

KYAC 2024 Virtual Conference Biographies / Session Descriptions

Strengthening Communities through Lifelong Learning and Partnerships



Amanda Wheeler has over nine years of experience in the library field. She is currently the Experiential Learning Manager at Lexington Public Library. Her library career began as a Youth Services Librarian in Lincoln County, which helped develop her passion for creating engaging, hands-on learning experiences and STEAM education. Amanda has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and is a certified Environmental Educator. awheeler@lexpublib.org

Hands-On Learning: Enhancing Out-of-School Time at the Library

Want to learn how to implement series programming on STEAM topics at your library? Emily and Amanda will share their successful multi-day STEAM programs and provide tips on how to facilitate similar programs for your community.



Annie Ledford is currently the Assistant Branch Manager for Southwest Regional Library in Louisville. In her past lives, Annie has been a cataloger for NPR, School Media Library Specialist, Popular Services Librarian, School Liaison, Youth Services Department Head and Youth Services Manager. Annie has worked in four public library systems spanning from DC to Colorado to Kentucky. In her free time, Annie spends her time giving her basset hound, Roo, her best life ever as well as listening to a ton of podcasts, audiobooks, and music.
Annie.Ledford@lfpl.org

Managing Youth Services - the Juggling Act!

Are you a current leader in Youth Services? Do you hope to be someday? This session will discuss the job roles, responsibilities, and potential challenges of those in Youth Services leadership positions. While managing can be a truly rewarding role, it also requires a good deal of juggling many duties. This session will provide resources to help you be successful in your position.



Antonia Bottoms is the Children's and Young Adult Programming Librarian at Taylor County Public Library. Her background is, surprisingly, in geology, and she worked for the University of Kentucky for 12 years before proudly becoming a librarian. She has a farm full of goats, chickens, and bees that she shares with her husband, two kids, three dogs, and a wayward cat. antoniabottoms@tcplibrary.org

Bringing Books to Life: Engaging Kids with Book Character Trading Cards

Discover how to captivate young readers by creating book character trading cards in this interactive session. Learn how to incorporate popular trends and interests into your library programming, making books fun and collectible! Ideal for outreach and children's librarians, this presentation will cover practical strategies for designing, crafting, and using trading cards to engage kids in reading, foster creativity, and build excitement around books.



Bryan Klausing, a decade-long veteran of the Lexington Public Library, is the supervisor of the Northside Digital Studio. Leveraging his background in radio and TV, he guides the studio's creative community in producing digital media projects like podcasts, music, and videos. Recently, he led a workshop called AI for Creatives with the Digital Studio team.

bklausing@lexpublib.org

Fostering Curiosity and Creativity through Experiential Learning

Hear from the Experiential Learning Team at the Lexington Public Library who operate the Central Kloiber Foundation STEAM Lab, Marksbury Family

Branch Makerspace, Northside Digital Studio, and the Eastside Makerspace. They will share techniques and tools for successful hands-on learning. They'll also discuss how they engage members of the community in creative projects to develop skills and empower learners.



Candice Dent is the Outreach Coordinator at Daviess County Public Library. As the Outreach Coordinator, Candice's efforts to cultivate a love for literacy extend beyond the library's walls, as she actively engages with the community to promote reading initiatives. Her passion is to connect with children on a personal level, better understand their interests and needs, and tailor her guidance to help them discover the joy of books. Whether through interactive storytimes, creative writing workshops, or simply chatting about their favorite stories, Candice is committed to nurturing a positive outlook for the library in every child she meets. Candice firmly believes in the adage that "readers are

leaders" and uses her energetic approach to make reading fun. cdent@dcplibrary.org

Write On! How to Make the Book Writing Process Stress-free, Engaging, and Rewarding for Children

Candice Dent and Jarrod McCarty have developed a writing program designed to inspire and empower young minds to explore their creativity and become authors of their very own books. Using R.L. Stine's free resources, this program focuses on making the book writing process stress-free, engaging, and rewarding for children. Candice/Jarrold have adapted the lessons into a six-week summer outreach program that just wrapped up its third year. Topics discussed will include how the material was

tweaked to fit outreach needs, tips on how to conduct the program, how to get kids excited about writing, materials needed for the effective implementation of the program, and share success stories. Whether you are looking for an offsite outreach program or an in-house program, find out how this writing program can be used to foster a love for writing and help kids develop their unique stories.



Caroline Smith is the Facilities and Access Consultant at the South Carolina State Library, where she supports the state's 42 public library systems. Caroline received her M.L.I.S. from the University of South Carolina in 2011 and has been a member of REFORMA since 2015. Library Journal recognized her as a 2020 Mover & Shaker. Prior to her current role, she worked for the Charleston County Public Library for nine years. jcsmith@statelibrary.sc.gov

Spanish for Public Library Staff: Two States, Two Programs for Language Learning

South Carolina and Colorado State Libraries invite library staff to participate in Spanish language learning communities where they practice vocabulary, explore cultural competence, and learn best practices to serve Spanish speakers equitably. This session will include program overviews, information about getting to know your community's Spanish-speaking populations, and ideas for informed outreach and relationship-building with your Latinx community. Presenters will share their curricula and learning materials with participants.



Chris Prichard is the Programs and Trainings Coordinator for Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky (PCAK). Chris has a background in education and holds a BA degree in English Education from Morehead State University and a MS degree in Higher Education from the University of Kentucky. Prior to joining the PCAK team, Chris worked as a college access and success professional, with TRIO programs at Morehead State University and Eastern Kentucky University, and the ACTION Program at UK's Markey Cancer Center. cprichard@pcaky.org

Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse

Are you unsure about what constitutes child abuse/neglect and when something needs to be reported? Participants of the session will learn how to identify child abuse and will learn when and how to make a report.



Cindy Shutts is passionate about teen services. She loves dogs, pro-wrestling, Fairy tales, mythology, and of course reading. Her favorite genres are Romance, mystery and fantasy. She loves spending times with her dog Harry Winston and her niece and nephew. Cindy Shutts is the Teen-Focused Librarian at the White Oak Library District in Romeoville, IL. cshutts@whiteoaklib.org

***You may also know Cindy's work as she is the columnist of [Cindy Crushes Programming](#) featured within the Teen Librarian Toolbox in the School Library Journal.

May the Force Be with You – Comic Cons

How to create a family friendly comic con that celebrates pop culture characters and iconic stories while bringing families and communities together.



Cristy Moran is the Adult Library Services Senior Consultant at the Colorado State Library. She is a librarian and educator who has worked in libraries and education for over 15 years. In supporting all Colorado libraries (including public, academic, and special libraries), Cristy's role can best be described as the librarian for librarians who serve adults in Colorado. Spanglish is her superpower. Kindness punk is her praxis. She'd tell you wildflower seed-bombing is what she does for a living. Moran_c@cde.state.co.us

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relationship-building with your Latinx community. Presenters will share their curricula and learning materials with participants.



Derek Beaven has been with Kentucky Humanities for almost two years, working primarily on Prime Time Family Reading, Museum on Main Street, and in disaster preparedness for cultural institutions. He graduated from Centre College in 2014 with a B.A. In English and Creative Writing. After college, Derek spent nearly two years working at a ski resort in the Bavarian Alps before returning to Kentucky to work with adults with disabilities for six years, both in employment and education. Derek currently resides in Mt. Sterling with his wife, Melissa, and their dog, Tucker. derek.beaven@uky.edu

Kentucky Humanities: Prime Time Family

Reading, Chautauqua, and More

This session will cover the basics of hosting Prime Time Family Reading at your library. This award-winning program is for children six to ten years old (along with the significant adults in their lives) and uses children's books to facilitate humanities discussions about different virtues. You'll learn the ins-and-outs, including more about the roles of scholars, storytellers, and site coordinators. This session will also feature a brief overview of other Kentucky Humanities programs, such as Kentucky Chautauqua, Speakers Bureau, and more.



Elizabeth Haigh is a neurodivergent goofball who thought a 'two-hand sandwich' was a meal for cannibals. She is the sister, daughter, and granddaughter of loudly opinionated designers and leverages this to augment her designs in the Youth Services Program at the Henry County Public Library.

elizabeth.haigh@henrylibrary.org

Copy That! Best Practices for Accessible Signage

You may already know that using more than two or three fonts is a design no-no, but does your color palette work for people with low vision or color blindness? Perhaps you're a master wordsmith, but what about folks impacted by dyslexia, low literacy, or neurodivergence? In this

session, we'll augment best practices in design with tips and tricks to reach folks with comprehension challenges.



Elsie Merlie has found comfort in exploring museums and historical sites since a very young age, driven by an insatiable curiosity to uncover the stories behind the artifacts. This passion for learning led her to the field of education, where she dedicated five years to engaging with students and educators alike. Now, Elsie is the Teacher Resources Manager at the Kentucky Historical Society, where she leverages her teaching experience to help educators across Kentucky connect with all the resources KHS offers.

elsie.merlie@ky.gov

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS): Enhancing Visual and Historical Literacy

Discover how KHS utilizes Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to deliver art-infused history lessons that enhance students' visual literacy, historical

understanding, and critical thinking skills. We will offer valuable suggestions for creating VTS lessons that focus on historical fiction and non-fiction for children. Participants will have the opportunity to explore KHS's extensive research library and digital collections, providing a rich repository of resources to support the VTS methodology.



Emily Hutchison has worked in libraries for over four years. She has coordinated and facilitated programming in the Central Kloiber Foundation STEAM Lab for two years. While being an educator was not in her original life plan, she has always loved libraries, and she looks forward to seeing her library kids every day. ehutchison@lexpublib.org

Fostering Curiosity and Creativity through Experiential Learning

Hear from the Experiential Learning Team at the Lexington Public Library who operate the Central Kloiber Foundation STEAM Lab, Marksbury Family Branch Makerspace, Northside Digital Studio, and

the Eastside Makerspace. They will share techniques and tools for successful hands-on learning. They'll also discuss how they engage members of the community in creative projects to develop skills and empower learners.

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Emily Keely is the Early Childhood Social Emotional Consultant with Kentucky Department for Public Health. She works directly with the Kentucky Strengthening Families Initiative and has been in this role since 2020. She is a credentialed Early Childhood Trainer. Her educational experience includes a Bachelor of Science in Family Studies and Master of Science in Early Childhood Education Degrees from the University of Kentucky. emily.keely@ky.gov

Collaborating for Family Outcomes: FRYSC and Libraries Uniting for Community Impact

This workshop will explore how Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs) can collaborate with libraries to enhance family and community outcomes. Participants will learn how FRYSC can support library initiatives aimed at

strengthening families and fostering resilience using the Protective Factors Framework. This session will focus on practical strategies for partnership, and attendees will leave with actionable insights on how to align FRYSC services with library goals to create meaningful, measurable impacts on their communities.



Evan Hatter has been the Information Officer with the Kentucky Talking Book Library since February 2024 and is currently working on spreading the word about the services offered by KTBL to those with visual, physical, and reading disabilities. A Frankfort-native, Evan graduated in 2020 from Western Kentucky University with a B.S. in meteorology and a minor in broadcasting. evan.hatter@ky.gov

Reading Is for Everyone

Sharing and discussing the services provided by the Kentucky Talking Book Library and how to sign up your patrons.



Fred Fakury helped open the Marksbury Family Branch Makerspace earlier this year. Before going into the library, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry. He enjoys guiding customers through their projects and uses his science background while teaching STEAM programs. ffakury@lexpublib.org

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and tools for successful hands-on learning. They'll also discuss how they engage members of the community in creative projects to develop skills and empower learners.



Hack Hudson currently works for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) in the Office of Teaching and Learning as a State Literacy Coaching Specialist. Hudson received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Morehead State University with a concentration in Mathematics. He began his career in education as a primary teacher, teaching mostly second grade. After teaching early primary for several years, he taught sixth grade. Eventually, Hudson fell in love with literacy which led him to seek a master's degree in library sciences from Eastern Kentucky University. He served as a library media specialist for nearly a decade. During that time, he has served on the Board of Directors for the Kentucky Association of School Librarians (KASL).

Mr. Hudson later served as a District Literacy Specialist in Breathitt County, where he oversaw literacy initiatives in the district from preschool through graduation. In this role he worked with multiple stakeholders inside and outside of the district, including the local public library. This partnership provided learning opportunities and resources to teachers, students, parents, and community members. Additionally, he currently serves on the board of the Kentucky chapter of The Reading League. Hudson lives in Jackson and has one daughter, Abigail Hudson who is a student at Eastern Kentucky University. hack.hudson@education.ky.gov

Brief Overview of the Science of Reading

A brief overview of the structured literacy and the science behind how children learn to read. Session includes findings of the National Reading Panel report, a description of the Simple View of Reading, along with a discussion of Scarborough's Reading Rope. Additionally, the role of knowledge in the process of reading and the importance of libraries to reading development will be discussed.



Hayden McCubbin has a Master's degree in Instructional Systems Design from the University of Kentucky. He spent 3 years developing professional training content and has spent the last year running the Eastside Makerspace at the Lexington Public Library. In this time, he has taught equipment and project classes, met with customers for one-on-one instruction, and acted as the facilitator of open studio hours to allow community access to Makerspace equipment.
hmccubbin@lexpublib.org

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Heather Flynn is the Young Adult Librarian at the Wayne County Public Library in Monticello, KY. She has worked there since 2011, and around 2021 started in her current position. She enjoys a myriad of different hobbies and interests and loves when she can tie one of those aspects into a program. She enjoys spending her free time with her family and writing. She's excited to be having her first short story published this fall.

teenlibrarian@waynecountylibrary.org

Anime, Cottagecore, and Beyond: Adventures in Teen & Young Adult Programming

Offering programs for teens and young adults can be a crazy adventure! Join the presenter as she

shares some of the different experiences she has had on her journey as a Young Adult Librarian. She's tackled everything from the Oregon Trail (as a life-size game) to having attendants race around the world without ever leaving the building, and that was only in June of this year. She will also share some bargain shopping tips and encouragement for those programs that may not go quite as you planned.



Heather McCarty lives in Owensboro, KY and has been the Regional Program Manager for Region 2 with The Division of Family Resource and Youth Service Centers for 5 years. Previously, Heather was a FRYSC Coordinator for 13 years and taught high school for 5 years. She is a graduate of Western Kentucky University with a social work degree. She loves being part of the educational system to better serve and meet the needs of students and families. She enjoys collaborating with community partners to enhance FRYSC programs that increase family engagement. It is a privilege to be here today with librarians from across the state.

Heather.mccarty@ky.gov

Collaborating for Family Outcomes: FRYSC and Libraries Uniting for Community Impact

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Jarrod McCarty is the Community Engagement Manager at the Daviess County Public Library. Jarrod earned an MSLS from the University of Kentucky and a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies from Western Kentucky University. In addition to his library career, Jarrod serves as the Vendor Coordinator for the Kentucky Public Library Association Conference and is on the board of trustees for Girls Incorporated. Jarrod has been married to his wife, Leslie, for 12 years.

jmccarty@dcplibrary.org

Write On! How to Make the Book Writing Process Stress-free, Engaging, and Rewarding for Children

Candice Dent and Jarrod McCarty have developed a writing program designed to inspire and empower young minds to explore their creativity and become authors of their very own books. Using R.L. Stine's free resources, this program focuses on making the book writing process stress-free, engaging, and rewarding for children. Candice/Jarrold have adapted the lessons into a six-week summer outreach program that just wrapped up its third year. Topics discussed will include how the material was tweaked to fit outreach needs, tips on how to conduct the program, how to get kids excited about writing, materials needed for the effective implementation of the program, and share success stories. Whether you are looking for an offsite outreach program or an in-house program, find out how this writing program can be used to foster a love for writing and help kids develop their unique stories.



Jennifer Sullivan has worked in public libraries for over 11 years and is currently the Children's Services Librarian at the Anderson Public Library in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. She is an information junkie and a self-professed dinosaur nut, and in a previous lifetime was a microbiologist, an award-winning cake artist, and a state-champion track coach. Jennifer is passionate about library services for children and families and enjoys using her varied interests and experiences in library programming. Her professional interests are early literacy, STEM programming, research, and advocating for youth services and youth services staff. Jennifer shares program ideas, commentary, and more on her blog, "Adventures In Storytime (and Beyond)" at www.adventuresinstorytime.com.

jsullivan@andersonpubliclibrary.org

Kidbrarians: A New Approach to Engaging Those Increasingly Unavailable Tweens

After finding that traditional after-school programming for school-aged kids was no longer working, I made some changes, including developing a new flexible program to engage those who were not attending traditional programs. The Kid Librarian program is designed to accommodate busy families, provide a meaningful experience, and hopefully create future library supporters. I'll share how I developed this program, what my goals are, how it works at my library, what I've learned, and tips and considerations for adapting it to your library and community.

Supporting STEM Learning in Young Children - Embracing a STEM Mindset

Are you being asked to add STEM programming for children to your already full plate and stretched budget? Intimidated by the idea of STEM because you're not a science person and not sure where to start? Learn how to adjust your approach and mindset to use simple, everyday activities to support STEM concepts in storytime and other programs, including recommended supplies, resources, and a few simple, budget-friendly, age-appropriate activities. While focusing on younger children, many of the concepts and ideas discussed also apply to programming for older kids. Participants will become more confident in their ability to support STEM concepts, and empowered to demonstrate how they can support STEM learning within the framework of existing programs.



Jocelyn Corbin is the YA Librarian and Teen Programmer at Meade County Public Library. She is also a former high school English and drama teacher, an Army veteran, and a proud mother of four. jocelyn@meadereads.org

Teen Connect: Building a Vibrant Teen Community at Your Library

Join us for this session where we'll share effective strategies for recruiting teens, fostering a strong and engaged teen community, and running a successful after-school program. Discover practical tips to create a welcoming and inclusive space that encourages

teens to participate and thrive at your library.



Kate Schiavi Kate Schiavi is the Youth Services Manager at the Louisville Free Public Library. She has over 20 years of experience developing and leading programs for children, teens, and families. In her current position, she cultivates community partnerships to help strengthen the mission and vision of LFPL. Her career highlights include, driving the bookmobile, sharing lunch with John and Hank Green, and checking out books to a Stormtrooper.

Kate.Schiavi@lfpl.org

Managing Youth Services - the Juggling Act!

Are you a current leader in Youth Services? Do you hope to be someday? This session will discuss the job roles, responsibilities, and potential challenges of those in Youth Services leadership positions. While

managing can be a truly rewarding role, it also requires a good deal of juggling many duties. This session will provide resources to help you be successful in your position.



Katie Reineke is the Community Outreach Manager for the Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library (EVPL), where she has served for over 10 years. She believes her talents and skills are best utilized by being embedded in the community, helping solve complex challenges and connecting those to library services. In 2021, Katie was given the opportunity to manage EVPL's newly developed Outreach Department and prioritized its efforts in communities that experience barriers to traditional library service. Since the establishment of the Outreach Department, EVPL's services in the community have more than doubled and are creating new and innovative ways to serve hard-to-reach populations in the county. Katie served on the (ABOS) Continuing Education Committee during 2023, curating and coordinating virtual and in-person opportunities for members to share their expertise and skills. In 2024, she was elected Board Member at Large and was asked to co-chair both the Continuing Education and the Communications committees. katie@evpl.org

Seeing Is Believing: Using Google Maps to Track and Enhance Outreach Efforts

For three years, EVPL Outreach has utilized Google Maps to organize, document, and showcase the specific neighborhoods and organizations they serve. In this presentation, Community Outreach Manager Katie Reineke will walk you through the process used by her and her team to create and enhance the Community Touchpoint Map and optimize additional features of Google Maps. Participants will learn how to build their own map and customize it to their organizations' needs. Katie will share tips and tricks that she learned along the way, and how this tool can be leveraged to demonstrate and further grow the success of library outreach efforts.



Kym Davick brings 26 years of teaching in a public-school setting, curriculum planning, mentoring, and leadership experience to her position at TeachingBooks where she oversees the implementation and educational support of this literacy service. She has taught most recently as an elementary classroom teacher. Her experience in the classroom, as a mentor/teacher leader, and as a Cooperating Teacher for preservice educators from area universities adds to her understanding of teachers' roles, student learning styles, and the importance of building a reading and learning community. kdavick@overdrive.com

Get Ready to Recommend: Using TeachingBooks for Reader's Advisory & Beyond

*TeachingBooks, a new KDLA resource, has tools to assist library staff in providing easy and thorough Reader's Advisory, including Discover Like Books, searching and filtering, and resources to preview titles. Come away ready to recommend a book for any reader and empower readers to independently discover a new favorite title. Additionally, learn about tools to promote the titles on your shelves, ways to keep up with Kentucky Award winners, and resources to support summer reading. **TeachingBooks is now provided to all Kentucky schools, public libraries, universities and residents through the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives.***



Laura Poole is the Director of Hickman County Memorial Library. She's been a library director for the past 11 years, which has been a very happy place to land! In the past two years, the public library has built a children's wing, increasing both square footage and patron usage - marrying her two worlds together by including interactive exhibits which mainly reflect the heritage of the river counties. Her background is history and anthropological museum studies from Murray State University. She has 24 years of museum experience, including consultant work, exhibit design, preservation, and board of director membership. Laura also did a brief 4 year stop in preschool, where teaching at Easter Seals; interestingly enough, that time teaching preschool would fuel ideas for her to use in the library.

hickman.co.mem.lib@gmail.com

Pulling Museums into Libraries: Creating a Library Experience Using Museum Ideas and Techniques

How can you infuse your library with the creativity and engagement typically found in museums? This session will explore ways to involve staff and the community in gathering materials, developing programs, conducting outreach, and finding inspiration for exhibits in your public library. Learn how to create a rich, interactive library experience by integrating museum concepts and practices.



Lee McLeod is a father, a pastor, a substitute teacher, and a lifelong gamer. He began playing Dungeons and Dragons in the late 90's and never stopped. He's run games for groups as small as 2 and as large as 15, for ages 6 to 60, in a variety of systems, both in-person and online. His passion is for introducing new gamers to the world of tabletop role-playing games and seeing the hobby grow. He currently runs a monthly game at the Jessamine County Public Library and hosts short introductory adventures during their annual Comic Surge.

lee.mcleodiv@gmail.com

Amid the Tomes of Candlekeep: Hosting

Tabletop Role-playing Games for Local Libraries

Tabletop role-playing games (RPGs) like Dungeons and Dragons are experiencing a surge of interest, and local libraries are uniquely equipped to engage their communities with this form of modern interactive storytelling. This session will equip you with the knowledge and tools to introduce RPGs to your library programming. We'll demystify the often-complex rules system, address common challenges faced when creating a healthy gaming environment, and provide resources for running tabletop games in a variety of spaces both physical and virtual. Our goal is to provide tools and resources to create effective, flexible, and successful gaming experiences in your programs and contexts – even those who know very little about Dungeons and Dragons.



Ma has been a member of Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA) since 2014 and is a founding member of the Rolling Hills Chapter in Florence, KY. Ma started as a supporter in 2014 and became a patched member in May of 2018. Ma has held various positions in the chapter, from tail gunner (riding at the back of formation, helping bikes/bikers on the road, and communicating with road captain) to treasurer, and for the last four years Ma has held the position of chapter child liaison and state child liaison. As a child liaison, only Ma can speak to legal guardians who seek the assistance of BACA for their child(ren). Ma@rh-ky.bacaworld.org

Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA): Empowering Children to Not Be Afraid of the World in Which They Live

Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA) is an international organization dedicated to creating a safer environment for children who have experienced abuse. Comprised of a network of bikers, BACA's mission is to empower these children to overcome fear and regain control of their lives. Each child is paired with 'BACA Primaries,' bikers who are available 24/7 to provide both emotional and physical support, fostering a sense of security and belonging. BACA collaborates closely with local and state authorities tasked with child protection. Referrals come through various channels, including Community Action Councils, police departments, prosecutors, and other child-focused entities, such as public libraries, ensuring comprehensive support for these young survivors.



Maggie Myers lives in Danville, KY and is in her fourth year as a Regional Program Manager with the Division of Family Resources and Youth Services Centers, providing training and support to FRYSC Coordinators in 13 Kentucky counties. Her prior work includes serving children and families as a FRYSC Coordinator, a School Counselor, and a Programs Coordinator for her local public library! Maggie has a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Eastern Kentucky University and a Master's in School Counseling from Liberty University. She is passionate about empowering and encouraging others to become agents of change in their communities.

maggie.myers@ky.gov

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Natasha Nall is the bookmobile librarian for Taylor County Public Library (TCPL). Natasha has a background in restaurant and office management and event planning, and she graduated from Campbellsville University in 2009 and settled in Taylor County after meeting her husband. She's passionate about her community and looks forward to serving its people for years to come.

natashanall@tcplibrary.org

Bringing Books to Life: Engaging Kids with

Book Character Trading Cards

Discover how to captivate young readers by creating book character trading cards in this interactive session. Learn how to incorporate popular trends and interests into your library programming, making books fun and collectible! Ideal for outreach and children's librarians, this presentation will cover practical strategies for designing, crafting, and using trading cards to engage kids in reading, foster creativity, and build excitement around books.



Nicole Brown has been the vibrant force behind McCracken County Public Library's Story Time program since August 2014. Growing up in Paducah from the age of 9, she chose to raise her family with her high school sweetheart, becoming an integral part of the town's thriving arts community. Nicole's love for storytelling began during childhood road trips with her father and her experience helping to raise her siblings. She fondly recalls attending

Story Time at the library with her own daughters, never imagining she would one day lead these sessions and create the same magic. With an entertainer's spirit, first developed through play with her younger siblings, Nicole injects energy and creativity into each Story Time. She believes in the transformative power of public libraries, which offer free, welcoming spaces for everyone to learn. Her sessions skillfully blend language, music, art, and movement, making the humanities come to life for children and families. Nicole considers her role an honor and privilege, connecting her deeply

with the McCracken County community. As a leader and collaborator, she works closely with an exceptional team at the library. Joining her in Story Time are beloved puppets: BRARY Bear, the library mascot; Lady Dragon, who shares music curriculum; and Dr. Duck, a doctor of letters. Together, they inspire young minds and nurture a lifelong love for reading. nbrown@mclib.net

Programming with Puppetry

Explore the creative art of bringing characters to life through puppetry in the public library. This session is perfect for anyone interested in storytelling, performance, or the theatrical magic of puppetry. Please bring your questions!



Dr. Noah Lenstra, MS.LIS., is an associate professor of Library & Information Science at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He received his M.S. and PhD in Library & Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He brings a community organizing approach to the research and teaching of public librarianship. His books include *Healthy Living at the Library* (2020, Bloomsbury) and *12 Steps to a Community-Led Library* (co-author Audrey Barbakoff, 2023, American Library Association Editions). Since 2016, Dr. Lenstra has managed the Let's Move in Libraries initiative, which he started.

NJLENSTR@uncg.edu

Starting from Where You Are: How to Start and Sustain Community Partnerships No Matter Your Job Title

It takes a village... What strategies work for libraries wanting to become stronger community partners? How can you do this work no matter your job title? Being strategic, accountable, and a library advocate focused on documentation are key, but so too is centering the entire process around joy and being open and excited about the unexpected. We'll present examples of libraries across America that have devised working systems for building partnerships and strong community relationships. You'll leave this session not only with renewed confidence in your ability to find partners, but also with plans to integrate partnerships and relationships even more fully into your work, and into the work of your library.



Patricia Jarog served her entire library career at the White Oak Library District that serves the Chicago suburban communities of Crest Hill, Lockport, and Romeoville, Illinois. One of the partnership projects that she had the opportunity to lead and formulate was the annual pop culture/comic con event -- Comicopolis. Upon her retirement in 2021, she had the honor of becoming an Illinois Library Luminary. Pat currently serves as the Liaison to the Library Foundation where she coordinates fundraising activities. During her free time, she loves to garden, to read at least some of the books that she somehow missed, to take walks with her husband, and to hang out with her family and grandchildren.

pjarog@whiteoaklib.org

May the Force Be with You – Comic Cons

How to create a family friendly comic con that celebrates pop culture characters and iconic stories while bringing families and communities together.



Rachael Sullivan, MLIS, has 7+ years' experience working in public libraries. Currently she is a Youth Services Librarian for Louisville Free Public Library. Kawaii, anime, and manga are among her passions along with providing as many services as possible to her current community. Rachael.Sullivan@lfpl.org

Super Cute Kawaii *Discover Kawaii and its practical uses in youth programming. This will be the cutest presentation you've ever seen!*



Stephanie Jones is the Reference Assistant at the Burlington Public Library in Iowa where she has served for 13 years. For the past four years, she has specialized as the Infant Literacy Specialist, leading the Babygarten program which fosters early literacy skills for infants and their caregivers. Stephanie also pioneered the Baby Sensory program, which was designed to support sensory development in young children. Stephanie holds a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of Northern Iowa and a Master of Science in Library Science from the University of Kentucky. She holds certifications from the state of Iowa in Public Library Services,

Youth Services, Mental Health First Aid, and the Gold Level for Directors. When she is not advocating for libraries, she stays busy raising four amazing children.

sjones@burlington.lib.ia.us

Babygarten: Enhancing Early Literacy Through Interactive Learning

Join Stephanie Jones, MSLS, Babygarten teacher at the Burlington Public Library, Iowa, as she explores the role of interactive learning in early literacy development.

Babygarten is a program designed for infants and their caregivers with a focus on fostering a love for books and language through songs, rhymes, and book sharing. In this session, participants will learn about the essential components of Babygarten which are designed to nurture cognitive, emotional, and language development in young children. This presentation will offer helpful insights into implementing similar programs to support early literacy in your community while highlighting the significance of bonding and building a supportive environment for families. This presentation is perfect for librarians and professionals working with youth and will inspire attendees to create environments that set the stage for lifelong learning.



Suzanne Banta is the Youth Services Librarian at the Henry County Public Library where she leads a department of creative and innovative individuals passionate about creating positive change in their community and creating lifelong learners. She grew up in libraries and was raised by women who loved reading and stories and is proud to continue their legacy. She even has her Summer Reading Certificate from 1985 framed in her office. Suzanne@henrylibrary.org

What Will We Make? Process Art & the Art of Learning

Have you ever wanted to try process art in Story Time, but were worried about how caregivers would react?

Have you tried process art with your afterschool group

and now they want more? Whether you want to dive into process art headfirst or just get your toes wet, you'll find plenty of examples to get you started during this conference session. Alongside project examples that have been tried and tested by HCPL staff, you'll also gain information about the benefits of process art, including saving money. You'll create your own art supply wish list and learn some tips and tricks for introducing process art in your library that will help you walk away empowered to encourage creativity, expand learning, and increase the confidence of patrons of all ages.



Tonya Swan began her career in an elementary classroom before combining her love of teaching and animals with a move to the Louisville Zoo's Education Department. After starting a Master in Environmental Education, Tonya became supervisor of programming at the Jefferson Memorial Forest for 13 years. There she developed a love of nature play and experiential education. She joined the staff of the Louisville Free Public Library and received her MLIS in 2015. She is the Supervisor of Youth Programming at the Northeast Regional Branch because it has its own park and lots of trees. She has since put in a giant mud puddle. Tonya.Swan@lfpl.org

Day of Play: Creating an Event to Inspire Movement, Creativity and Safe Risk-Taking in Children

Learn how to create an event that inspires families to engage in activities that incorporate safe risk taking, creativity, and experiential programming.



Tori Summers is the Teen & Tween Services librarian at Marion County Public Library (MCPL) in Lebanon, KY. She is a strong believer in partnering with community organizations and local schools to build a strong base of teens and tweens. Her commitment to nurturing young minds has shaped a generation of upcoming leaders. She enjoys reading, crocheting, painting, and supporting her fellow staff members. tori.summers@marioncopublic.org

Beyond Books: Strengthening Teen Engagement through School Partnerships

In this session, we will explore innovative strategies to build strong connections between libraries and local schools to engage and empower teens. By developing collaborative programs, creating tailored outreach efforts, and leveraging partnerships

with educators, we can transform the library into a welcoming hub for teen learning, creativity, and social interactions. Attendees will gain practical tips for cultivating long-term relationships with schools, designing programming that resonates with teens, and fostering a culture of reading and exploration beyond the classroom.

