

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JENNIFER K. ABDELNOUR, CAE



Spring is (has been) here! And FLA is here for it!

FLA's first priority this year was hiring a new part-time Administrative Assistant. We hired Niall Williams, a Master of Science in Information (MSI) student at Florida State University, in January. Niall has proven to be such an asset to FLA and to my work supporting your association.

Next up was the selection of your new *Florida Libraries* Journal Editor-in-Chief, Mary Daniels, Maitland Public Library. Mary and the Editorial Board members are critical to shepherding journal issues from their many disparate parts into cohesive publications.

Library Legislative Day was held in late January, though planning began last summer. Around 35 library supporters, Florida legislators, and legislative staff attended the Legislative Reception at the Historic Florida Capitol. The next day our advocates met with legislators' offices to share the good work that libraries do and to request their support of library funding. The visits were upbeat and positive. Thank you to all who participated.



Douglas Crane, Winona Patterson, Rep. Rita Harris, Patty Takacs, Jenny Abdelnour

Also in late January, FLA awarded hurricane relief funds to a Taylor County Library staff member in need following last year's Hurricane Idalia. Thank you to those who donated to the Hurricane Relief Fund. You made a difference.

Rounding out the month, FLA's Communications Committee, led by Chair Dino Giallourakis, helped create a merchandise shop on the Threadless website. Shirts, mugs, tote bags, and other items can be customized with the FLA logo, conference logos, and more. And, FLA gets a percentage of all sales!

February brought many opportunities for our members and other library supporters to expand their knowledge and make their voices heard through the Virtual Town Hall with President Douglas Crane; Diversity Discussion; Library Conferences 101 webinar; and a Q&A with our 2024 Conference keynote speaker, Kris McGuigan.

In early March, Vice President/President-Elect Jorge Perez flew to Washington, DC to participate in the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies' Voices for Libraries event. Jorge participated in a briefing followed by a day of advocating for library funding at the federal level. Thank you, Jorge, for representing Florida libraries!



Jorge Perez



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In early April, FLA welcomed two new and three existing Board members to the 2024-2045 FLA Board of Directors. Congratulations to VP/President-Elect, Allison Grubbs; Treasurer, Nancy Fredericks; Region 2 Director, Sonya Chapa; Region 5 Director, Holly Albanese; and Region 6 Director, Caitie Cerise. We appreciate your past and future service to FLA.

FLA will be awarding three worthy library graduate students with scholarships of more than \$1,000 each. In addition, we will honor esteemed libraries, library workers, and library supporters with 16 awards. Congratulations to all of our honorees!

Year-round conference planning will soon culminate in the May 15-17, 2024 Annual Conference in Orlando. You do not want to miss all of the professional development, camaraderie, and just plain fun of this event!

Looking ahead to early August, the FLA Board of Directors and Committee Chairs will hold a retreat at the University of Central Florida to include a facilitated strategic planning session.

I look forward to seeing you at the FLA Conference in May and wish you a fun-filled summer.

As always, thank you for supporting Florida libraries!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer K. Abdelnour". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JENNIFER K. ABDELNOUR, CAE
FLA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

