

NEWSLETTER

J.P. Porcaro

[LSSIRT did not receive a statement from J.P, so we are excerpting portions of his website and other publications.]

JP Porcaro's ALA Presidential Platform: My platform for my time as ALA President revolves around ensuring a stronger future for librarianship.

Presidential initiative: We know from collected data that a positive perception of librarians and staff is more important to people than their perception of libraries as organizations. That report suggests "targeting marketing messages to the right segments of the voting public is key to driving increased support for U.S. public libraries." I will challenge ALA to embark on a large-scale public relations campaign demonstrating that it's the staff that makes a library.

If elected, I'd initiate a large-scale public relations campaign within the ALA supporting and promoting us, librarians. The value that we as librarians bring to our communities is not quantifiable, and my presidential initiative will keep librarians and front-line library workers as the face of all the libraries represent – just as it should be. The time for this initiative is now.

<https://www.jpporcaro.com>

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The American Library Association has the very big job of representing our profession for every library, every library worker (over 50k members) and every library stakeholder on every library issue! Annually, each ALA president selects an initiative or focus that supports ALA's strategic initiatives for addressing issues - advocacy, information policy, and professional and leadership development. My choice for my presidential initiative is to focus on leadership and specifically - leading with who we are- that is, leading by focusing on library worker expertise and value. And - I deliberately chose "library worker" to be inclusive in my initiative and to illustrate my commitment to the breadth of library employees in the field.

This commitment; however, isn't new for me. For the past fifteen years, I have been a presenter in the Texas State Library and Archives Commission Small Library Management program, designed to educate librarians and other stakeholders in the smallest Texas public libraries, most of whom do not have library master's degrees. My current state association service is the design and delivery of a webinar series (with almost 1,000 registrants) A 2

Joe Janes

I always tell everybody that my mom was a librarian. She worked in the library in our small town, and she had a natural aptitude for it, intellectual curiosity, a love of books and reading, a ready smile, and a genuine interest in people and in helping them. When I was growing up, I worked along side her at the circulation/information/reference/bathroom-key desk, and I learned about as much about reference work, her specialty, from her as I did from the class I took in grad school. Her practical and real-world perspective is with me every day, and I think it's very likely I wouldn't have gotten into this field if it hadn't been for her.

But a lot of people would differ with me, because she didn't have a professional degree. The degree does matter—as somebody who's been a library educator for a couple of decades, it'd be hypocritical for me to say anything else—but it's not the only game in town. Hard work, dedication, great ideas, insight, innovation borne of experience and multiple points of view can and do come from anywhere inside an organization.

One of the great strengths of ALA is our size and breadth. With



**ALA
Presidential
Candidate
James LaRue**

James LaRue

The library - whether it be school, public, academic, or special - is about more than the people with library degrees. I know from my own experience that some of our most powerful service transactions and relationships come not only from support staff, but from the many citizen activists and advocates upon whom our financial support depends.

I often tell the story of Mrs. Johnson, who at several key moments gave me the right book, asked the right question, said just the right thing. I think of her as the first librarian I ever met, and one of the most influential people in my life. I found out, years later, that she did not have a library degree. But I can imagine no better example of what a library representative should be. Indeed, OCLC's research ("From Awareness to Funding," 2008) found that when people vote for public libraries, they are voting for their belief in the passion of library staff.

As your ALA president, I will focus on three key areas:

Moving from gatekeeper to gardener. The idea here is to become more than distributors of content, to become co-creators and publishers ourselves.

Moving from "embedded librarian" to community leaders. We must become less institutionally focused, and more community focused - whatever that community might be.

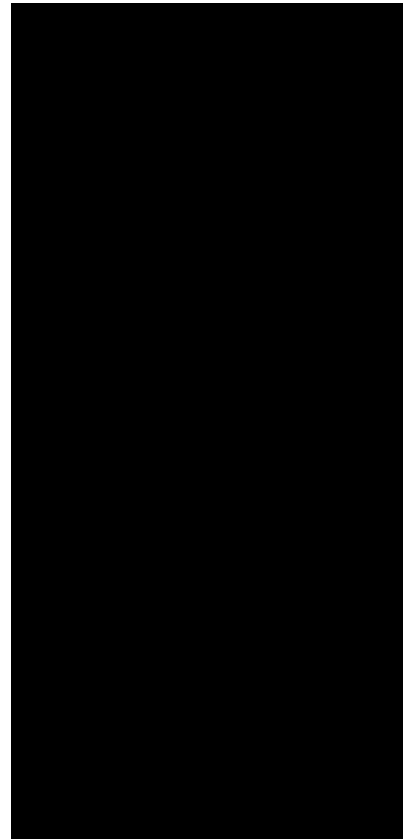
Moving from book deserts to book abundance. Book deserts are households with fewer than 25 books in them. Book abundance has been shown not only to help the life of the child in the home, but society as a whole.

What does this have to do with library support staff? Everything. These three areas have the potential to transform not only our communities, but also librarianship itself. And if we are to become content co-creators, if we are to be community leaders, if we are to find ways to raise our societies from poverty and illness to prosperity and health, then we need smart, passionate, connected staff at every level.

As ALA president, my message is one of shift - a shift from passive to active, a shift from service to the individual, to intentional service to the surrounding environment. While this is the most exciting time in the history of our profession, it will require every single mind and spirit we have to embrace

James LaRue continued

change, to break out of the echo chamber of our own conferences and media and carry this new activism to the larger



Our mission is to provide an arena within ALA for programming, communication and networking for library support staff.

The LSSIR Newsletter is the official publication of the Library Support Staff Interests Round Table (LSSIR) of the American Library Association. It is distributed free to members of LSSIR and is published three or four times a year.

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