State Librarian’s Update
March 2022

There’s a lot going on at NJSL these days, and you may have seen some of it through recent surveys. We realize we have a number of different surveys asking you to provide feedback to us. And it’s a lot to ask. But please know we will use the information you provide as we make decisions and plan activities. Thank you!

Jen Nelson, State Librarian

Stay Informed:

Ukraine and Russia Research Guide Federal resources that provide information, background and perspective on the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine were added to the National Security section of NJSL’s U.S. Government research guide: https://libguides.njstatelib.org/usdocs/nationalsecurity.

Statewide E-resources The Statewide E-resources and Software Review Committee had their first meeting on March 9 to review RFQ responses that have been submitted by library vendors. Vendors will be recommended by the committee to the State Librarian for a final decision on three-year contracts. To accompany their reviews, the State Library will be posting a statewide survey regarding topical priorities for libraries in New Jersey (such as Genealogy, Summer Reading and Language Learning).

NJSL’s Re-entry Program The Fresh Start @ Your Library program, which provides citizens returning from incarceration assistance and access to resources, is getting a reboot at six participating libraries that have been serving as Reconnection Centers. Fresh Start social workers are available for in-person meetings to provide assessments, referrals, and library resources related to reentry, educational, employment, health, legal and social topics. The Fresh Start @ Your Library program is now funded by the State of New Jersey with program oversight and day-to-day management provided by Mimi Lee, Director of Literacy and Learning at the New Jersey State Library. For inquiries, please contact Mimi Lee at mlee@njstatelib.org. For more information about the program and to learn of upcoming events, please visit the project website http://www.freshstartlibrary.com.

New Directors’ Orientation The presentations of the New Directors Orientation, held on February 16 and 23, 2022, can be found here: https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/consulting_services/library_directors/.

You’re Invited:

NJSL’s Upcoming Events NJSL Presents classes and programs are open to all, but registration is limited. See the NJSL Events calendar for details about offerings: https://www.njstatelib.org/events.

March 2022 Summer Reading Workshops The Statewide Summer Reading Committee, led by statewide project coordinator, Sharon Rawlins, offered three 2022 Summer Reading Workshops, two of which have taken place. Registration is still open for the last workshop, taking place on Monday, March 21st - Gloucester County Library, Mullica Hill (in person) at 10:00 am. Register on the NJ Summer Reading website: https://njsummerreading.org/workshops/. You must be subscribed to the website before registering.
March Directors and Trustees Check-in This will be a presentation on best practices for dealing with materials challenges from the perspective of a director and a trustee, as well as a discussion of the current landscape of intellectual freedom in public libraries. This webinar, held on March 24, from 7:00 – 8:30 PM, replaces the Trustee Check-in for the month and is open to trustees, library directors, and all who are interested. Presenters for this session are David Paige and Judith Pissano. David Paige is the Immediate Past President of United for Libraries, where he has been a board member since 2016. He currently serves on the United for Libraries Intellectual Freedom Task Force and on the American Library Association’s Rapid Response Team addressing materials censorship. Judith Pissano, is the branch manager of Gloucester County Library System, and Chair of the NJLA Intellectual Freedom Committee. Please register for this program here.

Literacy New Jersey Literacy New Jersey, a statewide literacy organization that supports NJ’s network of literacy programs and tutor training, is hosting its annual Literacy for Life Conference on April 27-30, 2022 via Zoom. The New Jersey State Library’s NJSL+Partners Literacy Project will be featured during a session presented by Mimi Lee on Saturday, April 30, 2022, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. For inquiries, please contact Mimi Lee at mlee@njstatelib.org.

Vital Conversations about Digital Literacy in NJ Libraries NJSL’s Virtual Digital Literacy Forum, on May 10-13, 2022, will foster an open environment for NJ libraries to expand capacity in response to digital literacy needs in their communities. Further details will be forthcoming. For inquiries, contact Mimi Lee at mlee@njstatelib.org.

NJSL+Partners Literacy Project SAVE THE DATE! May 13th is the official launch of the next phase of the project and registration for students and IC3 classes via Zoom will begin late May. In-lab services are currently available and will continue through Fall 2022. For inquiries, contact Mimi Lee at mlee@njstatelib.org.

Get Involved:

New Jersey Northstar User Group The New Jersey Northstar User Group met for the first time on February 25 to discuss their experiences implementing and using Northstar. For now, the group is limited to staff representing the libraries with current Northstar licenses, but in the future, it may open to anyone interested in learning more about the product. The recording of the session is available here: https://youtu.be/TzQt52H3_N0. There is also a shared Google Document that will be used as a record of meetings and will be updated in real time each session.

LEAP (Library Equal Access Program) Registration has begun for the Spring classes for training on accessibility features of the iPad and iPhone for patrons 55 and older at six public libraries and the Talking Book and Braille Center (TBBC). The libraries are Toms River Public Library, Hackensack Public Library, Cherry Hill Public Library and the East Brunswick Public Library, which held classes in the Fall. Newark Public Library, Atlantic City Public Library and TBBC were added. Those interested in registering can contact Stephen Felle, TBBC Outreach Librarian at 800-792-8322 ext. 812.