

# Circle of Community

The Freezing Over Moon Month or Gashkadino-Giizis

by Loriene Roy

If there is a time to dust off and review the Library Bill of Rights, it is now. Post it on your wall near the circulation desk, provide a copy on your website, or add it to your course syllabi. Review Article V: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

This month's *American Libraries* reminds us that libraries and librarians continue to stand strong at the forefront of defending access to library resources and services for everyone. Today, libraries around the world are responding to their changing demographics by building and providing multilingual collections and offering a range of customized services for this sometimes-new clientele.

For example, at the New Immigrant Centers at six Austin (Tex.) Public Library branches, patrons can find study material on U.S. citizenship in a range of formats (books, audio and video, and computer software); read material in languages other than English; find information on community services; and attend classes, including Talk-Time, a scheduled time to practice conversational English.

Successful services for immigrant populations are those that respect and support literacies in both English and in community languages. Minneapolis Public Library's Library Links! services are provided by staff in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. Staff welcomes patrons through tours, instruction, bilingual storytimes, and interpretation services. They even visit school and

community events. English-language literature support aids in lifelong education and the attainment of individual goals, especially those related to education and employment.

Community-language literacy provides the opportunity to participate globally, to forge and reinforce connections, and to support self-esteem.

As we move toward our Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, ALA's Office for Literacy and Outreach Services initiative "The American Dream Starts @ your library" is gathering momentum. Funded by Dollar General, the project offers public libraries in Dollar General communities an opportunity to improve and expand adult literacy services to English-language learners. Mini-grant applications have been received and are currently being reviewed by a team of library literacy experts and practitioners. Grantees will be announced by December 1 and featured during Midwinter.

Members of our professional community are leading the way in providing a variety of resources and opportunities. This past year, over 400 American public libraries celebrated El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day)—sponsored by ALA's Association for Library Service to Children in cooperation with Reforma, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish



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Speaking—successfully programming events that confirm that libraries can successfully support bilingual reading. As Día founder and author Pat Mora reminds us, every day is book day.

The International Children's Digital Library ([www.icdlbooks.org](http://www.icdlbooks.org)) digitizes children's books from around the world, including works in over 30 languages. ALA's affiliate Reforma has prepared a Librarian's Toolkit for Responding Effectively to Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and has signed on with the White Ribbon Campaign for Dialogue, an expression of support for meaningful conversations about immigration reform. ALA and Reforma both have agreements with AMBAC (Asociación Mexicana de Bibliotecarios, AC), the Mexican national library association, to share information and opportunities.

As a professor in a school of information, my daily work has been greatly enriched by my faculty colleagues and students who were born outside of our national borders and who have graced us by their presence, ideas, and dedication to learn. In ALA, we are also grateful to the many contributions of members who have immigrated to our lands. ■

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