

*New Jersey State Library*  
**2016 ANNUAL REPORT**

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*Connecting people with information through libraries*

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*The New Jersey State Library building located at 185 West State Street in Trenton, New Jersey.*

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

# CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH INFORMATION THROUGH LIBRARIES

At the New Jersey State Library (NJSL), we recognize our primary purpose as being to connect people with information through libraries. Over the course of the past year we worked to develop stronger collaboration, promote transparent processes and procedures, and strengthen our outreach and communication practices. NJSL has continued its investment in the development of New Jersey's libraries by fostering professional training of library personnel, and providing effective leadership and administration to support and improve library services.

*In addition to 2016 being a productive year, as an organization we worked to re-envision and refocus the way we conduct our work.*

The State Library leadership team feels assured that we are more strongly positioned as a result of our new mindset regarding adaptive planning and the disruptive challenges to which we need to respond. As we move forward into 2017 and beyond, we will continue to revise and adapt our targets in order to best support our various constituencies.

What follows is our 2016 calendar year wrap-up report of activities and initiatives. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather, a sampling of key highlights from the year.



# STATE LIBRARY MANAGEMENT TEAM



FROM LEFT

| **MARY L. CHUTE**, *State Librarian*  
 New Jersey

| **PEGGY CADIGAN**, *Deputy State Librarian*  
 Innovation & Strategic Partnerships

| **MARGARET NIZOLEK**, *Chief Deputy State Librarian*  
 State Library Information Center (SLIC)



| **JAMES LONERGAN**, *Deputy State Librarian*  
 Library Support Services (LSS)

| **TIFFANY McCLARY**, *Director*  
 Communications, Marketing & Outreach

| **MIKE RASIMOWICZ**, *Director*  
 Information Technology (IT)



| **SHERI SHAFER**, *Chief Financial Officer*  
 New Jersey State Library

| **MICHELE STRICKER**, *Deputy State Librarian*  
 Lifelong Learning

| **ADAM SCZEPANIAK**, *Deputy State Librarian*  
 Talking Book & Braille Center (TBBC)

The Office of the State Librarian promotes exemplary service in accordance with New Jersey Library Law; supports professional development through LibraryLinkNJ, the New Jersey Library Cooperative; and is responsible for Information Technology, the Business Office, and the Office of Communications, Marketing & Outreach. The Office is also responsible for Library Development through the Lifelong Learning, Library Support Services, and Innovation & Strategic Partnerships business units.





*Moorestown Public Library's 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, winner of the NJSL Best Practices in Early Literacy Award.*

# STATE LIBRARY AWARDS

The State Library held its annual awards ceremony during the State Librarian's Breakfast at the New Jersey Library Association Annual Conference on May 18.

Four New Jersey libraries were honored with the *NJSL Best Practices in Early Literacy Award* for conducting outstanding early literacy programs on behalf of their youngest library users and their families: Bernardsville Public Library for their Reading Rumpus Program, Cranford Public Library for their Family M.E.S.S. Program, Moorestown Public Library for their 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program, and Rockaway Township Free Public Library for their School Skills Program.

Three New Jersey libraries were honored with the *NJSL Multicultural Programming Award* for conducting outstanding multicultural programs to engage cultural and ethnic communities in meaningful and effective partnerships: Atlantic City Free Public Library for their Atlantic City Experience: La Ciudad Atlantica Program, Free Public Library of Hasbrouck Heights for their Multicultural Celebration- Focus on Asian Cultures Program and South Brunswick Public Library for their Cultural Conversations Program.

The *2016 Innovation Award* was presented to the Hillsdale Public Library for its contributions to the Makerspace Community.

Each winning library received a \$1000 award along with a certificate.



*Atlantic City Free Public Library's Atlantic City Experience: La Ciudad Atlantica program, winner of the NJSL Multicultural Programming Award.*



# STATE LIBRARY HONORS & AWARDS RECEIVED

On May 17, 2016, members of the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA), library advocates and community leaders recognized the New Jersey State Library's Communications, Marketing and Outreach Department at its annual honors and awards reception. The New Jersey State Library was honored in the Information Literature category for its publication *Reboot Literacy @ Your library 2015 Graduate Yearbook*.

On November 12, 2016, the State Library Talking Book & Braille Center received the Agnes Allen Distinguished Service Award from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Federation of the Blind. The Agnes Allen award is the organization's highest award. TBBC was its third recipient.

NJSL was invited to join the NJ Division of Children and Families (DCF) staff at an Employee Recognition Program on July 12, 2016, held at the Professional Center in New Brunswick, where NJSL staff were presented with certificates to honor their teamwork and partnership efforts in cultivating the DCF & NJSL Partnership. During 2016, members of NJSL's Life Long Learning, TBBC, and Communications, Marketing & Outreach departments held quarterly partnership meetings, joint sponsored events, and cross promotion/marketing initiatives with DCF.



*NJSL and DCF staff, along with DCF Commissioner Allison Blake (far left), receiving the 2016 Teamwork and Partnership Award at DCF's Annual Employee Recognition Program.*

# STATE LIBRARY STAFF TRANSITIONS

2016 introduced a number of new staff appointments:

- Margaret Nizolek was appointed as the new Chief Deputy State Librarian and Director of the State Library Information Center (SLIC).
- Sergio Pastore joined the Talking Book & Braille Center's (TBBC) Shipping Department.
- SLIC welcomed librarian Regina Fitzpatrick to the Reference Services section.
- Andrea Levandowski, a reference librarian with NJSL since 2008, was appointed Program Manager of Small Business Development and Technology in the Lifelong Learning section.
- Elizabeth Burns was appointed Head of Reader Services at TBBC.
- Amelia Muzithras joined the NJSL Information Technology (IT) Department.
- Ben Saracco was appointed Electronic Resources Librarian in SLIC's Reference Services section.
- Jayson Neville joined the facilities staff team.

Additionally, there were several retirements announced during 2016:

- Colleen Dazé, Chief Deputy State Librarian and Director of SLIC,
- Loretta Aja, Supervising Reference Librarian, SLIC,
- Donna Remely, Technical Library Assistant, SLIC,
- Barbara Doyle, Library Assistant, SLIC.



*Mike Rasimowicz, Director of Information Technology, speaks to Middletown Library about JerseyConnect's services.*

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The IT staff have completed the installation of all new HP blade and SAN servers in the data center at 101 West State Street and have begun migrating all servers to this new environment. This project, along with moving Illiad and Horizon over to a vendor hosted solution, are the result of ongoing efforts to meet the requirements of the State Library's business continuity plan.

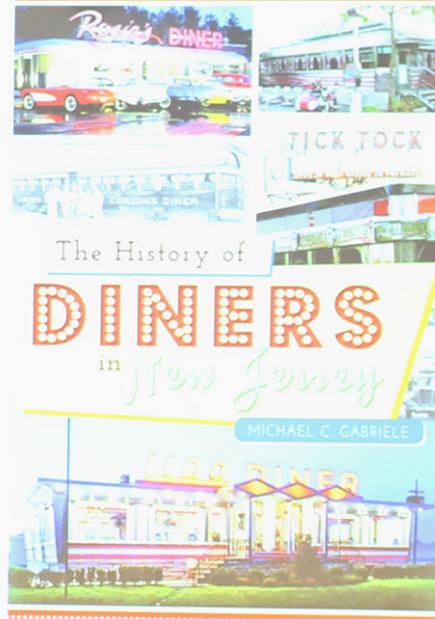
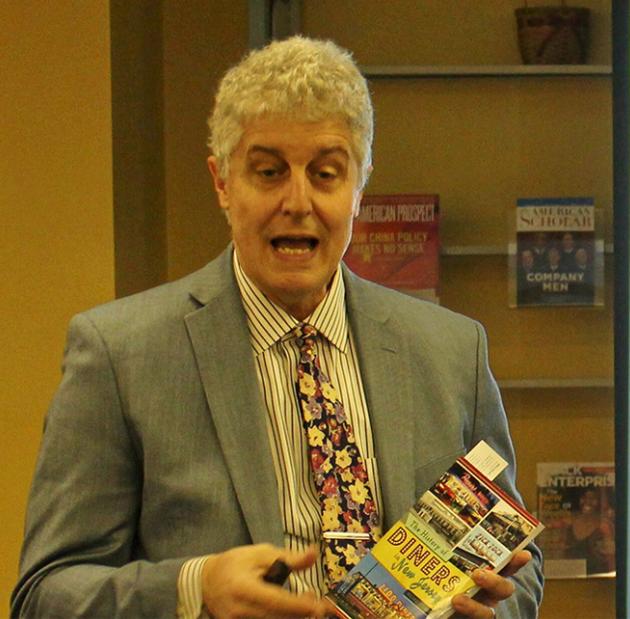
IT staff are also completing the upgrades to Office 2016 and will then focus on upgrading the remaining staff computers to Windows 10.

## JERSEYCONNECT

The JerseyConnect team completed the following initiatives in 2016:

- Network upgrades for the following libraries: Atlantic County, Asbury Park, Irvington, Somerset County, Camden County, Gloucester County, PALS PLUS and Maplewood, were completed.
- Staff assisted Warren County Library System with their network upgrade project, which is a blend of using Verizon and CenturyLink's EVPL service.
- Upgrades to the JerseyConnect core network have started. The core network will be upgraded to a 10 gig backbone. The work will be completed by spring of 2017.
- The following libraries have or will be installing Meraki wifi equipment this year: Hackettstown, Wyckoff, Phillipsburg, Belleville, Haddonfield, Dunellen, Irvington, Hopewell and Waterford.
- JerseyConnect announced free SSL certificates for web-hosting customers through Let's Encrypt. This is another free service from JerseyConnect which will provide secure web-hosting to its customers.
- Many libraries have taken advantage of JerseyConnect's application hosting environment, specifically by switching their ILS to Koha with the assistance of ByWater Solutions. The process has become so successful that ByWater Solutions is automatically suggesting to new NJ library customers to use our hosting environment.
- This year we have either successfully hosted or are in the process of taking on hosting of the following libraries' Koha ILS systems: Audubon, Atlantic City, Collingswood, Gloucester City, Haddon Heights, Hudson County Community College and Northfield (Otto Bruyns).





Author Michael C. Gabriele speaks about the history of local diners at an NJSL Author Talk.

## STATE LIBRARY PROGRAMS & COURSES

Traditionally, NJSL delivers programming and offers learning experiences that are open to all, such as author talks, book clubs, lunchtime classes and webinars. A number of these classes were offered during 2016.

NJSL hosted 13 New Jersey authors, discussing topics such as U.S. Presidential Campaigns, Women in World War II, Baseball in the Civil War Era, Gardening and Storytelling by Song. The Lunchtime Learning program featured a wide array of topics including grants and proposal writing, online privacy, exploring languages, crowdfunding, health and wellness and more. Tabletop Tuesday board game sessions were also held and were open to all.

### DISASTER PLANNING AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCY TOOLKIT AND WORKSHOP SERIES

With the help of a \$40,000 grant from the PSEG Foundation, NJSL commissioned the Librarian's Disaster Planning and Community Resiliency Toolkit, which includes a guidebook and workbook, to help libraries in New Jersey and across the country to be better prepared to accept the new mantle of responsibility being thrust on them as a safe haven in times of crises. The grant provided for the printing of 500 manuals, the creation of an archived training webinar and 10 training workshops, which were held at libraries across the state. The training workshops took library staff through the step-by-step development of a disaster recovery plan for their facility and allowed the library staff to develop a strategy for dealing with the operational challenges that would arise while providing services to the public in the midst of – or shortly after a disaster. Library staff learned how to confidently and competently develop relationships with emergency management that would lead to a seat at the table before, during and after a disaster.



Donald Byrne teaching the Disaster Planning and Community Workshop Series.

## ONLINE GOODREADS BOOK CAFÉ

In February 2016, a Goodreads group page for the former NJSL Book Café was launched so that state employees and others across New Jersey could participate in book discussions facilitated by the State Library. Goodreads is billed as “the world’s largest web site for reader and book recommendations.” It allows registered users the opportunity to catalog the books they are reading, have read, or want to read; to connect with other readers who have similar tastes; and to seek out recommendations for new titles to read. NJSL staff held a webinar and posted a how-to YouTube video to assist patrons with getting started using the social tool.

## LIBRARY EQUAL ACCESS PROGRAM (LEAP)

NJSL’s Talking Book & Braille Center partnered with the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) and public libraries in South Orange, East Brunswick and Mays Landing to provide accessible software training. Eight fully accessible computers were delivered to each library in the program, as well as a number of Apple iPads. CBVI’s training contractor, Advancing Opportunities, was commissioned to conduct classes throughout 2016 for individuals interested in learning about the software. Although the initial aim was to advance training to seniors, all people interested were eligible to participate. The computer workstations were also available anytime for use that the libraries were open in accordance with their policies.



*Veteran Virginia Lucas, in cap, is trained how to use an Apple iPad by Lolly Cheatham.*

## iPAD TRAINING FOR VETERANS

In 2016, TBBC received a grant from Disability Rights New Jersey to teach veterans to use the assistive technology features on iPads. Built into Apple’s iOS operating system for mobile devices are little-known accessibility features for those with hearing, physical, learning and vision impairments. The spirit behind pursuing this grant was to help reduce the digital divide for veterans by introducing them to new technology to assist them in their daily living. TBBC partnered with Advancing Opportunities on this grant to deliver the training. Training included finger navigation, magnification and text-to-speech (VoiceOver) features, as well as an introduction to using assistive apps.

## ENGLISH TO GO!

During October 2016, Audiovision, the radio-reading service of TBBC, began broadcasting *English to Go!*, a series of three-minute English conversation practice sessions. Audiovision volunteer readers and staff have recorded everyday English conversation that listeners can repeat to help them communicate more confidently with friends and neighbors; introduce themselves and ask for assistance; make appointments over the telephone; order at a deli or restaurant and more. Learners new to the English language, especially those with visual or print disabilities, can benefit greatly from this radio broadcast of conversational English language practice sessions.



Career Connections program banner hanging on the outside of the New Jersey State Library in Trenton.

## CAREER CONNECTIONS

Following the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development's (LWD) \$2.5 million commitment to connect New Jersey workers with employment services at their public libraries, nineteen chosen Career Connections libraries have been working with the State Library and LWD personnel to hire and train staff, prepare their locations, and become acquainted with local One Stop operations. From May-June 2016, library staff received Career Connections Navigator Training and met with staff members from LWD to discuss grant procedures. July 11, 2016, was the soft launch of the Career Connections website that grantee libraries, including the State Library Information Center, are using to assist job seekers at their locations. Career Connections replaces LWD's *Jobs 4 Jersey* program and provides a comprehensive resource for New Jerseyans to explore career services and information from LWD.

## WEBSITE RE-DESIGN

Over the course of several months, the NJSL Communications, Marketing & Outreach team, in collaboration with the NJSL Website Committee, comprised of staff members across all departments, as well the NJSL IT Department, worked to restructure and redesign the njstatelib.org website. This included new site navigation and a complete overhaul, which required extensive web development and design work. The revamped website officially launched in February 2016. In addition to making the website more user friendly, the website debuted the new Ebsco Discovery Service, which allows a robust search of NJSL's catalog, database and journal holdings all from a single search box. Research LibGuides were also officially launched on the new site. These online web pages, created by librarians, are designed to facilitate patrons' research by pulling together, in one place, library resources and carefully selected, reputable web resources.

## NATIONAL DIGITAL NEWSPAPER PROGRAM

In August 2016, Rutgers University, the New Jersey State Library and the New Jersey State Archives were awarded a grant to digitize 100,000 pages of historical New Jersey newspapers. With the \$186,204 grant, New Jersey became the 44th state to participate in the National Digital Newspaper Program, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The New Jersey Digital Newspaper Project is a collaboration of Rutgers University Libraries, the State Archives and the State Library that will make the history of New Jersey known and accessible to its citizens and the world through searchable digital files available through the Library of Congress website, *Chronicling America*. Over a two-year period, the project will digitize and catalog at least 100,000 newspaper pages, originally published between 1836 and 1922, not currently available in digital format.



*NJ State Librarian, Mary Chute addressing new directors. The State Library's 2016 New Directors Orientation was held February 17 & 24 in the conference room at the Talking Book & Braille Center.*

## NEW DIRECTORS ORIENTATION

Thirty-four library directors from across New Jersey convened at TBBC on Feb. 17 & 24, to learn about everything from library law to managing staff during the State Library's annual New Directors Orientation. After being welcomed by State Librarian Mary Chute, attendees were briefed on a variety of topics vital to them performing their jobs effectively: Library Finance, Per Capita State Aid, Budgeting, Library Law, Library Marketing, Library Boards, JerseyConnect's Managed Wifi and more. There was also an overview of services offered by NJSL and TBBC. It was a great opportunity for the new directors to learn the basics about their positions, and to network with State Library personnel, other library professionals and new library directors from around the state. This marked the first time the orientation was held away from the West State St. State Library building. The change of venue provided the opportunity to allow more new directors to attend.

## NJ CULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSE (NJCAR)

The NJ Cultural Alliance for Response group made great strides as it worked towards becoming an independent organization. In 2016 they held a strategic planning retreat, and began writing a business plan for sustainable funding and an Memorandum Of Agreement with partner organizations. With help and guidance from both LYRASIS and the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, NJCAR is now officially written into New Jersey's statewide emergency management plan under Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). ESF is the grouping of governmental and certain private sector capabilities into an organizational structure to provide support, resources, program implementation, and services that are most likely needed to save lives, protect property and the environment, restore essential services and critical infrastructure, and help victims and communities return to normal following domestic incidents. At the close of the year, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded a \$6,000 Preservation Assistance Grant to the NJSL for a project in partnership with NJCAR, to provide disaster-preparedness training to libraries, archives, historical societies, and museums with humanities collections.

## STATEWIDE DATABASES

The State Library assembled a Database Advisory Committee with the goal of selecting an assortment of statewide databases for multi-year contracts. Representatives from the Library Services and Technology Act Advisory Council, the Library Network Review Board, other library associations and cooperatives; and front-line staff members in New Jersey Library Network libraries were invited to serve on the committee. The committee took part in multiple activities, including various steps of the Request for Quotation process and evaluation of vendor quotations, with the goal of submitting purchase recommendations to the State Librarian. A survey was also issued to the New Jersey library community in order to gauge the value of current licensed databases and to identify future needs for FY2017 and subsequent years.

In May 2016, the State Library announced that it had licensed statewide databases/e-resources for a three year period that provide coverage of general and scholarly periodicals and journals; newspapers; biographical information; consumer health; nursing and allied health; and literature and literary criticism. NJSL had also licensed job, career and small business e-resources, and, in response to the request by committee members to strengthen our statewide e-resources for public libraries, added the language learning product, Rosetta Stone Library Solutions Plus.



*A Taxation University workshop for small businesses in New Jersey that took place at Old Bridge Public Library in October 2016.*

## SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOPS

During October 2016, NJSL began offering Small Business Workshops at public libraries, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Treasury's Division of Taxation. These workshops covered the basics of how individuals can register their businesses and remain in compliance with reporting, sales tax, and employer requirements. Representatives from Taxation University presented a comprehensive seminar, answered questions from the audience and offered their services in the future, a great benefit for small business owners who want a direct contact with the Division of Taxation. From October to December, sessions were scheduled at eighteen libraries across New Jersey, nearly quadrupling the number of workshops offered by Taxation University. Building on the initial round of workshops, the NJSL is scheduling additional sessions in 2017.

## 2016 STATEWIDE SUMMER READING PROGRAM

New Jersey had a total of 173,281 participants this year in its statewide summer reading program – a 14 percent increase from last year – with a total of 1,644,877 books read by all ages. There were 30,255 library programs offered throughout the summer, with over 635,110 NJ residents in attendance. This year’s summer reading theme for all ages was sports/health/fitness and the early literacy and children’s artwork was designed by Author / Illustrator Matt Tavares. Author Kate DiCamillo, two-time Newbery Medalist, and former National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature, was the national spokesperson for the summer reading program. This year’s the slogans were: “On Your Mark, Get Set...READ!” for the early literacy and children’s, “Get in the Game. Read” for the teens and “Exercise Your Mind. READ!” for the adults.



*Montville High School Students Represent New Jersey in a National Summer Reading Program Video Contest.*

## ADULT LITERACY COLLECTION GRANT

The success of the 2015 Literacy Boot Camp positioned NJSL to offer further support to select public libraries in the area of adult literacy. In June 2016, the State Library awarded 18 New Jersey libraries with up to \$2500 each in grant funds to purchase library materials in any format to help develop their literacy collections (whether creating a new collection or expanding an existing collection) for adult learners who seek to improve their literacy skills. The grant opportunity was offered to libraries that successfully completed the 2015 Literacy Boot Camp. In their grant applications, libraries articulated their on-going commitment to providing adult literacy services. They noted the high demand for literacy classes which help support the needs of several different groups, including English language learners, adults with low literacy skills, and job seekers hoping to advance in the workforce. Grantee libraries directed their awards towards a broad variety of materials which strengthened their literacy resources, including English language instructional materials, GED and other test prep books, and workforce development materials. Funds for this grant opportunity were made available through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and administered by NJSL.

## GRANTS FOR MOBILE MINI-MAKERSPACE KITS

NJSL and LLNJ received 15 applications to help fund the purchase of three mobile mini-makerspace kits for joint use by a partnering public library/branch and public school library (Kindergarten - Grade 8) at a maximum amount of \$7,500 per award. The focus of this initiative is on small communities (population of less than 15,000) in an effort to strengthen the connection between a public library/branch and a public school library while reinforcing their shared role of providing school, student and community support in the area of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programming. The three winning public and school library partnerships that received grant awards for their projects were announced in early December 2016.

- Glen Ridge Public Library and the Forest Avenue School Library (Pre-K – Gr. 2) for their *Heatin’ Up Minds to MAKE STEAM!* project.
- Edgewater Free Public Library for their *Edgewater Free Public Library + George Washington School: Building Bridges!*, and *Wonder...Question...Learn...Create!* initiatives.
- Collingswood Public Library and its partner, the Collingswood Middle School (Gr. 6-8), for their *Coll Creators: Engaging the Community* program.



Attendees for the 2016 New Jersey Library Trustee Institute.

## STATE LIBRARY EVENTS & CONFERENCES



### NEW JERSEY LIBRARY TRUSTEE INSTITUTE

The 2016 New Jersey Library Trustee Institute was held September 10, 2016, at the National Conference Center Holiday Inn of East Windsor. Over 160 library trustees and directors from across New Jersey attended the full day session. Keynote speaker Maureen Sullivan led the morning session discussing the topic: *Re-envisioning the Future of Libraries and The Role of Trustees in Community Engagement*. The audience offered tips for engaging community leaders. Participants then did an exercise to reflect on action steps libraries could take.

### JERSEYCONNECT REGIONAL MEETINGS

The JerseyConnect Team hit the road during March and April 2016 to conduct five regional meetings across the state to talk about the variety of services offered, provide an in-person demo of the new Managed WiFi service, answer questions about the statewide EVPL contract, and preview upcoming service changes. Regional meetings took place in Voorhees, Trenton, Middletown, Wayne and Ocean City. The new Managed WiFi offering, was implemented to aid libraries in their statistical reporting for the IMLS of the number of wireless sessions provided annually. So far, 99 library entities, including 5 county systems, have signed on, providing 230 access points.

### INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AUDIO INFORMATION SERVICES CONFERENCE

TBBC hosted the International Association of Audio Information Services 2016 Conference June 1 – 4, with a base at the Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village. Two busloads of conference attendees traveled to TBBC for a tour of the Audiovision studio and of the facility. Following light refreshments, TBBC staff conducted a brief presentation on reader services for iOS devices and provided a walk-through of the Audiovision studios. The conference closed with an awards banquet.



*TBBC staff members Tara Kehoe, Mary Kearns-Kaplan, Luz Sanchez, Gail Stokes show devices from the Tech Accessibility Drop-in Clinic at the Eighth Annual Adult Services Forum.*

## ADULT SERVICES FORUM

The Eighth Annual Adult Services Forum: “Brick and Click: Training and Development for Library Leadership,” sponsored by the State Library and the New Jersey Library Association, was held on October 24, at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters, in Manalapan. Keynote was given by Tonya Garcia – “Mindful Leadership – How to create an empowered, engaged and productive workplace.” Garcia, the Long Branch Public Library Director, was selected by the NJLA as The 2016 Librarian of the Year at the NJLA Conference in May.

## NJ MAKERS DAY

In recent years NJSL has been active in the makerspace movement and, in 2016, participated in NJ Makers Day, a statewide initiative established to enhance community engagement and develop connections among New Jersey residents by collaborating with multi-type libraries, museums, small businesses and others to promote and explore new opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation and hands-on learning experiences. Held on March 18, NJSL hosted in-house makerspace activities that could be completed in 15 minutes, to accommodate the lunchtime visits of state workers. Activities included making and microwaving cakes in a mug, egg carton seed starters, button-making, and creating origami bookmarks. Staff displayed a selection of books related to making and crafting that were available for check out. NJSL was also awarded two Maker Kits from NJ Makers Day sponsor PSEG. The kits consisted of various invention, digital learning and prototype development tools, some of which were demonstrated that day. The SparkFun Inventor’s Kits were also featured in subsequent Arduino Computer Lunchtime Learning programs.



*NJSL staff hosted the State Library’s first NJ Makers Day lunchtime session in March.*



*Participants of the Naturalization Ceremony recite the Pledge of Allegiance.*

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## NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

Perhaps one of our most visible strategic partnership initiatives in 2016 was our partnership with the Office of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The State Library hosted a Naturalization Ceremony that NJSL hosted on May 23 on the Capitol Plaza – organized by a committee of NJSL staff across multiple departments – where 44 people representing 22 countries were awarded citizenship status. Speakers included Keith Dorr, supervisory immigration services officer; Ya-Mei Chen, field office director, from the Mount Laurel Office of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); State Senator Linda Greenstein; and John E. Thompson, district director of USCIS, who presented the new citizens with their certificates. Photos were mailed to each participant and to staff from USCIS. Additionally, legislators sent congratulatory messages to each of the new citizens in their district.

## MENTORNJ NETWORKING EVENT

An initiative that came out of the *Statewide Plan for New Jersey's Libraries*, “MentorNJ,” is a project funded by NJSL and LLNJ. “MentorNJ” held an In-Person Networking Event at the Monroe Township Library on November 9. Over 80 colleagues from around the state gathered together to network and to learn about topics relevant to libraries. Fobazi Ettarh, Resident Librarian at Temple University, presented a fascinating talk, “Killing Me Softly,” about identifying and understanding the effects of microaggressions. All attendees were able to engage in an interactive game designed by Fobazi which allowed the players to experience microaggressions. Participants then networked and had the opportunity to have their photograph taken by a professional photographer. After lunch, Courtney Young, Past President of ALA, presented *Better Together: The Critical Role of Networking and Professional Development in Librarianship*. This was followed by a series of table discussions on various topics, including self-care, diversity and branding yourself.



*Keynote speaker Lourdes Tango addresses the audience at The Annual Youth Services Forum.*

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## YOUTH SERVICES FORUM

The Annual Youth Service Forum: *Libraries Without Walls*, a day of hot topics and issues in library services to children and young adults, sponsored by the State Library, the New Jersey Library Association and the NJ Association of School Librarians, was held on October 20 at the Monroe (Middlesex County) Public Library with over 150 librarians in attendance. Keynote speaker was Lourdes Tango, a consultant specializing in the areas of cultural competence, diversity and inclusion. Her presentation was entitled: “Exploring Unconscious Bias: Leaning into our Cultural Diversity.” She explored with the audience the formulation of cultural values and how those values influence decisions and behaviors. Other sessions included director recruitment and evaluation; the roles and responsibilities of trustees; fundraising; strengthening the library’s profile in the community; and library law.

## TBBC GOLF CLASSIC

Area golfers, including those with visual impairments, turned out on a beautiful sunny day to play in the NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center’s 5th Annual Golf Classic on June 14. The event took place at the historic Hopewell Valley Golf Club, a 90-year-old facility located on the banks of the Stony Brook in Hopewell Township, with a championship course designed by Thomas Winton, noted Scottish golf architect. Proceeds benefited TBBC, the state’s only free public library for the print disabled (anyone who has a physical impairment, a reading disability or a visual impairment). Special guest Vito DeSantis, U.S. Army veteran and former executive director of the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, was in attendance and shared his experiences of being dismissed from the U.S. Army due to the onset of blindness caused by retinitis pigmentosa in 1984 and playing golf without sight.



*Area golfers, including those with visual impairments, enjoyed a day of golf at TBBC’s 5th Annual Golf Classic.*

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*These services were made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.*