JOINT CONFERENCE OF LIBRARIANS OF COLOR (JCLC)

The Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC), September 19 – 23, Kansas City, MO, is sponsored by the five caucus associations of color of the American Library Association (ALA). The conference will serve as a forum for library staff from all types of libraries and backgrounds to discuss issues of diversity in U.S. libraries.

The JCLC will offer four days of tracked programming for a wide audience of attendees who serve diverse populations. The conference will provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to better serve diverse communities, offering 75 sessions that will foster discussions on best practices, collection development, recruitment, early literacy advocacy and delivery of service. Speakers include Emmy winner Sonia Manzano, best-selling authors Sharon Flake, and Lauren Myracle and many others.

The conference sponsors are the American Indian Library Association, the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Chinese American Librarians Association, and the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking.

The American Indian Library Association (AILA)

The American Indian Library Association (AILA) is a membership action group that addresses the library-related needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives. AILA was founded in 1979 in conjunction with the White House Pre-Conference on Indian Library and Information Services on or Near Reservations. AILA members are individuals and institutions interested in the development of programs to improve library and information services in all types of libraries that serve Indian communities.

Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA)

Founded in 1980, the Asian/Pacific Librarians Association (APALA) was incorporated in Illinois in 1981 and formally affiliated with the ALA in 1982. A predecessor of APALA, the Asian American Librarians Caucus (AALC), was organized in 1975 as a discussion group of the ALA Office for Library Outreach Services reflecting the interest in library services to minority communities and professional support of librarians of minority ancestry that prevailed in the ALA in the 1960s and 70s. APALA and AALC before it was organized/founded by librarians of diverse Asian/Pacific ancestries committed to working together toward a common goal: to create an organization that would address the needs of Asian/Pacific American
librarians and those who serve Asian/Pacific American communities.

Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA)

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) serves as an advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and resources to the nation’s African American community. Founded by ALA Past President E. J. Josey in 1970, the organization provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians, and also serves as a clearinghouse for information about Black Librarians in promoting their wider participation at all levels of the profession.

Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA)

Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) started in 1973 as Mid-West Chinese American Librarians Association, a regional organization in Illinois. A year later, Chinese Librarians Association was formed in California in 1974. In 1976, Mid-West Chinese American Librarians Association was expanded to a national organization as Chinese American Librarians Association. By 1979, CALA had five chapters in Northeast, Mid-West, Atlantic, Southwest and California respectively. Chinese American Librarians Association and Chinese Librarians Association were merged in 1983. The merged organization retains CALA’s English name and Chinese Librarians Association’s Chinese name (hua ren tu shu guan yuan xie hui).

National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA)

Dr. Arnulfo Trejo founded REFORMA in 1971. As an affiliate of the ALA, REFORMA has actively sought to promote the development of library collections to include Spanish-language and Latino oriented materials. The organization works to recruit bilingual and bicultural library professionals and support staff, and the development of library services and programs that meet the needs of the Latino community. REFORMA supports efforts to educate the U.S. Latino population in regards to the availability and types of library services, as well as efforts to preserve existing library resource centers serving the interests of Latinos.

Joint Conference of Librarians of Color: Talking Point

Key messages

- The most recent Census analysis tells us that minority groups make up an increasing share of the population in nearly every state. Every year, libraries expand their collections and services to meet the changing needs of our users.
• The Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC) will serve as an opportunity for library staff from all types of libraries and backgrounds to come together to share successful strategies on how we can best serve our increasingly diverse communities.

• The goal of the conference is to network and share strategies, effective practices, and expertise on how to better serve increasingly diverse populations.

• Because libraries offer free access to all, they bring opportunity to all.

• To be their best, our libraries and profession must reflect both the communities we serve and the larger global community.

About the JCLC

• The Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC) is a conference for everyone!

• Hundreds of library staffers from all types of libraries and backgrounds, diversity advocates and educators will gather in Kansas City, Missouri from Sept. 19 – 23, to network and exchange ideas on how to better serve increasingly diverse populations.

• The conference’s theme is Gathering at the Waters, Celebrating Stories, Embracing Communities and includes 75 sessions featuring speakers, skills building workshops, research based panels and networking opportunities.

• Conference speakers include Emmy winner Sonia Manzano, best-selling authors Sharon Flake, and Lauren Myracle among others.

• Key issues of discussion will include advocacy, outreach, multicultural collection development, diversity best practices, recruitment, delivery of service and much more.

• The JCLS is sponsored by the five ethnic caucuses of the American Library Association that include the American Indian Library Association (AILA); Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA); Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA); Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA); and National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA).
Libraries & Diversity

- The strength of our nation has always been the diversity of its people. The strength of libraries is the diversity of their collections and their commitment to serving people of diverse backgrounds.

- Children and adults of all ages need to see themselves when they walk into the library.

- Today’s libraries provide a wide range of opportunities for people with diverse needs and interests. These include cultural heritage collections, materials in alternate formats such as large print, multilingual Internet training, bilingual story-hours, English as Second Language classes and many other creative and resourceful programs.

Minority librarian recruitment

- Founded in 1997, the Spectrum Initiative’s major drive is to recruit applicants and award scholarships to American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students for graduate programs in library and information studies.

- Since 1998, more than 700 new librarians of color have entered the profession and continue to receive leadership and professional support through the Spectrum Initiative.

- The Spectrum Initiative was awarded nearly $1 million in 2004 to expand its outreach efforts, and just this year again received funding from the Institute for Museum and Library Services for a new Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship. The fellowship will provide full tuition support and stipends to 10 full-time library and information science (LIS) doctoral students for all four years of study.

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