As we begin to see a light at the end of the COVID tunnel, it is important to find opportunities to gather together and share ideas. What better place to do that than a beautiful oceanfront resort in Daytona Beach?

The FLA 2021 Hybrid Annual Conference will include engaging educational and networking opportunities, inspiring keynote speakers, and much more in celebration of Florida’s libraries. Our mission to **Lead Inclusively** will be felt throughout the conference, from the new President’s Panel event moderated by ALA President Julius C. Jefferson to the extensive list of breakout sessions available for on-demand viewing. We are also excited to feature a virtual conference option this year, with many events streaming live to attendees across the state.

Whether you attend virtually or in person, this year’s conference will be a unique and valuable experience. Let’s **Lead Inclusively** and come together for an exciting opportunity to support Florida’s Libraries!

Sarah Divine
FLA 2021 Conference Planning Committee Chair
Nova Southeastern University Alvin Sherman Library
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Lifetime Achievement
Mary Anne Hodel’s vision for Orange County Library System has been based upon service and inspiration. In the nearly 20 years she has been at the helm of this system, she has introduced massive advances in technology, made investments in programs that support the community, and steered the library through a global pandemic. Her work has raised the bar for modern libraries and draws national attention to the value they bring to those they serve.

Library of the Year
Although the pandemic forced them to change the way they do business, Orange County Library System did not allow it to stop them from serving the community. As soon as they were forced to close their doors to comply with the statewide stay-at-home order, staff worked from home converting hundreds of in-person classes, events and programs to a virtual format. They also started making plans for how they could safely reopen their facilities for essential services when the time was right. By June 1, all of their locations reopened with care for limited in-person service, even while many libraries around the nation remained closed.

Librarian of the Year
Doug Crane is an inclusionary leader who exemplifies compassion, vision, communication, and efficiency. Since his appointment as Director of the Palm Beach County Library System Doug has led the organization through major changes, including revising the mission and strategic plan, strengthening the work culture, and improving communication. In 2020, Doug led his system in the face of extraordinary challenges. Between a pandemic, a Presidential visit, and the threat of two hurricanes, his steady hand supported the needs of staff and the community. His contributions to the profession stretched across the state and country including work with FLA and ALA. His articles and workshops enhanced librarianship. For this work, Doug is worthy of recognition as the Librarian of the Year.

Outstanding New Librarian
Ms. Sophie Meridien is passionate advocate for all teenagers. She understands the importance of equal access to popular books for all teenagers. Her work to establish popular author visits to local, often forgot about teenagers is the pillar of her dedication and service to teenagers. She garners applause for the courageous, thoughtfulness in which she approaches library services to teenagers. In just a short time, she has become a pillar in Mandel Public Library’s services to teenagers.

Outstanding Paraprofessional
Broward County Library (BCL) Public Information Specialist Catherine McElrath is an exemplary communicator, content creator and publicity generator. As part of the six-person, BCL marketing team, her job is to spread the word about Broward County Library’s outstanding staff, resources and services via creating engaging, word-perfect promotional materials. These include press releases that’ve resulted in TV coverage, articles in local magazines promoting library services and resources, nationally recognized digital and print library newsletters and a slew of state and national marketing awards for both team and individual projects.

Library Innovation
The Palm Beach County Library System, in partnership with Friends of the Palm Beach County Library and the Audubon Society of the Everglades created birding backpacks - kits with an adult pair of professional grade binoculars, two children's binoculars, wipes, and a guide to Florida birds in May, 2019. Available in all 17 branches and the Bookmobile, these kits have circulated over 270 times (3 week circulation period). As a result of its success, the Library System has been sought out by other libraries around the United States to recreate this popular kit. Birding Backpacks are the culmination of a 40 year relationship with the Audubon Society of the Everglades, and an enhancement to a collection of ornithological periodicals spanning decades and over 1060 monographs.
Maria Chavez Hernandez “Libraries Change Peoples’ Lives”

Orange County Library System (OCLS) has done a phenomenal job creating opportunities for English Learners and underserved populations by providing resources and funding as well as allowing creative ways to serve the needs of the ESL population. OCLS has the community’s best interest at heart and is willing to go above and beyond to serve. OCLS has made the needs of English Learners and underserved communities a top priority and has included them in their Annual Strategic Plan year after year to ensure that they, as an organization, serve them well.

Betty Davis Miller Youth Services- Children

In the year 2020-2021, Orange County Library System (OCLS) revolutionized library programming for schools by creating free virtual field trips for students. This program invited 1,350 kindergarten and first-grade teachers in Orange County to participate. Student participation increased by 380% with a projected audience of 3,217 students. Field trip bookings increased by 220% and the participation of Title I schools grew by 200%. Virtual programming expands accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusivity for students, staff, and schools. The promotion of reading, literacy, and library use are demonstrated in every field trip through a story time, song, mini-lesson, and craft. This program can be easily replicated with two staff members and cost-effective supplies in any library location.

Betty Davis Miller Youth Services- Teen

Broward County Library's Science Fair Readiness Festival is an outstanding example of a direct library service to youth, providing equal access to STEM-related experts, information and resources and helping to level the academic playing field for local students, regardless of where they live or attend school. It is an outstanding illustration of how a public library can creatively package their resources, both digital and physical, to young library users with a targeted event that promotes library use and value while offering free assistance with one of the most stressful assignments of the year.

Exemplary Instructional Programs or Services

The Climate of Art (COA) program raises the awareness of the earth’s fragile resources through the creation of original artwork. This popular program attracts hundreds of participants who create art and multimedia, using art materials, found objects and electronic resources. The program instills pride and leadership in patrons whose artwork is displayed during the COA Exhibit. The COA program helped inspire the creation of a Mobile Resilience Hub, constructed by the Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience, in partnership with the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center. Lastly, the program supports an ongoing community dialogue about the protection of earth’s natural resources.

Libraries Mean Business

Built in Broward provides outstanding, significant, free library and community resources that support both local and national workforce development and provide a path to economic and professional success for local entrepreneurs from minority/underrepresented groups. As part of a national Libraries Build Business cohort, it will inform and impact how libraries across the country provide library-led entrepreneurship initiatives.

Library Web Presence

Broward County Library’s website, Broward.org/Library is an outstanding example of a public library providing excellent virtual and remote library services via an online branch. Crisp, colorful and cleanly designed, it combines an easy-to-use format with excellent, up-to-the-minute content to provide a one-stop, virtual library branch that’s accessible, fun to use and provides everything a sticks-and-bricks library does – virtually! The emphasis on online programming was a smashing success, as evidenced by a whopping increase of over 40,000 views annually!

Friends, Foundations & Boards Outstanding Member

Over the past twenty years, Judy Wetter has been an indispensable member of the Friends of the Central Library Board. Her initiative and hard work built an extremely successful Friends Bookstore that has been in business for nine years. Her conscientious oversight of Friends’ funds as the Board Treasurer enabled thousands of dollars of programs each year, including a $90,000 renovation of the children’s room. Now that Judy is leaving the Board to start a new chapter of her life, her impact will forever be felt by everyone who visits the Second Edition Bookstore or attends a program at the Library.

Outstanding Business or Media Partner

News anchor Lois Thome has provided over 20 years of support to Lee County Library System’s signature event, the Southwest Florida Reading Festival. As a founding member on the festival’s planning committee, Lois has brought expertise and insight to the event, ensuring the
Lois has always gone above and beyond to make the festival a success by offering her voice talents, creating a marketing video for publishers and authors, offering festival-day storytimes to attract audiences to booths, arranging on-site author interviews and more. With Lois’s help, the festival has been able to reach thousands of attendees annually, positively impacting well over 100,000 readers in the SWFL community.

Friends, Foundations and Boards

Awards

Outstanding Program

Friends of Rocky Bluff Library have hosted its annual Storytelling Festivals since 2018. Every year the festival has grown in size and attendance which draws in a truly multi-generational crowd and is consistently one of the library’s largest events. The third annual Storytelling Festival, on February 29, 2020, commemorated the 75th anniversary of Smokey Bear and, thanks to the Florida Forestry Service, a costumed Smokey Bear was part of the festivities.

Newsletter of the Year

The Melrose Library Association’s (MLA) newsletter works to keep the Melrose community informed of events, programs, fundraisers and new things happening in and to the library. It is also used to express thanks, promote local artists and writers and to spread the word on special occasions such as local awards. Our newsletter is produced to inform both our membership and our community of events and programs for the Melrose Public Library, which is the center of our unique community. Melrose is an unincorporated town and is located at the corner of four counties in North Central Florida, so our library provides services for neighbors in four counties.

Special Projects

One of the Friends of the Boca Raton Public Library’s key revenue sources, Friends Used Bookstore, encountered a common obstacle during the pandemic… closure. This hurdle did not stop the group though, and they came together and implemented a three-part program to continue selling books and other media. The three steps were converting book/media sales to online, creating publicity to advertise items for sale, and to continue accepting book/media donations. The Friends online bookstore was launched in mid-July 2020 and will be a continued service, even when their doors will re-open to the public. This approach provides well-rounded coverage to reach both in-person and online customers.

Registration closes:

In-person: 5/10/21
Virtual: 5/14/21