protested the action. It stated, “Protecting free speech is not something we do because we agree with all of the speech that gets protected. We do it because we believe that no one—not the government and not private commercial enterprises—should decide who gets to speak and who doesn’t.”

Their statement concluded with, “We would be making a mistake if we assumed that these sorts of censorship decisions would never turn against causes we love.”

Shouldn’t the library community join with EFF in protesting the removal of websites from the internet, and isn’t

this a form of banning speech?

In contrast, the California chapter of the ACLU broke with its national organization by declaring “white supremacist violence is not free speech.”

The debate will continue. Whose speech is protected? Maybe that’s what Billy Joel meant when he said, “You can speak your mind. But not on my time.”

**Pat Tumulty**

## Have Something to Say?

Speak freely—send a letter to the editors. Send letters to [newsletter\\_editor@njlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org). Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

### Message from the President

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down barriers to opportunity that currently exist by fighting for human rights.

Speak truth. To act in the best interests of our communities and build trust even in a cynical world.

Speak from your heart. Most importantly, I hope that you will never lose the drive that first brought you to this wonderful, adapting, sometimes frustrating, often exhilarating, always indispensable profession.

Be bold and be heard, because you are the voice of NJLA.

**Michael Maziekien**

# Responsive, Nimble, and Independent

## Willingboro Public Library charts a unique course

Since 2003, the Willingboro Public Library has been situated in the middle of the township's Town Center, a large shopping mall located along Route 130 filled with retail establishments, restaurants, and ample parking. Occupying a spacious 42,000 square feet, the library, along with the next-door Willingboro campus of Rowan College at Burlington County, serves as a community anchor for the entire facility and is heavily used.

Most of Burlington County's 40 municipalities are served by the county library system, but Willingboro—along with Moorestown and Mount Laurel—operates as an independent municipal library and has done so since being incorporated in 1960. Both the library and the township share an interesting history.

Until the mid-1950s, Willingboro was a sparsely populated rural enclave, but in 1954, the famous postwar suburban developer Levitt & Sons selected it as the site of its third major housing



project, purchasing most of the land, starting construction, and selling the first new homes in 1958. The following year a referendum resulted in the town being renamed Levittown and its population grew dramatically from fewer than 1,000 residents to over 43,000 by 1970. Sociologist Herbert Gans spent two years living there as the new town was being established, and his subsequent in-depth study, "The Levittowners," became a classic in field research.

The Levitt company immediately ran afoul of New Jersey's anti-discrimination law when its president, William Levitt, publically announced he would not sell homes to African-Americans, resulting in legal action that was settled only in 1960 when the state Supreme Court ruled against Levitt. By then Levitt opted to embrace



The front entrance of the Willingboro Public Library in the Willingboro Town Center shopping center [All photos by Richard Kearney]

**In upcoming issues, Richard will be profiling new faces and places in New Jersey libraries. Got a tip? Let us know at [newsletter\\_editor@njlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org)**

integration, albeit in a low-key manner, and continuing struggles for civil rights led to the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968.

A few years later the township joined the organization National Neighbors, which promoted integrated housing, and Willingboro—its name restored following another referendum in 1963—became increasingly diverse. By 1990, some 40 percent of Willingboro's population was black or African-American and by 2010 this figure had risen to over 70 percent, making it distinctive among communities in Burlington County. Approximately 15 percent of its residents are foreign-born, including a large number of people hailing from anglophone African countries, and the town's proximity to the McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst military facility has also made it a home to many veterans.

Though the library has been independent of the county system since its inception, a 1995 report from the state to the township recommended it join the county system. At a public hearing to gather community feedback on this proposal, citizens testified overwhelmingly in favor of the library remaining independent, and this support led to the formation of a vigorous Friends of the Library organization.

To get a sense of how the library has pursued its mission since then, I spoke with Director Christine Hill. She began working at Willingboro as a children's librarian in 1990 following 16 years spent at the Mercer County Library and the Free Library of Philadelphia. She became assistant director at Willingboro in 2003 and director in 2014.

For Hill, the chief benefit of independence is the ability to focus exclusively on local needs. "We are extremely responsive to our community—that's what we pride ourselves on. Everything



A wall of paintings from the library's art exhibit room near the entrance.

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## Responsive, Nimble, and Independent

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we do is tailored specifically to Willingboro. Every item we buy, every program we hold, all our policies, and people in Willingboro believe that's the best thing for them."

### Engaging Their Community

To ensure continuous community engagement, the library employs a full-time outreach specialist and regularly seeks input from residents.

"We do surveys every year, we are very active in going out to the community, and we constantly get feedback on what people need. We have a strategic plan and get a lot of public input as we do it. It's a three-year plan so we can stay nimble."

Public input also factored into design of the library's current space, which includes an exhibit gallery, a café, a computer center, several meeting rooms, and a recently opened co-working space where small business owners who do not have office space of their own can work and network with others in similar situations. The meeting rooms are constantly used.

Hill noted that another room was originally intended to be used for watching videos and other media, but as advances in digital and mobile technology rendered that purpose unnecessary, the room will soon serve as space for Willingboro's initial foray into maker-spaces.

"We have an active sewing group, so we're going to buy some sewing machines and turn the room into the beginning of our maker-space," said Hill.

The exhibit gallery usually features the work of local artists, and Hill noted that Willingboro is home to a significant number of talented artists, some of whom also exhibit their work in New York and Philadelphia. Elsewhere in the library, a number of paintings and other works are on display, donated by artists who exhibited in the gallery in the past.

The library's full schedule of programming covers an array of topics, but a highlight of each year is an African cultural festival, initially launched as an outreach program to engage the growing immigrant community. Hill notes the library wanted "to do a series of programs that would introduce the immigrants from Africa to the American-born black community, and it was a huge success."

The library was recognized for this program in 2014 as a recipient of the New Jersey State Library's first Multicultural Program Award. Today the library has four African employees on its staff, and "that's been a good thing for us because the African community does use the library a lot," according to Hill.

The library received two grants this year. One, from the state's Department of Labor and Workforce Development, provides funding for instruction in English as a second language. The other was for

## "We just relentlessly programmed to help people in every way"

Christine Hill, director, Willingboro Public Library

the NJSL-sponsored "Fade to Books" program, which assists libraries in partnering with local barbershops to promote youth literacy by donating collections of children's books to the shops.



The Library's Local History Room features many objects from the township's early Levittown years.

Hill noted that Willingboro's library board supplemented these funds with additional money raised through a popular fundraising event now in its seventh year, the Del Payne Memorial 5K Run/Walk, named in honor of a founder of the library's Friends organization and a former member of the board.

Hill has high praise for the board, who are all "very active, very concerned. They do education, they go to the NJLA conference, and they attend our annual staff development day. We have an excellent library board."

### Time to Respond

As was the case with libraries throughout the state, the recession hit Willingboro very hard, entailing a budget cut of \$350,000 that forced both staff layoffs and a reduction in hours.

To deal with the fiscal implosion, the library "reorganized, outsourced most of our technical services, and everybody really worked hard to get us close to where we were in terms of services."

In particular, "we just relentlessly programmed to help people in every way.

Since 2010, we've assisted 3,000 people to find jobs. The other thing we have really concentrated on in recent years is assisting people who are running small businesses, as a lot of people are running businesses online or out of their garages," said Hill. "There's hardly a week that passes that we don't have something, and we have been making the case with the township that the library is an economic engine in the community."

Despite economic adversity, a focused dedication to community needs has helped Willingboro thrive as an independent municipal library. While there are real benefits that membership in a county system can confer, including easy access to a larger collection, Willingboro has taken full advantage of its status to be a true mirror for its community, an anchor for both the Town Center and the township itself.

*Richard Kearney is electronic resources librarian at William Paterson University in Wayne. He holds an M.L.S. from Rutgers University in New Brunswick. His email address is kearneyr@wpunj.edu.*

# THIS YEAR'S DO-INGS...

The NJLA Diversity & Outreach Section (D&O) was established in November 2013 by combining the LGBTQ Roundtable, the Special Populations Section, and the Bookmobile Roundtable together with a shared mission. Since then, our motto has been D&O Spells DO.

We are a very active section with a fairly large membership. Because diversity has a place in everything we do in librarianship, we try to have a say in things that NJLA does. Many of our section leaders and members are also active in other sections, committees, and organizations, and come from a variety of library types, including public and academic, across the state. We are only as good as our members—and fortunately for us, our members are awesome!

This year, we have agreed to focus on planning one major initiative: our very own Diversity Conference. This free conference, to be held in November 2018, will energize librarians and enhance our understanding of what it means to serve a diverse community. The Diversity Conference will be presented as two half-day sessions. Day one will be themed around issues of social justice, and day two will be focused on issues of ability—all as it impacts libraries, library workers, and the public we serve. Attendance at both sessions is not mandatory; we simply want to reach as many public, academic, and school library workers as possible. We are currently accept-

## NJLA MEMBER UPDATE

***In upcoming issues, we will be profiling the sections and committees that make up NJLA. Who's next? Let us know at [newsletter\\_editor@njlamembers.org](mailto:newsletter_editor@njlamembers.org).***

ing program ideas and proposals from all library workers in New Jersey. Anyone who is interested in joining the Diversity Conference Planning Committee is welcome to help us put on this exciting and groundbreaking conference—the first of its kind since 2010!

D&O put together two free information sessions on the status of the Affordable Care Act. The sessions, which were held at the Elizabeth Public Library and the Gloucester County Library System's Mullica Hill branch, were open to all library staff who wanted to know what their library can do to help get the word out about this year's shortened six-week enrollment period and how to find and engage partners to help with enrollment assistance. A free webinar with information for any and all library staff

to access will be available soon. With cuts in funding to

organizations like SRA, the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and our state Navigators, libraries need to get creative and work twice as hard to ensure that this open enrollment period is not forgotten.

As always, the D&O section is planning great things for the NJLA Annual Conference in May 2018. We are hopeful that, as in years past, all of our program proposals will be accepted—yes, we are high achievers! We are currently soliciting program proposals from anyone in NJLA, so please reach out to section leadership to let your voice be heard at this year's conference! Some of our recent programs have been centered on the topics of ADA compliance, disability services, and serving LGBTQ populations. We are particularly interested in programs that shed new light on the myriad "diversities" in our communities today, including culture, race, gender identity, socioeconomic, disability, labor, and more. What ground have we yet to cover? Whose voices have you not heard at the conference? What should librarians be thinking about and working toward? We want to hear from you!

Our leadership this year is made up of Section President Jen Schureman, head of youth Services at Gloucester County Library System, and Section Vice President Ally Blumenfeld, head of information and adult services at Elizabeth Public Library. Please contact Jen ([jschureman@gcls.org](mailto:jschureman@gcls.org)) or Ally ([ablumenfeld@elizpl.org](mailto:ablumenfeld@elizpl.org)) if you have any questions or ideas related to the D&O Section. Happy DO-ing!

**Ally Blumenfeld**  
Vice President,  
Diversity &  
Outreach Section



## Helping Patrons Hold on to Their Dreams (Continued from page 1)

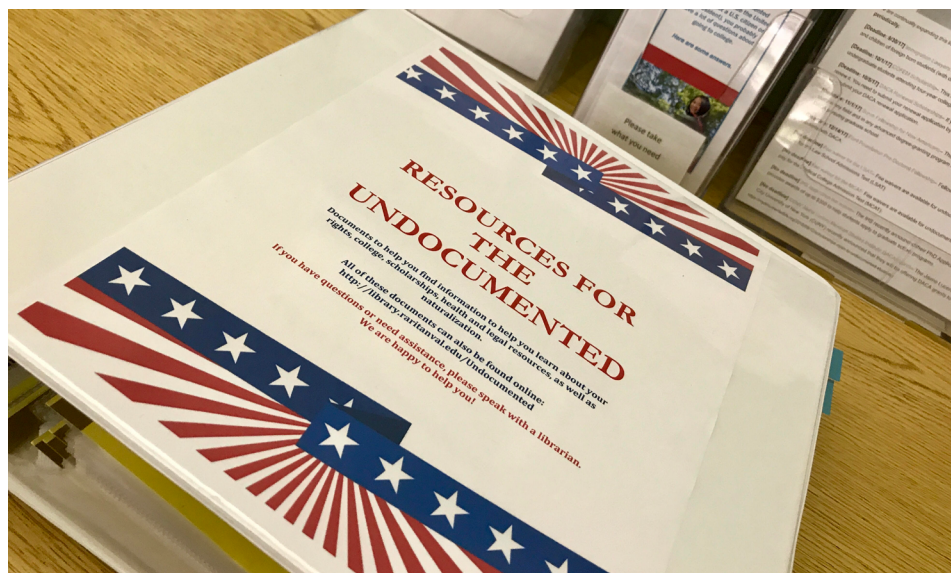
their rights are, how to get started in college, the scholarships that are available to them, legal services, health resources, access to on-campus support, and immigration services. She tasked me and a colleague, Adjunct Librarian Suzanne Kosempel, with collaborating on creating an information station for undocumented students.

Suzanne, Carina, and I conducted most of the research at the end of RVCC's spring 2017 semester. We outlined the main areas of informational need: basics of citizenship and immigration, help available to students on the RVCC campus, education resources (scholarships, NJ state tuition information), legal services, support for immigrant youth, temporary protected status, green cards (indicating permanent residence status), health resources, and diversity resources.

We bookmarked links, printed guides and applications, and met a couple of times to review our findings and refine our focus. We made multiple copies of applications and single-page documents of note so that patrons could take them home. We assembled lengthier documents and handbooks into binder form, which we keep at the information station for review by patrons and staff.

We created a LibGuide to house all of the helpful links in one place. We also assembled three handouts based on our findings: "On-Campus Help for Undocumented Students," a guide to help our undocumented RVCC students navigate their experience here; "Six Things Undocumented Students Need to Know about College," a resource for prospective college students; and "Information and Resources for the Undocumented," a brochure containing all of the links found in the libguide.

Although the opening of the station was delayed as a result of the increasing uncertainty surrounding Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), we made the decision to provide whatever help



A binder at the resources station containing documents and handbooks for undocumented patrons [Photo by Jose Romero]

and information we could that was valid and reliable. We came up with a multimedia display consisting of the brochures, one-page handouts, and comprehensive resource binder. We posted the LibGuide containing e-versions of all the printed material to the library's website, as well as links to more information.

The station is situated in a quiet, unobtrusive area of the library, within sight of the reference and circulation desks, and next to the outreach librarian's office. This placement

accomplishes two goals: it provides patrons with a space that is both private and conducive to reading the

materials, and it allows staff to provide assistance to those who need it.

A press release heralded the arrival of the information station, as did announcements on the library's website and Lion's Den (RVCC's online portal). We sent announcements to RVCC's Admissions Department, Multicultural Affairs Office, dean of Student Services, Financial Aid department, and New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF), and email blasts to students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, we placed posters around campus and at the Hunterdon and Somerset County libraries.

We unveiled the information station on Monday, September 25. The release of this valuable resource for RVCC's undocumented patrons came

about soon after the announcement that INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine had, for the fourth time, honored the college with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award. RVCC was the only college in New Jersey to earn the award this year.

So far, reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. Richellen Dashield, dean of Multicultural Affairs at RVCC, called the final product, "a wonderful project that serves as a model of inclusive excellence." Patrons slowly but surely began to take the available brochures and handouts provided. As word spreads, we expect its use to increase greatly.

Support will not end with completion of the station. Immigration attorney Sonia Frontera was scheduled to appear in the Robeson Room of the RVCC library on October 17. The purpose of her visit was to offer support to the community about DACA and Temporary Protected Status (TPS), immigration status, and protected rights. Private, one-on-one consultations were available during the session.

For more information, visit the Information and Resources For the Undocumented LibGuide at <http://library.raritanval.edu/Undocumented>.

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# Libraries as Creative Spaces

By **Lexi Majeski**, Youth Services Librarian, Ocean County Library, Barnegat Branch

The maker and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) movements have been gaining national recognition in recent years as libraries shift their focus from the traditional warehouse of knowledge model to the more modern and innovative community space model.

While some view this shift as irrelevant to the library field, I have to disagree, as this has opened a beautiful outlet for many in the profession, myself included, by marrying maker creativity with passionate librarianship. I truly love being a librarian (as in, “if I won the lottery, I would still probably work at the library” kind of love), and being creative is something I not only need in my life, but relish. I have been able to grow personally and professionally by participating in these two movements.

The maker and STEAM movements have also allowed me to observe changes happening within the field, such as a change from static programming toward programs with more versatile technology, and also programs aimed at patrons with different abilities. For example, within my library system, we have had success with incorporating our maker kits into programs for children with autism and autism spectrum disorders.

One of my favorite programs from this past summer involved using Strawbees. For those unfamiliar with this device, Strawbees are plastic connectors you can place in straws to connect and build with. I love these toys because they always seem to take kids by surprise with what they are able to build. During the program, a frequent patron, who is on the autism spectrum, was fascinated with building different Star Wars ships. In the past I have struggled to keep his attention (or been subject to long discussions about the differences between reptiles and amphibians, which I love but does tend to take the focus away from the program), but with this activity he was focused and engaged for the entire hour. I love my talks with this particular patron and am thrilled that he still talks about building the Death Star—it lets me know these programs make an impact on kids.

Another maker/STEAM program I’ve enjoyed was hosting a drop-in style program where I set out directions and supplies and let the participants work at their own pace. I was unsure exactly how my idea would go, and whether or not it would be chalked up to a Pinterest-style fail. My vision was to make a pipe cleaner figure dance on top of a paper cup using

vibrations from staples on the side of the cup. When you run a pen against the staples, the pipe cleaner figure moves. It was a hit! Watching kids light up as they saw for themselves how their experiments worked was more fulfilling than I can describe. It was also a pleasant surprise to see normally shy kids who keep to themselves working with other

kids to teach them how to get the figure to work. I’ve found a strong sense of community among participants in maker/STEAM

programs—I think it has to do with the feeling that everyone is just as clueless in trying to figure things out, and that helping one another can be fun.

A sense of community and teamwork are only two examples of the benefits driving to incorporate STEAM into programs and services. Patrons now require a space that meets their ever-evolving needs. Parents want supplemental learning and creative support for their children. Adults want to experience and keep up with new technology. With the addition of makerspaces and the ability to test technologies such as 3-D printers, Silhouette cutters, and green screens, libraries are embracing a new role.

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***One of the universal truths about working in public spaces ... is that you never know who will walk in the door.***

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# PEOPLE & PLACES

## Around the State

### Honors, Awards, and Recognition

**Bloomfield PL** was awarded an NJ Council for the Humanities grant for "Take Pride, Bloomfield!" The project will examine the narratives that shape the LGBTQ+ experience in Bloomfield and beyond.

**Cherry Hill PL** was awarded an NJ Council for the Humanities grant to run the inaugural One Book, One Cherry Hill community read project this fall. The selected book is *Songs of Willow Frost* by Jamie Ford, and the author will be visiting the library on November 15.

The **Pemberton Branch of the Burlington County Library, Franklin PL (Somerset County), Princeton PL,** and **Wayne PL** were awarded grants from ALA and WETA Washington, DC, to receive a programming kit for "The Vietnam War," a 10-part documentary film by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick that will air on PBS stations.

**Susan Quinn**, director of the Ocean County Library, and **Michele Stricker** of NJSL provided guidance to library colleagues in Texas to help after Hurricane Harvey, sharing how libraries responded in New Jersey after Superstorm Sandy.

**Red Bank PL** was awarded \$1,500 from Investor's Bank to help with an ongoing digitization project that will make a variety of material, including Red Bank Regional High School yearbooks, available online.



*Deena Caswell*

### Appointments and Elections

**Deena Caswell** was named supervisor of outreach and diversity at Cherry Hill PL. She was previously outreach librarian.

**Eleonora Dubicki** was promoted to professor at Monmouth University. She was previously associate librarian, reference & instruction.

**Bob Keith** was named director of library law, per capita state aid and statistics at NJSL.

**Adriana Mamay**, reference and instruction librarian at Middlesex County College Library, has been promoted to the rank of assistant professor.

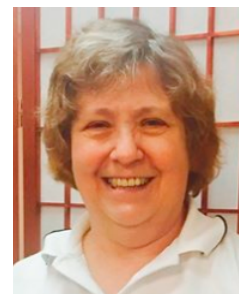
**Kathleen Peiffer** is the new deputy state librarian for library support services at NJSL. She had previously worked at the NJ State Library before becoming State Librarian of New Mexico.

### Deaths & Remembrances

**Gail Rosenberg** died Aug. 12, 2017. She was director of Metuchen PL and was instrumental in the development of the New Jersey Library Network.

### Resignations/Retirements

**Betty Steckman** retired after 13 years of service with NJLA as the database manager.



*Betty Steckman*

## WRITE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

of the

*New Jersey Libraries NEWSletter*

**Winter 2017/18 - The Future in Libraries**

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## Libraries as Creative Spaces

(Continued from page 8)

One of the universal truths about working in public spaces (especially libraries, in my opinion) is that you never know who will walk in the door. We see people from all walks of life and backgrounds. This is also true of the participants of maker and STEAM programs.

Many people may believe that libraries are boring, stagnant places where people are outnumbered by stacks of books, fossil-age technology, and shushing librarians. We are anything but that. The unpredictable and innovative nature of maker and STEAM programs advertise to the public something that librarians have always known: libraries are intriguing ecosystems in their own right. The fact that libraries are staying ahead of the curve of innovation has also started to capture that elusive 19- to 35-year-old demographic. The involvement of this group in library programs can help sustain the life of the library.

Another trend I have noticed is the increasing involvement of outside organizations, such as NASA and Google, partnering with libraries to raise awareness of what we have to offer. For example, I am sure the solar eclipse glasses were the bane of many librarians' existence for at least a few days this past August. However, there was undeniably a boost in foot traffic as well as library use. Initiatives like this fit well within the STEAM umbrella, and while I have certain reservations about the use of social media, I believe there are clear benefits, such as increased awareness for libraries and their respective programs in mainstream consciousness. It is not a one-sided relationship, however. Outside organizations also benefit from the boost in publicity and business. Partnerships with outside organizations have helped to bring libraries out of the past by advertising their programs and services. Libraries have traditionally promoted through newspapers and word of mouth, but the reach of contemporary social media is unprecedented.

I truly believe that libraries will always have a purpose within our society, even if that role continues

to evolve and change shape over the coming years. Fifty years ago we were, among other things, a place for doing homework, completing research, and of course, reading for pleasure. Twenty years ago we still did all of those things plus libraries became a space for digital users. Our services and collections grew to include audiobooks, computers, Playaways, video games, and online databases. Today, we offer all of the above in addition to being makerspaces and community centers. I like to think of the library system as a living organism, similar to an oak tree. Our roots run deep and are entrenched in our country's history. Our core duties and responsibilities constitute our trunk. New technology represents our branches.

I, as much as anyone, do not know whether certain branches will grow. All I can do is watch and try to nurture growth, and this to me is a fulfilling way to spend my professional life. I believe libraries may grow and change but will always be an important fixture in our society, whether it be as a place of creation, pleasure, comfort, business, or even solace.

*Lexi Majeski is a youth services librarian with the Ocean County Library. She holds an M.L.I.S. from Rutgers University. She has been an avid follower of the maker and STEAM movements for a few years, and has experimented with new ideas within her programs (she is happy to write she has never had to evacuate the building because of said programs, and may or may not have lost an eyebrow). Her email address is amajeski@theoceancountylibrary.org.*



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