

## 2025 PaLA Conference Sessions available for Sponsorship

Presentation Day	Event/Activity	Session Description
Sunday	Facilitating Successful Visual Arts Programs for Adults at Your Library	The presenter will discuss visual arts programs for adults offered at Penn Hills Library. She will focus on strategies for facilitating visual arts activities through the lens of three specific programs: “How to Draw” (a step-by-step drawing class), “Art Lab” (an arts and crafts class utilizing various materials and methods), and “Accessible Crafts” (a workshop featuring self-guided projects). During this presentation, Tisa will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a brief overview of how and why each program was conceived and how they have evolved.</li> <li>• Explain how to research each program using available resources and conduct a demo of one of the projects.</li> <li>• Discuss considerations and procedures for running these projects, including factors such as patron demographics, room setup, and instruction methods.</li> <li>• Share five successful projects from each program, along with supply lists.</li> <li>• Lastly, Tisa will explain how she evaluates each program's success both qualitatively and quantitatively, using program evaluations, participant feedback, and attendance data. This 45-minute lecture will conclude with a 15-minute Q&amp;A session. .</li> </ul>
Sunday	Intro to Teen Volunteers	In this session, participants will gain the skills to effectively engage with Teen Volunteers within their communities. They will learn how to utilize Microsoft and Google Forms to streamline volunteer registration, management, and communication. Additionally, participants will explore strategies for organizing and executing successful Teen Volunteer training sessions. The session will also cover the use of CANVA to create volunteer schedules and track hours. Finally, participants will discover best practices for recognizing and celebrating the achievements of Teen Volunteers.
Sunday	Making Cents Of Games: Using Games To Fundraise	Working in a nonprofit and asking for donations can be hard, but putting on a game event is fun and makes asking for money easier. Learn about different types of fundraisers you can hold and see some examples of these events held in libraries, with a focus on presenting your own murder mystery event!
Sunday	Research & Write with Generative AI	This session explores methods to leverage generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools that can enhance your research and writing. While much of the generative AI focus has been on the use of chatbots for prompt-based questions and answers, there are a host of tools that support researchers. Beginning with effective prompt writing, the session will share tips and tricks to get the results you need. The session moves into a review and comparison of multiple tools that support literature searching and literature reviewing. The session concludes with tools that support efficient writing workflows. Some of which attendees may be using already. This session will be useful to all librarians based on the need to research and/or share research tools with their patrons.
Sunday	Sensory Rich Environment for Early Childhood Programs	This session will demonstrate a variety of program options that can be used or adapted to any library setting. The presenters will share ideas to create a sensory rich environment for early childhood library programs. The session will promote pairing literacy with sensory activities to enhance basic PreK skills. Hands-on activities will allow participants to engage with materials and discuss with the presenters and fellow session attendees.

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Sunday	The Art of Small Talk and Other Networking Skills	If the idea of making small talk with an elected official, heading to a conference alone, or actually delivering your elevator pitch gives you anxiety, you're not alone. Join us to build a foundation of basic networking skills that will give you confidence and project professionalism in any setting. You will learn what to do before, during, and after networking interactions to have a positively memorable impact. After briefly outlining the importance of and return on networking, we will give attendees an overview of the best ways to prepare for a networking event so they are set up for success. They'll learn how to get comfortable making conversation with new faces, and how to ask questions that promote productive professional relationships and foster conversation and goodwill - then put it to use. We will outline etiquette, best practices, and hard-earned lessons for succeeding at receptions and other events. Finally, we'll talk about what happens the day after a networking event and how to springboard conversations into fruitful collaboration.
Sunday	Future Focused: Designing a ChatGPT workshop for First Year University Students	Description This session will provide a case study about designing an interactive workshop about generative artificial intelligence, focusing on ChatGPT, for first year university students. The presenter will describe the collaboration process used to create a session based on a request from a campus artificial intelligence task force. Based on the request, the workshop focused on defining ChatGPT, using the software, and discussing ethical issues that would likely be encountered in an academic classroom. Participants will learn about the instructional design process used to create the workshop and how the workshop was approved by various levels of campus administration. The presenter will share the current workshop design and engage participants in several of the interactive activities so that participants can determine how well the workshop format might work in their specific settings.
Sunday	Make New Friends - But Keep the Old. Retention and Recruitment to Keep Friends Strong.	As the umbrella organization for Pennsylvania Library Friends, PCBL has been seeing a growing number of Friends groups disbanding. The COVID pandemic hit Friends groups hard and many groups haven't fully recovered. But, that's only part of the concern. A lot of our Friends are "aging out" and the organizations are struggling to recruit new members while retaining the wisdom and institution knowledge of existing Friends. Friends can be strong advocates and provide much needed financial support. But whose job is it to keep Friends functional well? How can library administration navigate the often challenging personal and group dynamics that contribute to the decline of a once thriving Friends organization? This session will be a facilitated panel discussion featuring several Friends and Library Directors who have successfully developed strategies to safeguard and strengthen the significant role Friends can play in the Library's long-term health and stability. PCBL President Denise Sticha will lead the panelists to comment on areas of recruitment and retention, roles, responsibilities and relationships, Memorandums of Agreement, and the importance of communication and respect. Attendees will also be invited to submit questions to the panel.

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Sunday	Mother Goose on the Loose: More than Just a Storytime	Mother Goose on the Loose is a method for presenting an engaging, nurturing infant and toddler storytime that incorporates a research-based approach to baby brain development as well as early literacy education for caregivers. The storytime method strengthens early literacy and teaches caregivers ways to interact with their child in order to stimulate brain development and learning. Mother Goose on the Loose is heavily nursery-rhyme based and also includes music, puppets, read-alouds, play, visuals, props, movement, sensory stimulation, and musical instruments. Woven into the storytime presentation are language and math skills on an age-appropriate level as well. The session will cover a brief overview and history of the Mother Goose on the Loose method and will include a 30-minute interactive demonstration of a typical program. Afterward, I will break down each portion of the program with tips and resources related to each element (music/rhymes, books, props, etc.), including how to incorporate early literacy and developmental tips for caregivers naturally into the storytime. The session will be presented by a single speaker in a combination lecture and group participation format.
Sunday	Tough Interactions: Preserving Access Rights in Public Service Behavior Response	Anyone working in library public service can tell you that it is not uncommon to experience patron behaviors and attitudes that make us uncomfortable or are unpleasant. The challenge for library workers is that unlike in many public-serving professions, community members have a well-established right to access the library, a right which prohibits their access from being denied because of origin, age, background, or views. For library workers, this means that there is a whole category of behaviors that, however unpleasant or uncomfortable, are allowable under the library's policies. We call these "Tough Interactions," and it is more important now than ever that frontline library staff are clear about what kind of speech or behavior is grounds for exclusion from library services, what is not, and how to minimize the stress that comes from handling tough interactions that do not clear that bar. In this session, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Review what the ALA Bill of Rights has to say about patrons' right to access library services;</li> <li>•Discuss simple ways to think about determining the appropriate response to tough interactions when they occur;</li> <li>•Learn and practice effective techniques for pausing interactions, setting limits, and successfully completing even the most difficult interactions with patrons.</li> </ul>
Monday	Championing Freedom: Libraries as Guardians of Intellectual Freedom and Social Justice	This session will examine the intersection of intellectual freedom and social justice. As a profession, we are fighting day in and day out to protect our intellectual freedom as well as that of our communities. The threats to these freedoms are all too frequently targeted toward traditionally underrepresented groups; groups we currently try to make feel like they are not only reflected in our spaces, but that they belong there. Libraries championing for social justice is not new. This session will move beyond a cursory overview of intellectual freedom, and will discuss the intersection of social justice and intellectual freedom as well as provide some of the historical context of libraries as advocates for social justice. We will also discuss current challenges for our field examined through case studies and present strategies for raising spirits and prevailing in the face of injustice.

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Monday	Growing Communities with Seed Libraries	Seed libraries exist to help collect, distribute, and save seeds for the community. Learn about the state laws and regulations that impact seed libraries and how to set up your own. You will learn about available resources for sourcing seeds and partner organizations for programs and gardening support. Explore examples of seed libraries in and out of the commonwealth and how you can help your community grow with a seed library.
Monday	Voracious Readers' Advisory: How to Satisfy (Hopefully!) the Insatiable Reader	You're quite sure that your patron has read every book on your shelves and you feel like you've exhausted your stockpile of "go to" recommendations. Now what? We'll tell you about how a collaborative staff effort plus thinking outside the box has helped us keep one of our most voracious readers happy and coming back for more at our small library. Whether your insatiable reader is tech savvy or "old school," we'll share tips & resources to refresh your approach to meeting your patron's needs. The session will include discussion to provide the opportunity to share strategies you use at your library.
Monday	You can do it!: A roadmap to earning your PA Forward Gold Star in one year	You've heard about PA Forward, but maybe it seems like a lot of extra work. Perhaps you work in a small library and think it's not possible to achieve Gold Star status with your staffing and budget. But it doesn't have to be that way! In this session, we will discuss how to use PA Forward branding to promote what you already do. This way, you can better communicate the value of your library to stakeholders and earn your Gold Star without breaking a sweat.
Monday	Communication, Compliance and Compassion - the Cornerstones of HR Best Practices	This engaging and informative workshop will delve into the key pillars of effective HR management—Communication, Compliance, and Compassion—and how they collectively contribute to building a strong organizational culture and effective workplace practices.
Monday	Dare to Be Different: Crafting Exciting Adult Programs at the Library	Join us for an interactive and lively session where we'll explore innovative strategies for planning and executing adult programs that break the mold! This isn't your typical library program; we're here to shake things up and have some fun! In this session, you can expect to: - Discover Creative Concepts: Learn how to take traditional book clubs offsite and into the community, creating unique experiences that draw in diverse crowds. We'll share tips on choosing the perfect venues and themes that resonate with your audience. - Engage with BYOB Ideas: Explore the exciting concept of "Bring Your Own Beverage" events! We'll discuss how to create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere that encourages social interaction while keeping it clean and fun—no shady bar rooms here! - Build Community Connections: Understand the importance of charging your community connections and circles. We'll discuss how to collaborate with local businesses, authors, patrons, and organizations to enhance your programming and foster a sense of belonging. Expect a mix of discussion, brainstorming, and hands-on activities that will leave you inspired and ready to implement fresh ideas in your library. Whether you're a seasoned librarian or new to adult programming, this session promises to be informative, engaging, and full of laughter and stories of success and failure!

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Monday	Health Programming at Your Library: Project Ideas, Resources, and Opportunities	Interested in offering health programming at your library? Not sure where to start with developing health outreach initiatives and partnerships? Join this session to learn about how libraries have responded to various community health needs through health outreach and programming. Project ideas explored will include addressing food access and nutrition, starting telehealth services, mental health and wellbeing, storytelling programs, and more. We will cover a variety of replicable programs as well as larger initiatives and identifying national and local partners to best meet your community's needs and interests. Attendees will leave this session with examples of practical project ideas, programming resources, partnership strategies, staff training resources, and knowledge of funding opportunities. The presentation will include time for audience interaction, feedback, and Q&A. Continuing education: Attendees will receive 1 credit toward the Medical Library Association's Consumer Health Information Specialization (CHIS).
Monday	Re-animate Your Teaching: Raising Student Spirits By Utilizing the Backward Design Process	This interactive session will introduce participants to the Backward Design process developed by Wiggins and McTighe in their innovative text, Understanding by Design, originally published in 1998. Backward Design is a lesson planning framework that is transformative for teaching practice and the student experience. This session will focus on the three steps of Backward Design and offer participants the opportunity to practice designing goals, assessments, and learning experiences for common library instruction requests. Notably, this presentation will utilize the Backward Design process in its creation and development. Benefits and challenges of using the Backward Design process for different formats of library instruction will be discussed, and there will be time for questions. References Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). Understanding by design (2nd ed.). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
Monday	You Don't Need a Title to be a Leader	This session will begin with a discussion of ten common myths about leadership and how these myths keep everyone from developing their true leadership potential. Leadership is more than a title or position and attendees will learn how to develop their leadership potential, discover new resources and tools for leadership development including a selection of the presenter's favorite books and websites on leadership development, and begin to build a foundation for continued leadership development. While this session is primarily focused on library workers who are at the beginning of their leadership development journey, the presenter will be providing a broad overview of leadership development that is applicable for both new and seasoned library workers.
Monday	Accessible Reading for All: Supporting Your Library Youth with LAMP	During this session, we will share information about how LAMP/Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians provides library services for youth patrons who cannot use standard print due to a visual, reading, or physical disability. We will also discuss how organizations such as Intermediate Units and school districts can support LAMP eligible youth beyond library services. Participants will learn how to connect their youth patrons and educators to LAMP services, and we will provide time for a question-and-answer session.

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Monday	Information Literacy for Real Life: Debunking TikTok Videos with Library Resources	This session will examine social media and confirmation bias and highlight an activity I integrated into information literacy sessions that helps students critically evaluate the messaging on sites like TikTok and Instagram. When social media algorithms learn what we like, we are continuously fed similar messaging. The videos are reinforcing one another, confirming what we already think to be true. Students are bombarded with information without the skills necessary to actively question the source for accuracy and reliability, like they might utilize when doing scholarly research. In this session, I will share an activity I created for an information literacy session that includes watching TikTok videos, using library resources to debunk their claims, and investigating the creators' credentials, and question why they might be producing this content. I also use the topic and content of the video to brainstorm keyword terms and build search strings. In the session, we will do an abbreviated version of the exercise to investigate, fact check, and identify scholarly research that addresses the topic. I will share how this relates to the ACRL framework tenets Information has Value and Searching as Strategic Exploration.
Monday	Rural Library Forum: PA Rural Population Revitalization Commission	This interactive session will present the findings of the Pa Rural Population Revitalization Commission which is made up of elected officials and other appointees of the Governor and Legislature. Established by Act 21 of 2024, the purpose of the Commission is to create "reviews and recommendations aimed at attracting and retaining residents in rural Pennsylvania while addressing challenges facing rural communities due to population shifts and changing demographics". This includes recommending legislation and regulatory change. The panel will provide attendees with the opportunity give feedback and contribute to the overall final recommendations of the Commission.
Monday	Safety By Design	Your library should be inviting, beautiful, and a safe haven. Learn from experts and case studies how effective security solutions work seamlessly with your vision for welcoming and inclusive spaces. Learn fundamental principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): 1) natural surveillance (criminals do not like to be seen); 2) natural access control (clearly define public and private spaces); 3) territorial reinforcement (an environment that fosters privacy and a sense of ownership); and 4) maintenance (upkeep to discourage vandalism and other unwanted behaviors). Presentation will be followed by a facilitated Q/A.
Monday	Thrive in 25: Best Practices in Board Governance	Today, as the pace of change in the world continues to accelerate, our communities need the positive impact of our libraries more than ever. To maximize impact, it is important to be mindful of good leadership practices. Here are some tips to help your board be more engaged and effective. Doing all 25 things may feel a bit daunting, but adding a few to your board development list can help your board Thrive in '25! Best practices shared include strategies for effective meeting management, recruiting, orienting and engaging your board, clarifying board/staff relationships and organizing the board to support implementation of your strategic plan.

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Monday	eResource Lending and Service Changes: Decision-Making and Communication Strategies	The cost of and demand for digital content continues to increase and budgets are not keeping pace. Many libraries have come to a point when the cost of maintaining their current digital collection surpasses their available budget, leading to difficult decisions. How do you make changes so that you are fiscally responsible while meeting demand as best you can without harming other vital collections and services? How do you support staff and patrons throughout the process? Is it possible to generate goodwill rather than anger when services are being reduced? Difficult decisions can be made by relying on data and establishing a set of criteria early in the process to evaluate change options. Libraries of any size, regardless of which eResource platforms are offered, can create a well-considered approach that includes data gathering and staff and patron engagement. Join Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Collection Services and Communications and Creative Services Departments as we detail our approach to the changes we made to our Libby and hoopla lending policies in 2024.
Monday	In-Reach to Boost Morale and Realize Our Full Potential	Does your department or organization need a morale boost to unlock its full potential? Is your library looking for creative ways to better serve individuals, families, students, businesses, and community partners while maximizing your staff's skills and talents? Sometimes, all that's needed in administrative planning is a new approach to learning, thinking, and doing! Try the in-reach role – the ability to develop our inner best and bring that energy to the table. In-reach, a play on 'library outreach,' helps foster fresh perspectives and boosts morale. In this session, participants will learn seven easy-to-use in-reach techniques or 'can-do-isms.' This session will demonstrate how the in-reach role can inspire creativity, whether navigating internal communications or identifying community needs. It will also show how cultivating a kind, cheerful, and even-tempered attitude in oneself and staff can reduce friction and tap into creative intelligence to move the organization forward.
Monday	New Horizons: Navigating the Future of Inclusive Librarianship	In today's rapidly evolving library landscape, it is essential to embrace diversity and inclusion as core values. Join us for "New Horizons: Navigating the Future of Inclusive Librarianship," a dynamic session dedicated to exploring innovative strategies and trends that shape the future of our libraries. Attendees will gain valuable insights into promoting diversity and inclusion, discover cutting-edge leadership approaches, and explore emerging trends in librarianship. Our expert panelists will share practical tools and actionable steps to create inclusive environments that reflect and celebrate our diverse communities. Whether you're a library leader, an aspiring professional, or an advocate for change, this session will equip you with the knowledge and inspiration to drive positive transformation in your library and beyond.



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Monday	Lessons from a Library Disaster	When the Osterhout Free Library South Branch was only days away from celebrating its one hundredth anniversary, disaster struck. The already beleaguered branch was flooded after a frozen water pipe burst. The resulting damage was the final straw after already suffering from a negligent owner. Most of the furniture, nearly all of the technology, and much of the collection was lost to a neighborhood that relied on this branch for social services almost as much as traditional library service. Could this branch be reestablished, could it be done within a limited budget, and if so where? This session will give a brief description of the events surrounding the emergency evacuation of a treasured neighborhood branch and how it rebounded. In addition, participants will learn how some of the issues may have been avoided, what proactive actions should have been taken, and tips for avoiding and dealing with emergency situations. Finally, the session will show how a disaster ultimately became a net positive for the community.
Monday	The NWPA Innovation Beehive Network: Public Libraries as Economic Development Partners	The NWPA Innovation Beehive Network serves as a case study for the library's role in economic development efforts while lowering entrance barriers to university resources. This session will outline a collaboration between the Erie County Public Library (ECPL) system with five regional universities who together offer free complementary services to entrepreneurs and small businesses. The Beehive is a success and a unique model for economic development, collaboration, and experiential learning. The public benefits by having greater access to more services that help their business planning. University students gain exceptional real world experience solving problems for clients. ECPL librarian Rachel Stevenson and Penn State Behrend Industry Relations Coordinator Jacob Marsh will explain the collaboration, how it is organized, its funding, its methods, its impacts, and how it overcame challenges.
Monday	The Social Emotional Future: Using Upper Middle Grade Texts To Uplift Tweens	The tween years, when young readers are forging identities independent of their families and caregivers, present a key developmental time when librarians and educators can use literature to model social-emotional skills and competencies. High-interest upper middle-grade novels with protagonists who navigate challenging experiences can be powerful tools for illustrating social awareness and relationship skills, emotion regulation, supportive relationships, and cultural awareness and action. As readers are drawn into a protagonist's world, they can follow a narrative arc that explores difficult experiences but also shows resilience and growth: the joy and reward that can be possible once you work through a tough situation. In this interactive presentation, award-winning middle-grade authors will offer immersive, cross-curricular library activities that foster thoughtful discussions, help readers connect their own lives and experiences to situations in the books, and in doing so, build social-emotional skills and competencies. The activities are anchored in texts that incorporate different thematic approaches to working through difficult situations and healing, all of which also feature characters who face difficulties but are able to find their voices and stand up for themselves. Participants will develop author connections and leave the session with practical classroom lessons, library resources, and a recommended book list.



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Tuesday	Beyond the Book Club: Low or No Cost Adult Program Ideas	Are you looking to diversify your library's adult programming without breaking the bank? Join us for an inspiring session where we explore a wealth of creative, low-cost, and no-cost program ideas that go beyond the traditional book club. In this session, you'll discover innovative activities that can engage and enrich your community, such as gaming clubs, swaps, DIY crafts, walking clubs, and passive programming like a scavenger hunt. Learn how to leverage community partnerships, tap into local expertise, and utilize existing resources to create dynamic and appealing programs. We'll also share practical tips on how to implement these ideas with minimal budget, including strategies for seeking donations and making the most of what you already have. Whether you're a seasoned librarian or new to programming, this session will equip you with the tools and inspiration to offer diverse and engaging adult programs that meet the needs and interests of your community. Join us and take your library's adult programming to the next level—without the need for a big budget!
Tuesday	Building a Community Fridge: Food Equity as a Library Service	Inspired by Little Free Pantries and the global Community Fridge network, the Penn Hills Library began distributing food in June 2022. What started as a small shelf and fridge with occasional donations and volunteers has grown into a major library service which provides community access to over 5,000 pounds of food each week. Public libraries often serve food insecure populations and have to refer patrons to outside organizations, so the decision to provide direct food assistance was a logical addition to our efforts in expanding free and non-traditional library services. Most food pantries in the area require pre-registration, address verification, and income verification. The Library's central location, extended hours, and established presence as a community hub and resource center allow us to remove some of these barriers to access food. Some community members who hear about the Community Fridge are visiting the library for the first time, so we have an opportunity to share with them the programs and resources we have to offer. The concentration of people during restock times is a perfect opportunity for collaboration with community partners and the success of the Community Fridge has encouraged us to expand the types of resources we can offer.

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Tuesday	Future-proofing Privacy Literacy Programming: A Participatory Design Workshop	The future of library-based privacy education needs YOU! This BYOD (bring-your-own-device) participatory design workshop invites library workers whose roles include programming for youth and families, K-12 students, or college students, and library leaders with oversight of these areas, to engage with prototype-stage practitioner resources for developing and sustaining library-based privacy literacy programming. Privacy literacy is knowledge of personal information and its role in the information ecosystem. Privacy literate people are aware of how personal information can be collected and used to shape the information they receive, and their access to goods, services, and opportunities in our algorithmically mediated environment. Libraries have long been engaged in teaching community members how to protect their data and practice digital citizenship. Privacy literacy programming builds on this work by educating people about the social, political, economic, and technical systems that exploit personal data, and how corporate-government collusion in surveillance capitalism impacts us as individuals and society as a whole – and what we can do about it. In this workshop, participants will engage with prototype practitioner-facing resources and contribute feedback for the ongoing development of these materials, which will be open licensed (ex. Creative Commons) and made freely available to the library community in 2026.
Tuesday	Libraries After 2024: Emerging Trends, Opportunities, and What Comes Next	Public libraries are no longer just quiet spaces for books—they are vibrant community hubs offering technology access, workforce development, social services, cultural programming, outdoor spaces, and even coffee. But how are they evolving to meet today’s challenges, and what does the future hold? Join us for an insightful session that explores key findings from a statewide assessment capturing the perspectives of over 630 librarians and 1,900 Pennsylvanians. Conducted before, during, and after the 2024 elections, this study provides a timely and comprehensive look at the changing role of libraries. We’ll explore critical themes and emerging trends in the library experience, including current concerns, the shifting demand for digital resources, the role of libraries as community anchors, safe spaces, and essential service providers, and the power of partnerships in strengthening communities. Expect data-driven insights, case-study examples, and practical recommendations to help your library thrive in an evolving landscape. Don't miss this opportunity to engage in the conversation, gain fresh strategies, and reimagine the future of libraries. The next chapter starts here—be part of it!

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Tuesday	Measuring What Matters: Summer Library Impact and Outcomes	Libraries dedicate significant time and resources to summer programming, but how do we know if these efforts are making a meaningful impact? This session will focus on the importance of measuring both outputs (such as attendance numbers) and outcomes (such as changes in knowledge, skills, or behavior) to evaluate summer programs effectively. Attendees will gain insight into how the Pennsylvania Summer Library Program Impact Report can be used to assess programming, identify areas for improvement, and communicate the value of libraries to stakeholders within the communities they serve. We will also discuss practical methods for collecting and interpreting data to make informed decisions about future summer initiatives. Whether you are new to evaluation or looking for ways to refine your approach, this session will provide actionable strategies to help you measure the impact of your library's summer programs.
Tuesday	Small Libraries, Big Leadership: Navigating Board Challenges for New Directors	Small town, big problems? Being a new director in a small or rural library can be challenging, especially when you're navigating working with a board for the first time. We will bring together four library directors with ~70 years of collective experience working in different types of library organizations across Pennsylvania, and with special expertise in small and rural libraries.
Tuesday	2025 PA Forward(R) Adult Literacy Programming Awards	The winners in the 5 Literacy areas will be announced publicly and the Best PA Forward(R) Literacy Program will be announced at the program. Each program winner will be given the opportunity to explain how the program was developed and what they learned from carrying out the program.
Tuesday	Building a Better Library: Cultivating a Positive Work Culture	A thriving library is built on a strong, supportive, and motivated team. In this engaging session, we'll explore practical strategies for cultivating a positive work culture that enhances collaboration, employee well-being, and community impact. Whether you're a library leader or part of the team, you'll leave with actionable tools to foster trust, inclusivity, and a shared sense of purpose among your staff. Join us as we dive into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Effective communication techniques that build stronger teams</li> <li>•Strategies for preventing burnout and promoting work-life balance</li> <li>•Practical tips for embracing diversity and creating an inclusive work environment</li> <li>•How to empower staff through recognition and professional development</li> <li>•Tools to measure the impact of cultural improvements on library services</li> </ul> By the end of the session, you'll have a toolkit to create a more positive, productive, and people-centered library culture—one that benefits both your team and the community you serve.
Tuesday	Cutting Through the Noise - What's Working NOW to Spur Donor Engagement	Join fundraising master trainer, Chad Barger, ACFRE, ACNP, for a workshop focused on proven ways to capture donor attention. We'll look at the challenge of cutting through the noise in today's daily communication onslaught and the importance of donor retention. Attendees will learn simple, actionable steps that they can take to boost donor engagement at their organization. Examples will be shared of creative ways that real life nonprofit organizations identified, cultivated, solicited and stewarded their donors (including some that had no budget for doing so).

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Tuesday	Libraries and AI 2.0: Prompt Writing for Librarians and Library Workers	Libraries and AI 2.0 builds on the 2024 presentation, Libraries and AI, and focuses on prompt writing for librarians and library workers. Good prompt writing is an essential skill when interacting with generative AI. Attendees will learn about prompt engineering, about different types of prompts, and how to construct an effective prompt when using generative AI. This material is relevant in any type of library. Bring your laptops and get ready to play!
Tuesday	Read All About It!: Newspaper Digitization and Clipping Files in the Library	Through digitization efforts of small local newspapers and extensive vertical files of newspaper clippings, the Scranton Public Library continues strives to make information accessible to researchers. In a case study of the two main newspaper projects at the library, the digitization process, types of access provided by the library, and challenges of maintaining physical resources will be discussed. As an introductory session to the concept of in-house digitization of materials and developing vertical files, the goal of this presentation is to help libraries foster a more research focused approach to their daily newspaper deliveries. After a PowerPoint presentation, attendees will be able to ask questions and comment on the project.
Tuesday	Where the Schoolhouse and the Library Meet: Partnerships with Local School Districts	We will present ideas on how to effectively approach a school district and how to start building a partnership. We will discuss how to maintain a balanced and beneficial partnership including: how and when to take the initiative, what information and ideas should be shared and how to do that effectively, and how to work to get the schools to “buy-in” to the partnership and be equal partners. We will also present and discuss creative ideas for specific events that have bolstered our library-school partnerships (including but not limited to school-wide events, regular class storytimes, and all-district Literacy Nights for Title I requirements). We will also discuss boundaries on both sides for support of school and public library goals. We will open the floor to discussion and questions addressing specific concerns and situations.
Tuesday	Engage Your Community Through Storytelling	Libraries host readings, book clubs, and writing workshop groups to connect with their communities. But many patrons see such events as intended for literary types and thus don't consider attending. An alternative strategy is to ask a local author to offer a workshop in which attendees are instructed in the basics of how to tell a story, with the assumption that everyone has the innate ability to tell a story. Author and professor David Hicks has done just this at over a dozen libraries, using a familiar and accessible formula: “Once upon a time . . . Then, one day . . .” Patrons learn how to identify a story (an event that changed them) in their own lives; the central elements of a story, and how to structure their own story based on that event. They will finish the workshop with the first few paragraphs (character, setting, and plot) of a new story, and the confidence that comes with telling their own story and knowing it matters, both to themselves and the larger community. In this conference session David will describe this activity, demonstrate it with your participation, and explain how such an event can be hosted at your own library.

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Tuesday	Engaging Libraries in Brain Health: Raising Awareness and Inspiring Action	3 speakers (Panel Discussion) Join a panel of three experts as they discuss evidence-based strategies to lower the risk of cognitive decline and potentially dementia. This session will explore the latest understanding of modifiable risk factors and highlight ways the library community can engage patrons through programs, resources, and partnerships to promote brain health. Hear insights from a representative of the Alzheimer's Association, Penn State Extension, and an individual living in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease.
Tuesday	Even YOU Can Do A Music Program	Never learned how to play an instrument or read music but want to add a music program to your library? Then this is the session for you! Learn to play the super simple Ocarina and how to use it in children's programming!
Tuesday	Leveraging Technology to Drive Library Card Signups	As libraries continue to offer more and more digital services, having users physically come into the library in order to get a library card can be a barrier to service. We'll discuss how PA libraries have used specific technologies that can drive card signups, as well as ways to leverage lower-tech solutions to reach outside of the library building to get more folks registered for library cards. Our panel will feature several librarians from around the state and their efforts to work with school and community partners, and provide audience members with an opportunity to share their own experiences and ask questions.
Tuesday	Making School Outreach Flexible and Simple with Ready-to-Go Programs	Does outreach at your library need a refresh or maybe you need some inspiration to get started? Are you not doing outreach due to school restrictions, staffing or other time constraints? The Allegheny County Library Association has simplified outreach for libraries by creating four outreach programs geared towards children in preschool – 6th grade to engage readers with literature and create awareness of the public library. Regardless of library size, number of staff or school/class characteristics, these programs offer a flexible approach to outreach, that can be easily adapted to meet the needs of the library, schools and community. In this panel presentation, attendees will learn more about each program, hear from youth services staff about how it works at individual libraries and discover strategies to easily replicate at their libraries and schools.
Tuesday	Spirits in the Library: Beer (& Chili) Tasting Fundraisers	For 5 years, Mt Lebanon Public Library held two successful Beer Tasting events annually at the library (a total of 10), which raised \$60,000+ (approximately \$6,000 per event). During Covid, we hosted several virtual beer events. This presentation will give attendees a detailed overview for organizing such an event—from pre-planning, to procuring the beer and chili, handling volunteers, and setup/takedown. You'll learn what works and what doesn't as well as tips for running such an event smoothly and how to avoid disasters!
Tuesday	Outreach at Any Size	Small and rural libraries and library systems can engage in meaningful outreach even with limited personal, time, and budget. This session will introduce ten successful outreach programs—including staff time, costs, and outcomes--implemented by a small and rural library system in upstate New York. Target outreach groups covered will include early literacy, seniors and older adults, homebound, economically disadvantaged, and geographically isolated. Learn how you can scale down (or up) to make a similar program (or programs!) work for your library--no matter its size. Tips, tricks, and lessons learned included-- and no bookmobile required!

## 2025 PaLA Conference Sessions available for Sponsorship

Tuesday	Overcoming the Fear: Engaging with Teens in the Library	Let's be honest, most library workers don't want to deal with teens. We love superhero teen librarians who wrangle those hormonal small adults into some semblance of polite social behavior. The problem is that one bad interaction with another staff member can outweigh all the good your teen librarian does. I want to suggest a new mindset: Every person working in a public library serves teens and every interaction with a teen can make an impact. This workshop will discuss why having a space to belong in the community positively influences teens. We'll examine what neuroscience tells us about teen brains and why respect is the currency of teen life. We'll cover how to interact with teens to teach them to be better humans. You'll also leave with tips on how to share this information with your staff back home. This session is for anyone working in a public library (since you all serve teens) and will be a mix of lecture, conversation, and technological interaction.
Tuesday	The PaLA Hidden Treasure: The Digital Media Calendar	Since 2016, the PR/Marketing Committee has developed the Digital Calendar. This calendar is a treasure trove of programming ideas and easy to use social media posts that can be used to lay out an entire year of programming for your library. In this panel discussion, library workers will explain how they use the calendar each year and what successes they have achieved by using the calendar as a foundation of their planning process.
Tuesday	Technopoly: A Surveillance Capitalism Parody Game Design Jam	Protecting your privacy isn't a game... until now! Join us to co-create a Technopoly parody game in which players are data brokers acquiring tech platforms and service providers to capture the most data and win at surveillance capitalism. Created by collaborators working across library instruction and makerspace programming, Technopoly introduces players to concepts and theories related to privacy and surveillance in an accessible, inclusive, and fun format. Attendees will participate in a game design jam to co-create the Technopoly parody game by identifying industries, assigning values to properties, and creating Randomized Algo and Panoptic Sort scenario cards using materials provided. Throughout the game design jam, facilitators will introduce game-based learning design principles to explain how gaming can be an accessible, inclusive, and participatory format for educational library programming. Facilitators will demonstrate how privacy and surveillance theories informed the Technopoly game parody and are embedded in gameplay. Facilitators will also share lessons learned and best practices for recreating Technopoly or similar game-based learning materials in attendees' own makerspaces, as well as make their open-licensed game design files available to attendees for reuse. Co-designing Technopoly is half the fun, but we'll also play a few rounds in teams as session time allows!
Tuesday	You Can't Make This Stuff Up!	Part stand-up, part theatrics and 100% truth! Participants will be entertained by the antics of Jen Knisely and Heather Lindskold as they recount some of the highlights of their 10 years working together at the Altoona Area Public Library. From bed bugs to possums, it's all on the table!

## 2025 PaLA Conference Sessions available for Sponsorship

Wednesday	Empowering Vulnerable Populations in Your Public Library	Our focus will be on low cost or free ways libraries can support their vulnerable populations through maintenance of infrastructure, collections, and program offerings. Using statistical data from our local population and library, we will be presenting the effect that our efforts have had. Maintaining our technology, collections, and continual offering of innovative programming has allowed us the unique opportunity to provide for our service area in ways that other public institutions cannot.
Wednesday	Homeschool Exploratorium: Programming for the Homeschool Community	This session will provide insight on partnering with the Homeschool Community in your area. It will include information on how your library can serve this unique community including tips on how to be a welcoming space and create programs they want to attend. The session will focus on how we developed, planned, and implemented our successful STEAM focused Homeschool Exploratorium. We will also share highlights of other programs we have offered to Homeschoolers.
Wednesday	Hosting a Human Library	Join us for an insightful presentation on the "Human Library" program, developed in response to research on the growing isolation and loneliness crisis. This innovative initiative invites community volunteers to share their personal experiences in one-on-one conversations with library patrons, fostering empathy, connection, and understanding among individuals who might not otherwise cross paths. Through the program, participants are exposed to diverse perspectives, helping to break down barriers and build stronger community bonds. In this session, we'll explore the concept of the *Human Library*, the many benefits it brings to the community, and how libraries can play a pivotal role in combatting isolation. You'll also learn practical steps for organizing your own Human Library event, with highlights from the successful *ECPL Human Library Program*, showcasing its positive impact on both volunteers and patrons alike. This is a powerful way to enhance empathy and create meaningful connections, making libraries a vital hub for community engagement.
Wednesday	Making a Space for Teens: Redefining Space in a One-room Library	The content presented in this session will be aimed at directors and/or youth services staff. It will look at the steps our small library took to create a designated space for our teen/young adult population. Identifying that there was a need in our community for a safe space for teens, our library wanted to carve out space truly designed for that age group and demographic. Beginning with selecting a location in our one-room library, searching for grants to help off-set costs for trendy furniture, and sharing how we overcame unexpected obstacles, this session will go from start to finish of creating our new teen corner.
Wednesday	Media Literacy in the Age of AI	Artificial intelligence is rapidly advancing, with the general public now able to access text-to-image generators, chatbots, and other AI-powered tools. In a time of deepfakes and AI hallucinations, how can we discern what is real? This talk will include strategies for identifying AI-generated content in a variety of formats.



## 2025 PaLA Conference Sessions available for Sponsorship

Wednesday	Stemming the Spread and Influence of Misinformation: A Public Library Approach	This session will share a case study of an adult media literacy workshop that was piloted by Truth in Common at public libraries in Maryland, DC and southern PA in 2024. With equal parts presentation and discussion, participants will hear how patrons engaged with the content, reconnected with local information sources and practiced respectful discourse. Attendees will also have a chance to offer feedback on a proposed project to bring these workshops to libraries across Pennsylvania.
Wednesday	Building Home Libraries and Promoting Library Awareness by in the Community	Studies have shown that access to books in the home helps school performance and build vocabulary among other things. The Allegheny County Library Association is trying to help children build home libraries, as well as create library awareness through four different initiatives: Baby Bags: Distributing bags to new and expectant parents that promote early learning and include books and other manipulatives. Book Vending Machines: Placing book vending machines in locations where children are in challenging situations, like visiting a loved one at the Allegheny County Jail. Books & Beyond: Featuring Allegheny County libraries and programs monthly on the local TV show, Pittsburgh Today Live and offering the opportunity for viewers to complete a survey and receive the Book-of-the-Month. Community Events: Distributing books to children at large scale events, such as Kindergarten, Here I Come at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. In this presentation, attendees will learn more about these programs, how they can replicate them and hear from some of the collaborators, such as KDKA-TV and the Allegheny County Jail.
Wednesday	Ending the Stigma - Period. Throwing a Period Party at Your Library	In late September and early October of 2024, Erie County Public Library threw two Period Parties for kids ages 8-13. One session was specifically for cisgender girls, and another was for trans and non-binary friends who expected to menstruate as part of puberty. We partnered with the local County Department of Health, who provided a licensed RN to present to the attendees about the process of menstruation. We also partnered with local non-profit Compton's Table, an organization that supports LGBTQIA+ youth in Erie. This session will focus on the planning and execution of these programs, how they were received, and how you can throw your own Period Party at your library.

## 2025 PaLA Conference Sessions available for Sponsorship

Wednesday	Everything All At Once!: Addressing Cognitive Load in Libraries	Competing deadlines, an endless barrage of information, and relentless stress pressurize the daily learning journeys of library staff and patrons alike. While libraries are adaptable and resilient, constant strain on cognitive load magnifies existing challenges and introduces new ones. Cognitive load refers to the amount of information an individual can retain in their working memory. When it is surpassed, one struggles to learn new information. Cognitive overload can hamper a first-year student's success navigating a complex database to find relevant articles; it can intensify the emotional labor public library staff perform to conduct effective reference interviews and meet an ever-expanding roster of needs; and it can dramatically undermine how well attendees absorb new information presented in library information sessions, workshops, and other programming. When cognitive overload is not taken into consideration across library services, it can undermine learning and overall success. In this presentation, we share collaborative strategies and examples of efforts to reduce overwhelm in library systems, outreach, and workshops or instruction. Attendees from public, academic, and special libraries will see how cognitive load impacts their respective institutions and learn how their work can address these unique challenges. A toolbox will be provided with helpful readings and other resources.
Wednesday	Pennsylvania Libraries: Where are we now, and what does the future hold?	With changes occurring at the federal level, many questions start to be asked about public libraries in Pennsylvania: what are libraries current source of funds, can they maintain services if funding is cut, what ways are libraries cutting back and how does it affect patrons? This session will look at these questions and others to get a baseline for Pennsylvania libraries through 2024. Then we will look at the best way to increase our collective impact in a fiscally responsible environment. We will do this by presenting annual report data from 2023 and 2024 that looks at things like the percentage of libraries who could function for a year without any additional funds, percentage of libraries who saw a decrease in funding between 2023 and 2024, and libraries who are continuously using reserves to maintain services. We will also look at how this affects outputs like circulation and program attendance. Finally, we will look at what factors show the biggest effect on these measures. Attendees should be familiar with PA public libraries and some of their challenges.
Wednesday	Rainbow Connection Collection	With LGBTQ+ books at risk of increased challenges and bans learn how to build and use your Rainbow Connection Collection. Fawn Contreras, Head of Youth Services at the Valley Community Library will share why queer books are so important for all ages, the importance of creating safe spaces, how to be an ally, and how you can use these books in storytimes, outreach events, and every day to have a fully diverse and inclusive library. Learn how to build your rainbow connections in your community to strengthen your partnerships and support.
Wednesday	Turn Your Library into a Passport Acceptance Facility!	A local case study of how the Juniata County Library (JCL) in Mifflintown became a passport acceptance facility in December 2022. Vince Giordano, library director and one of the three passport agents at JCL, will explain why JCL became a passport acceptance facility, how it navigated the site registration requirements, and how this new service has panned out.