

Delaware Libraries as Second Responders in Emergencies and Disasters

Delaware libraries have taken on unique and unconventional roles in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it is safe to say that everyone hopes the pandemic is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, other emergencies and disasters, such as flooding, hurricanes, fires, and tornadoes can occur with more frequency and regularity. And libraries can continue to play an active role in responding to these types of events. In addition, libraries can assist their patrons in being better prepared for such events by providing important information and resources.

In 2017, the Delaware Division of Libraries hosted a summit, “Disaster Recovery for Delaware: Exploring Potential Partnerships among Emergency Planners, First Responders, Librarians and Others.” The summit was held at Dover Downs and saw representatives from 21 Delaware libraries in attendance along with emergency managers and first responders from all three counties. The summit was the beginning of ongoing activities that support the continuing exploration and development of Delaware libraries’ role as second responders in emergencies and disasters.

A more recent outgrowth of the summit is the Delaware Libraries and Disasters Initiative (DLDI). Over the past one to two years, the DLDI has hosted a quarterly Roundtable that has continued to involve library representatives, state and county emergency managers, first responders, and representatives of other stakeholder groups. Until summer 2020, Roundtable gatherings were held in person at the Dover Public Library, with meetings moved to the Zoom platform in July due to the pandemic. The Roundtable provides a unique opportunity for idea sharing and information exchange to better support libraries’ preparedness and outreach efforts regarding emergencies and disasters.

The DLDI Roundtable is looking to expand representation from public libraries across the state. The Roundtable meetings are held on the third Thursday of

January, April, July, and October and the next Zoom meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, October 15**. If you are interested in participating, would like more information about the DLDI, or you know of a fellow library staff member who might be interested, please contact Pat Young, DLDI Chair (and South Coastal Public Library staff member), at patricia.young@sussexcountyde.gov or 302-539-5231.

Submitted by: Pat Young



Available Now!

The September edition of the [Delaware Journal of Public Health](#) is devoted to libraries! Check it out!

Delaware Journal of Public Health

A publication of the Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association



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Free books for children!
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Dolly Parton's Imagination Library provides FREE books by mail for children from birth up to age 5, statewide!

A program of First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney's First Chance Initiative, brought to you by Delaware Libraries.

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delawarelibraries.org/kidscards



Volunteers needed at MLA/DLA Conference

Volunteer to help plan social activities at the 2021 DLA/MLA Conference!

The DLA Conference Committee is seeking volunteers to help with planning social events for our 2021 joint conference with the Maryland Library Association in May! Opportunities include:

Working with the MLA Social Committee to help plan their pub quiz!

Working with DLA staff to brainstorm and plan fun events, like karaoke or a craft night!

Helping to run the silent auction, including collecting auction baskets from each division and volunteering for shifts to help set up, monitor the auction, and tear down afterwards.

If interested please reach out to:

jennifer.wilson@dtcc.edu or

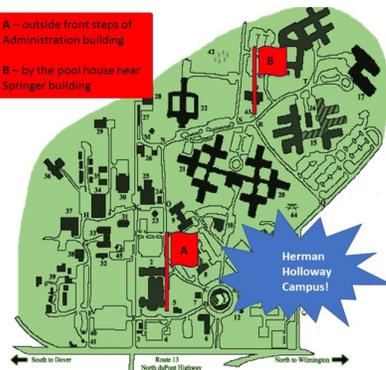
alisonwessel.dla@gmail.com

Submitted by: Jen Wilson



DHSS Installs Little Free Libraries

This summer the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Library installed two little free libraries on the Herman M. Holloway Sr. Health and Social Services campus in New Castle. With Department leadership support, the little free libraries will help build community and the love of reading. Our little free libraries are part of the LittleFreeLibrary.org network. Jill Fredel, DHSS Director of Communications, says that seeing the bright red box by the front steps of the Administration building makes her smile when she arrives in the morning.



Another opportunity for DHSS employees is the monthly D.R.I.V.E (Diversity and Racial Inclusion Virtual Engagement) Book Discussion Group starting in September 2020. This online book group facilitated by employees across the Department brings participants together at lunch

time to discuss some of the big ideas of our time using books to frame the discussion.

Submitted by: Anne Hiller Clark

Update from the Social Justice Committee

2020 has so far been a year full of change and uncertainty, which has proven to highlight inequities in our society. When I became chair of the (then-named) DLA Diversity Committee in July, racial justice was front of mind as protesters across the nation spoke out against the disproportionate amount of police violence that Black people face in our country. Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts have made progress on increasing diversity in our spaces and drawing attention to issues that affect marginalized groups. The newly renamed Social Justice Committee works to right systems that perpetuate inequality and work for greater social justice in Delaware libraries.

The term “social justice” can be polarizing -- it is inherently political (because it involves policy) but it isn't about being “liberal” or “conservative.” Social justice strives for a version of society where everyone has equal opportunity and receives fair and just treatment. Those who are LGBTQ+, part of a racial minority, women, poor, or members of a certain religion often face discrimination and injustice when interacting with societal institutions, which include everything from banking to criminal justice. It is our role as DLA's Social Justice Committee to draw attention to and recommend ways to right these injustices specifically as they occur in Delaware Libraries. Among other things, we do this through outreach events to the public, establishing relationships with similar community organizations, and leading professional development programming for DLA. For example, I and DLA SJ member Julie Brewer are currently facilitating a study group (sponsored by the YWCA) on Ibram X. Kendi's book *How to Be an Anti-racist, with the intention of fostering discussion and coming up with action plans to implement anti-racist policy in Delaware libraries.*

Membership in the committee is open to anyone in DLA, and we especially welcome those in all types of library roles. We maintain a mailing list (DLA-SJ) to keep communication open and request members to work on projects. For more information, reach out to me at kabner@udel.edu.

Submitted by: Kayla Abner

Professional Pipeline Recommendations: Recruiting African American Librarians

I grew up in a military family, traveling from state to state, from one base to the next for most of my childhood. In the late 90's my family settled in Delaware and I attended, and graduated from, Glasgow High School. Fast forward to 2010, when I applied for a position at the Laurel Public Library as a part-time evening and weekend circulation supervisor. From the moment that I started, I fell in love with the profession and I knew I wanted to be a librarian. In 2012, I accepted the position of Youth Services Librarian for the Laurel Public Library. The first time I encountered an African American librarian in my entire life was when I became one. I was my children's first African American librarian. As we stand here in 2020, with African American librarians making up only 5% of librarians in the United States and African American men, 0.4%, there is a clear need be intentional about recruiting African American librarians into the profession (ALA, 2012). But this is just my story. Every child, adult, and patron in Delaware should see themselves represented throughout all areas of the library, including library boards, administration, staff, librarians and the collection.

Recommendation 1 - Community outreach & engagement - Having young people, who are in high school or college, volunteer in the library is one way to provide exposure to the profession. Tiered programs, with progressively increasing responsibility, will allow you to gauge their maturity while providing them with a multidimensional awareness of librarianship. Completion of this pathway could lead to a part-time employment opportunity, which after two years the employee may be eligible for the Ada Leigh Soles Memorial Professional Librarian and Archivist Incentive Program. More importantly, it is necessary to encourage the exploration of the various areas of librarianship through site visits and mentoring.

Recommendation 2 - Connect with librarians of color - As one example, Delaware State University and University of Delaware academic libraries are both led by African American men with a combined 50 years of library experience. Connecting with these library directors, who have made an impact on the library world, in their own rights, would accomplish two goals. First, it would allow young people to see African American men in administrative roles in the library. Secondly, it gives the students an opportunity to engage with an academic library. Prior to COVID-19, organizing a tour of the library would have been one way to accomplish this; however, a short 'Get to Know the Librarians in Delaware' Zoom series could be launched.

Recommendation 3 - Library School - Finally, Delaware needs a Library School and I want to help build it. All my undergraduate and graduate coursework in library and information science took place outside of the State of Delaware. What if there was an institution of higher education in Delaware that was willing to bet on the impact that a library and information science curriculum would have on training our staff? Recruiting diverse populations into the profession? Providing continuing education to Delaware residents?

I have lived in Delaware for nearly 30 years. I graduated from high school here. I raised my children here. I have seen the power of Delaware libraries firsthand, both through my own personal experiences as well as my professional work. I know the impact that seeing yourself in the library can have. My oldest daughter is in library school today. Not just because her mother is a librarian, but she saw African American librarians as she attended LeMoyne-Owen College, a historically black college, in Memphis, Tennessee. She was mentored, nurtured and given volunteer opportunities within the library. This is the one small step that we can all take today. Let us give our young people an opportunity to look under the hood, if you will, and have a hands-on, behind-the-scenes experience. They may not all go to library school but at least they will have a professional and information background that will benefit them for the rest of their life. The inspiration saying, *'If you can believe it, you can achieve it'* is often quoted...but seeing it, the full representation of what you can become, helps too.

References

American Library Association. (2012). *Diversity Counts Report*. <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org/aboutala/files/content/diversity/diversitycounts/diversitycountstables2012.pdf>

Submitted by: [Tameca Beckett](#), Reference and Access Services Librarian, Delaware State University

Legislative Action Committee Updates:

The Legislative Action Committee has been extremely busy over the past few months. COVID-19 has changed our local and national landscape, and that's been especially true in how we advocate for libraries.

With the closure of Legislative Hall, DLA needed to brainstorm how to repurpose our advocacy message. For library staff and friends, DLA held an online training in May "*Knowing your value: how to assess and communicate the value of your library*". This training was instructed by Eli Turkel, PhD Candidate at the University of Delaware, Biden School of Public Policy and Administration. Through this training, participants learned the history of traditional models that have guided libraries for decades, and the recovery center model that libraries are transitioning into. Looking through this lens, we explored how a library can effectively track assets and assign a monetary value to them. If you missed this training, you can watch the recording, which is located on the DLA website: <https://dla.lib.de.us/links/training/>.

DLA also embarked on a seven week email campaign to State legislators and legislative aides. The email campaign started May 15th and concluded June 26th. The timing of this was deliberate as we wanted the campaign to conclude right before the final budget passing. The first six weeks of the campaign were designed to highlight different ways libraries were engaging with their community, virtual programming initiatives, and new online services and resources. The last email was designed to highlight patron stories sharing what libraries and their essential services have meant to them.

The question now remains, how do we continue advocating for library funding, for essential services for our communities, for keeping libraries front and center as the preeminent partner for many state and non-profit agencies. In August, I was able to attend the virtual DANA 2020 Annual Conference; Impact Delaware. One of the sessions I attended was *Policy and Advocacy Impact in a COVID-19 Landscape*. One of my key takeaways was that indicators make outcomes measurable. An outcome will typically have one to three indicators. These indicators show that a certain condition exists, or that our expected result has not yet been achieved. I thought about this in the context of DLA. If DLA is looking for an increased base of support from legislators, what indicators are we pushing? Have we highlighted a number of articles on the issue through media channels, what is the number of legislators aware and aligned with our agenda, has there been a significant change in social media engagement on one of our policy / agenda areas? Advocacy is always a shifting landscape and DLA needs its members to be engaged and cohesively communicating the same message.

Another great resource that helps frame this conversation is the Frame Works Institute (aptly named huh). Frame Works is a nonprofit research organization. There is a wonderful compilation of articles and reports on Framing COVID-19. One particular article was especially insightful, *Nonprofits are essential – especially now*. Please take a few moments to review the site; <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/framing-covid-19/>. The legislative action committee has many new upcoming events.

Data storytelling training will be held Friday, October 16th at 10am. This training builds on the May training conducted by Eli Turkel. If you missed that training please visit <https://dla.lib.de.us/links/training/>. More information on the October 16th training will be coming to your inbox soon!

"Get a Delaware Library Card" yard sign campaign. The purpose of the yard sign campaign is to provide a visual method to promote libraries throughout the state and within lower socio-economic neighborhoods. We also want to help raise awareness of libraries with candidates running for office. Everyone can help promote this campaign! If you see a yard sign, stop and take a picture standing in front of the sign holding your DE library card (or flashing your phone screen with the DLC mobile app). Submit to social media using #GetalibrarycardDE.

Work has begun on planning a virtual Legislative Day Lite event in January. A date for the event will be released in late fall.

Advocacy happens everyday. If you would like to be a part of the action please contact michelle.hughes@lib.de.us. We'd love to have you part of the team!

Submitted by Michelle Hughes, Legislative Action Committee chair

August 17, 2020



Delaware Governor John Carney

Governor Carney Announces Expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Statewide

Free, high-quality children's books now available to families across Delaware

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney and First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney today joined American icon Dolly Parton to announce the statewide expansion of her namesake Imagination Library book gifting program and to encourage parents of young children across Delaware to participate.

Watch announcement video on [YouTube](#) or [Facebook](#).

"I am so excited to be working with Governor and First Lady Carney to bring my Imagination Library to children and families across Delaware!" said **Ms. Parton**. "It takes visionary leaders to make this possible, and I can't thank them enough. It is such an important time to share the gift of books and reading with as many children as we can, and I know Delaware families will love receiving a specially selected book in the mail each month."

Children whose parents enroll them with [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) through Delaware libraries receive one new book in the mail each month from birth until the child's fifth birthday at no cost to the family, creating a personal library of as many as 60 books that can help form the foundation of a child's early reading experience. Information and registration are available [online through the Delaware Division of Libraries](#).

Books are selected by a national panel of early childhood literacy experts who review hundreds of children's books each year and choose those that best fit the needs of children as they learn and grow.

"A healthy reading habit motivates, inspires and encourages creativity among children and adults alike," said **Governor Carney**. "One of the most important things we can do to improve childhood literacy is to give our children access to books, especially during this challenging time. It's a simple but powerful idea. That's why Delaware is proud to partner with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to improve literacy in our state. I want to thank our state librarian, Annie Norman, and my wife, Tracey, for spearheading this important effort in Delaware."

Governor Carney announced a pilot launch of the Imagination Library program in five Delaware school districts in his [2020 State of the State](#) address. Beginning in February, the Division of Libraries partnered with 13 local public libraries to make the program available to families within the pilot districts. So far, more than 3,800 children have been enrolled in the program and received more than 16,000 books.

The Imagination Library program is also an important component of the First Chance Delaware initiative for children, led by First Lady Carney. The mission of First Chance Delaware includes promoting learning readiness through literacy and parent-child engagement.

"It's a great privilege for me to serve as the honorary chair of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in Delaware," said **First Lady Carney**. "The quantity and quality of early language experience, starting at birth, correlates to children's academic success at ages nine and 10—the target of our state's grade-level reading campaign—which then correlates to the likelihood of high-school graduation, which correlates to virtually every positive life outcome from then on. Expanding the Imagination Library program in Delaware is a great investment in our families and in our future."

For public libraries across Delaware, the Imagination Library program will serve as a springboard for children and parents to engage with their local libraries, participate in library programming and take advantage of the many resources libraries have to offer.

"It's never too early to start reading to children," said Delaware State Librarian **Dr. Annie Norman**. "Kids who read succeed! Dolly Parton's Imagination Library helps develop the reading and library habit, a foundation for success throughout life."

Parents who enrolled their children with the Imagination Library earlier this year through pilot school districts have already reported positive results, especially in light of the changes to daily lives and routines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The books we have received have helped a lot with his vocabulary and his ability to express himself," said Lewes mom **Ashely Durden** about her son Quentin, who has been enrolled in the Imagination Library Program for the last two years. "Thank you for bringing reading to everyone in our district and our state; it's a really great resource to get new books to children at a very young age."