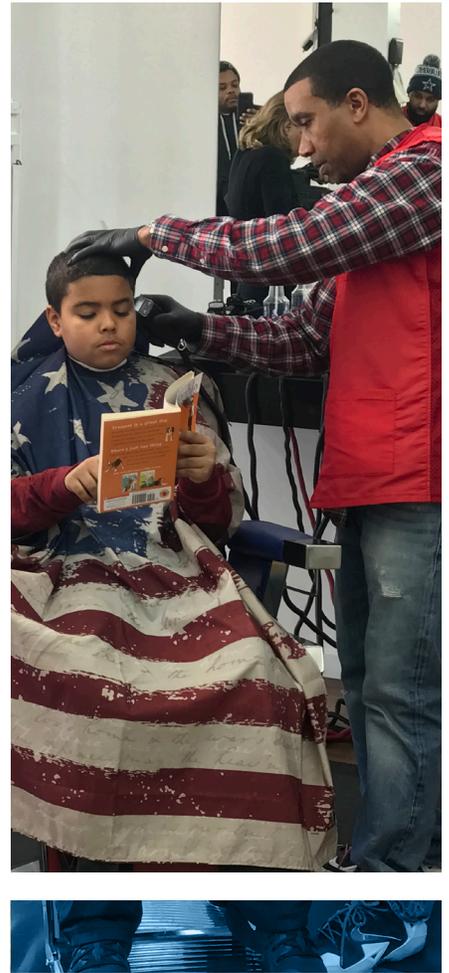


THE 2017 NEW JERSEY

# STATE LIBRARY AWARDS

*for Best Practices in Literacy, Multicultural Programs, and Innovative Partnerships*



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*Connecting people with information through libraries*

**NJ** State Library  
*An affiliate of Thomas Edison State University*

## CATEGORIES:



**SHARON RAWLINS**  
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### EARLY LITERACY

The *Best Practices in Early Literacy Award* honors up to four outstanding public libraries that currently provide exemplary literacy programs for children from birth to six years, their families and caregivers. The award provides a \$1,000 honorarium, a certificate and promotion of the winning library as a model program for other libraries.



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### MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMMING

The long-lasting influx of international immigrants has shaped the state's racial and ethnic composition. Every neighborhood has a different mix of nationalities and languages. Today's libraries are constantly challenged by their diverse communities.

The *Multicultural Program Award* recognizes library programs that increase understanding and promote diversity and multiculturalism in New Jersey's libraries. Libraries are encouraged to develop long-term partnerships with community organizations that result in sustainable cultural programming. The ultimate goal of the program is to share the libraries' programs as models for inspiration and adaptation by other libraries.



**PEGGY CADIGAN**  
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### INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

As the State Library continues its focus on innovation and collaboration, the *Innovative Partnership Award* seeks out exemplary models and technologies that can help assist the New Jersey library community in remaining relevant and essential community anchors. This award recognizes libraries that work to build strong partnerships with fellow government agencies, local organizations and businesses in an effort to develop library programs that support key areas of continuing need, such as small business outreach, workforce development, digital literacy and much more.

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# LIBRARIES AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITIES

**N**ew Jersey public libraries lead the way in promoting the essential role that library programming plays in building community engagement and individual empowerment. As community anchor institutions, libraries are uniquely situated to address the various needs of the communities they serve, however they are often challenged with stretching their resources and reaching beyond existing partnerships.

The New Jersey State Library (NJSL) recognizes the value of both innovation and collaboration. Innovation, even in isolation, is designed to create a positive impact. That impact is magnified when an endeavor is configured to include the input and resources of others.

Throughout NJSL's adaptive planning activities, both internal and external collaborative partnerships have been identified as important factors for maximum advancement. We have found that most successful partnerships are based on shared visions and common goals, and strengthen not only the joint endeavor but also each participant. As our libraries look to the future and face the challenges it brings, it becomes even more critical to form partnerships that reinforce our roles in the community and as community anchors.

I am delighted to recognize the winners of our *Best Practices in Early Literacy*, *Multicultural Program*, and *Innovative Partnership* awards. These awards were developed to recognize those hard-working public libraries and their staffs in laying out the groundwork for successful community coalition-building and carefully targeted programming. The winning programs all exemplify the essential role that library programming plays in the lives of residents across the state.

As State Librarian of New Jersey, I applaud these award winning libraries on their exceptional programs that highlight some of the best early literacy, multicultural and innovative programming currently being offered around the state. All of the programs here show that it is not the size or budget of the library that counts, but the desire to encourage lifelong learning as they fulfill roles as community centers of innovation, cultural and civic engagement.

Please join me in congratulating our winning libraries.



*Mary L. Chute*

**MARY L. CHUTE**

*State Librarian of New Jersey*

# 2017 BEST PRACTICES IN EARLY LITERACY WINNING LIBRARIES

CAMDEN COUNTY LIBRARY FOR:

## FIRST VISIT KITS

When a child up to age five years old signs up for a library card at any of the Camden County Library System's eight branches, they receive a *First Visit Kit*. The kits consist of a board book to keep, the library's early literacy brochure, and a current events newsletter, all enclosed in a branded tote bag. This was a project taken on by several librarians on the Early Literacy Team. The first goal was to promote the five practices of the Association for Library Service to Children's (ALSC) *Every Child Ready to Read*® campaign: read, sing, talk, play, and write with your child every day. Although the library had distributed ALSC's brochures in the past, it was felt the information could be repackaged in a more digestible and effective way. The brochure also overviews all the library's services for the birth to age five set, giving another opportunity to encourage children to sign up for the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program.

A second goal was to make sure that each child in the community has at least one book of their own. The book and brochure come inside a branded canvas bag, perfect for return trips to the library. In an effort to promote library card registration, young customers get a kit when they obtain their very own library card. Anyone from birth to age five can get a *First Visit Kit*, even if the child already got a library card before this campaign. We add a note into their account to keep track of all the kits distributed. So far, 280 kids have received a *First Visit Kit*.



*“My favorite part of giving out the First Visit Kits is seeing the joy on the kids’ faces when I tell them they get to keep the book inside.”*

–JULIE MUMMA, SENIOR LIBRARIAN,  
GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP BRANCH

GLOUCESTER COUNTY LIBRARY - LOGAN BRANCH FOR:

# LIBRARY CHILDREN'S GARDEN

The *Library Children's Garden* helps to develop early literacy skills through fun hands-on learning experiences. This program started in 2012, when tomato plants, as well as seeds for bean plants, peas and pumpkins were planted outside the meeting room used for storytimes. Children eagerly watered and weeded the garden each week following storytimes and picked fresh vegetables throughout the summer. Since then, it has grown to include a weeklong gardening themed storytime, and children have planted seeds in biodegradable containers to replant at home. Children loved watching the library plants grow, but they also loved talking about their gardens at home.

In 2016, containers were planted to put on the new library patio and an herb garden was added. This cut back on the amount of weeding and allowed for children and parents to have access to the garden at all times instead of just following storytimes. Children also decorated their own Popsicle stick to put next to their plant so they could track its growth. The vision for this program is to not only have one



week devoted to planting the garden, but also to devote a second storytime week in the summer to reading and learning about all the wonderful benefits the garden offers our bodies. The library would also like to be able to give the children more of a startup garden to take home. This would involve purchasing more soil, plants, seeds and containers.



*"In this technology age, it is important to get our children outside and get their hands dirty. To plant, pick and eat food you raised is very rewarding. Maybe one day, they will grow a garden for their own family."*

-CAROLYN OLDT, LIBRARY BRANCH MANAGER,  
GLOUCESTER COUNTY LIBRARY - LOGAN BRANCH

SUSSEX COUNTY LIBRARY FOR:

# THE READ AND PLAY PROGRAM

The *Read and Play* program for children aged six months through four years developed out of a need for a program that accommodated siblings of a wider age range than the more traditional lapsit (six months-two years) and preschool (three-five years) storytime programs. It is also structured differently, to give children who might be more active an opportunity to participate in a lively storytime that accompanies movement, songs and sensory playtime. A typical program runs approximately 30-45 minutes and includes 15-20 minutes of stories, songs, feltboard displays and fingerplays. Music and rhythm are encouraged with the use of shakers, colorful scarves and circle time with the parachute. The second half of the session involves a guided playtime that encourages caregiver participation.

Sensory bins filled with a variety of learning toys as well as tailor-made activity centers that coordinate with the theme are all included, at this time. The activity centers encourage early literacy skills, such as matching, sorting, counting, identifying colors,



sizes, and shapes. Print awareness activities, such as tracing games and lace boards are also included. Sensory development is encouraged with a variety of tactile play objects such as sensory bags and bottles. On occasion, the playtime component has been held outdoors to allow for messier activities, such as bubbles and painting with vegetables.

Since its inception in late 2015, there has been a boost in attendance at *Read and Play* in branches where storytime attendance was declining. Registration fills quickly and there is often a waiting list.

*"A parent reported that her daughter loved one of our opening 'bounce' songs so much, she would sing it to her dolls at home and try to engage them in the movements as well!"*

-HEATHER LUBCHANSKY,  
PRINCIPAL LIBRARY ASSISTANT IN YOUTH SERVICES  
SUSSEX COUNTY LIBRARY

# 2017 MULTICULTURAL PROGRAM AWARD WINNING LIBRARIES

BERGENFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR:

## ONE TOWN MANY STORIES

Over the past decade, Bergenfield has become a veritable melting pot of many different groups, including growing Hispanic, Filipino and Asian populations. Public school diversity is very disproportionate from national averages: 44 percent of students are Hispanic (national average is 25 percent), 29.5 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander (5.2 percent), 16.2 percent are white (51 percent), 9.2 percent are African American (15 percent).

*One Town, Many Stories* was designed to celebrate diversity in the community and introduce residents to various aspects of different cultures, in the form of food, song, dance and art. The library wanted to promote the idea that it is a privilege to live in such a diverse community and learn about each other's stories.

There were two critical factors that made the *One Town, Many Stories* program so phenomenal: 1) a dedicated strategic planning committee consisting of library staff, library trustees, members of the Bergenfield school district, and local parents and volunteers; 2) strong financial support and buy-in from the Bergenfield school district. In addition to the Bergenfield Education Association awarding the library with a Pride grant, the school district also provided over a dozen high school student volunteers for the day. These students proved to be invaluable and performed a variety of tasks such as serving food, directing visitors, assisting with children's crafts and setting up/tearing down furniture.

The key to this program's success was that it was so drastically different from anything the library had done before, specifically because so many outside groups were invited to participate. Because of this, patrons were able to



have a formal introduction to local groups that they had no idea existed. While all of these groups and businesses happily existed in their own separate universes within the Bergenfield community – the library was able to bring them all together into one space!

METUCHEN PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR:

# LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

The Metuchen Public Library wanted to expand outreach to various ethnic groups within the greater Metuchen area and made a concerted effort to develop programs attracting members of different ethnic backgrounds and providing opportunities for others to learn about these cultures.

*Lunar New Year Celebration* – The library has celebrated Chinese New Year since 2014 and broadened programming to include several Asian cultures celebrating Lunar New Year. The annual celebration includes Lion Dance, traditional music, dances, songs and crafts reflecting Asian cultures.



*Spanish Book Discussion Club* – This club began in April 2016 in response to requests for a Spanish language book group emphasizing Spanish writers and books written originally in Spanish. The library provides members the discussion books and is building a Spanish language collection, including best sellers and popular books for all ages.

*Brazilian Storytime* – This monthly preschool program is conducted entirely in Brazilian Portuguese. It introduces young children to a second language and is a popular time for families of Brazilian descent to mingle.

*Tenali Raman Folktales presentation and Diwali, Festival of Lights Celebration* – Both programs focused on Eastern Indian culture and were designed to engage the growing Indian population and introduce others to the culture. The Diwali celebration included dances, music and crafts central to the holiday.

*Day of the Dead Storytime and Craft* – This introduced the youngest library goers to Mexican culture through a story on how the holiday honors deceased loved ones. They also decorated Day of the Dead skulls and compared the holiday to Halloween to teach children about cultural similarities and differences.

The primary factor in the programs' success is the community's openness and enthusiasm to experience different cultures, plus



the willingness of volunteers to share their knowledge and talents in providing cultural programming. Realizing that multiple communication and publicity efforts are needed to ensure maximum awareness of programs, postings were made in local newspapers and TV, the library website, and Facebook, and the library worked with local organizations, including the senior center, school system and Metuchen Chamber of Commerce, to ensure that individuals of all ages were reached. Everything can easily be replicated by other libraries.

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NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR:

# THE RHYTHM AND THE BEAT: DRUMS AND PERCUSSION IN LATIN AMERICA

The Newark Public Library hosted seven public programs and an art exhibit, titled *The Rhythm and the Beat: Drums and Percussion in Latin America*, as part of the library's 2016 Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. The celebration focused on the history of drums and percussion in Latin American countries, of which many Newark and Essex County residents are from. This topic was chosen because it honored the significance of drums and percussion in Latin American music, which combines indigenous Spanish-European and African cultures, and is an important part of the spiritual expression, art, and social fabric of Latin American countries. The programs highlighted music from countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Puerto Rico.

Community involvement was essential to the success of the 2016 Hispanic Heritage Celebration. Ingrid Betancourt, project director and exhibit curator, has spent almost forty years developing strong ties to the Latino community in Newark, cultivating and maintaining relationships with people and organizations – such as La Casa de Don Pedro and FOCUS – that are integral to the success of the annual celebration. What began as Hispanic



Heritage Week four decades ago has now become an almost four-month-long Hispanic Heritage Celebration! Patrons want to see themselves represented in their libraries; that is a key component that needs to be replicated in libraries throughout the state. Many Latino immigrants visit NPL's Sala Hispanoamericana, as well as the Hispanic Heritage programs and exhibit, because they feel they have a visible, safe place in the community. Positive feedback, even from non-New Jersey residents, is proof of the success of the community collaboration and programming made possible during the Hispanic Heritage Celebration.

*"I had a wonderful afternoon on September 24 at the SAMBA TO SALSA performance at your library. Talented, professional musicians introduced us to the magic of drums and other instruments with their music making and careful education about their instruments. All was so well organized by a gracious curator named Ingrid Betancourt, of your library, who knew the performers well, quietly brought out the best."*

-ULRIKE KLOPPERS, LIBRARY PATRON

NUTLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR:

# INTERNATIONAL DAY

This program was a daylong celebration of the power of “the smartest card” and a chance to win great prizes. Library patrons enjoyed an around-the-world tour that included “Leggiamo Insieme! an Italian Story Time” with Marta Russoniello; “Flavor Myplate with International Flavors” with nutritionist Stephanie Bini; origami with artist Nobuko Okabe; town dignitaries sign-up for a library card; Nutley Police Recognition event; classical dances of India from Temple dance group from Mahwah Temple; and international foods.

The primary goal of the program was to stress the inclusivity of the Nutley Public Library and the power of the library card. “The smartest card” enables all patrons – across all cultures and regardless of economic status – access to the information necessary to attain personal and professional fulfillment in the 21st century. This program took library visitors and attendees on a unique journey into different parts of the world and broadened the cultural horizons as they shared a family event together among community members. At the same time, visitors were introduced to the many services available through the library by signing up for a library card.

It was a perfect program to deliver a great message to the community about the importance of the free library card and at the end of the day, be sure to use/apply for their library cards to check out some of the wonderful materials the Nutley Public Library offers on various subjects. The fun-filled experience



of International Day was a grand success. Honoring the Nutley Police Department at the library with a plaque took the library to the next level in terms of community collaboration and programming.

# 2017 INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP AWARD WINNING LIBRARY

## LONG BRANCH FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR: FADE TO BOOKS

This year we chose to recognize Long Branch Public Library's *Fade to Books* project, and their partnership with the Bridge of Books Foundation and five barbershops located in their community. Each partner wanted to do something to support literacy development in the young people in the community, recognizing that the ability to read is one of the foundations of a successful life.

The program recognizes the role of the barbershop as a community gathering space and the role of the barber as a mentor. It places books in the barbershop for kids to read when they come in for a haircut. The library and their partnering barbershops determine additional ways to encourage reading and potential incentives, such as tracking the number of books read to earn a free haircut.

Five Long Branch barbershops joined the initiative –

- Dave's Barbershop
- Elite Barbers
- Heads Up Barbers
- Montalvo's Barbershop
- Shaav Barbershop

– along with Monmouth University interns and the Bridge of Books Foundation in Rumson.

The Bridge of Books donated over 1,000 children's books, 250 for each barbershop, which made the program possible.

*Each barbershop now has a shelf with dozens of books in both Spanish and English.*

