Code Club at your library is possible

by Tracy Cole
Director, Spanish Fort Public Library

Books. Check. Storytime. Check. Summer Reading. Check. Code Club ... wait? What? In this day of public libraries struggling for resources that revolve around everything from funding, to relevancy, to the day-to-day operation of boots-on-the-ground staffing, it certainly might seem a bit daunting to consider offering a code club at your public library. The majority of public schools don’t even teach computer science. Only 40 percent of schools teach computer programming. If libraries are already spread so thin, and many public schools don’t even offer computer programming classes, why should public libraries consider rising to this challenge? As needs of youth and technology change, so do libraries. Because it’s what public libraries do in the 21st century in which we interact, live, and work. Libraries will; libraries must; and libraries can. There are multiple resources out there to get your library started. A code club at your library is possible. Is it scary to try something new? Yes. Is it worth it? Absolutely!

So what is coding?

What’s coding all about, and why should libraries even care? Libraries should care because such opportunities will allow the communities they serve to transform and thrive. By simply offering a code club at your public library, it will assist in providing essential life and job skills. Code.org states that “every 21st century child should have a chance to learn about algorithms, how to make an app, or how the internet works.” It’s about being a creator of technology and having a better understanding of how technology works, versus simply being a user and consumer. Coding offers empowerment.
C O D I N G
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and diversity. Coding is all around you. Think about it. It touches everything from the cell phone in your hand, to the website you are looking at, to the browser you are searching in. Coding touches on art, fashion, music, sports, game design, storytelling, and movies, just to name a few. Bottom line, coding is creativity, and it is the new literacy. Still need convincing that coding is something that public libraries need to initiate? Coding develops problem solving skills, encourages creativity, and helps younger kids learn new skills faster. Coding is widely used, is fun, and gets us out of our comfort zones and allows us to learn something new (including me and my Gen-X brain). A newspaper article caught my eye late last summer: “Wall Street erases the line between its jocks and nerds.” The article talked about the old fashioned and often strict hierarchy between traders and coders. Typically, the traders made money and won glory while programmers wrote code and stayed out of sight. This article explored how those days are fading, and how the line between the two is blurred. Recently, the focus has been drawn to computer code and algorithms (if this, then that). So you see, coding is money and it has firmly found its footing on Wall Street.

How did we get started?

Around the same time that I read the Wall Street Journal article, my email box was flooded with information on public library code clubs and computer programming groups. As the library director, I wasn’t even sure I could tackle another project. Perhaps it seemed a tad too trendy as the next big thing for libraries to do. I almost passed on it and tuned out. Not to mention, I simply wasn’t sure how our library staff, could add one more project to an already exhausting workload. Besides, don’t you need to be a coding expert to take on something of this caliber? It really seemed impossible. It still did when I applied for a Prenda grant award. Wouldn’t you know, we won the grant and graciously received it. Now our library was invested, the idea of a code club suddenly became alive and real.

Prenda helps run library code clubs and is specifically designed to work with libraries, providing software, training, and support, and generally make it easy to run a code club with zero experience. Thanks to the Prenda grant, Spanish Fort Public Library (SFPL) kicked off the Code Club in September 2018, and our staff has seven months of experience at running a code club. Prenda allowed SFPL and our patron community the amazing opportunity to jump in and code (and not let our fears or lack of understanding hold us back). SFPL did not need to have a computer science grad student on hand to run the class. SFPL doesn’t have a library staff replete with years of computer programming experience. SFPL didn’t even need to take time out to write lesson plans to prepare for the club’s weekly meetings. Nor did SFPL have a dedicated teen or youth services librarian to oversee the code club’s creation.

All we needed was some encouragement, a little hand-holding, and the Prenda team to help get us up and running and believing in ourselves. Since September, SFPL has not looked back and we can’t even imagine our library without the Code Club. The grant allows our library team access to the Prenda software, which is an annual subscription that is priced according to your population size. In addition, the grant provides an amazing support network and training. It was all very easy. Prenda quite simply said, “Here you go. Now, go do it!” And, our library did just that.

What to expect from a Code Club?

Imagine a room of kids all excited to learn something new. Add kitten videos, digital games, and after-school pent up energy, and you have yourself a typical day at our library’s Code Club.

Thankfully, we do have a library classroom that does help contain all the excitement and noise. It also allows the class to wiggle, laugh, and explore digital coding. Sometimes, we’ll even dance and sing. We host our club for 90 minutes, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. on Thursday afternoons. Some days are glorious. Others can be stressful. The facilitation, not teaching, has been a bit bumpy on some days. The Prenda support team has been great with that, providing the Code Club facilitators with a Facebook group page to share and discuss any issues, and in addition, they always remind us that they are just a phone call or email away if we have questions. The Prenda team has also encouraged all library recipients of the grant to journal about our experience with Code Club, and that has also been helpful. The Prenda support team is helpful in reminding the facilitators of Code Club that we are there to have fun and to get the kids to have fun and learn. They still understand that challenges are there.

So what are the challenges? Well, often it’s keeping kids on task. The Prenda challenges are just that: challenges. Prenda software starts them off on a series of tasks (referred to as workouts) exploring HTML, Scratch, and CSS, just to name a few. As they complete these workouts, they get to add special gear to their avatars. Challenge #1 is that many of these workouts are difficult for them. They struggle. It’s not always whiz, bang, boom, colorful fun. It’s a challenge and many don’t always have the mindset of rising to meet that challenge. Coding is problem solving. At the end of the day, and after many problems, you have to find
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Code Club is not about sitting around and playing games for an hour and a half. It’s about making the game. We’ve had seven months of weekly Code Club meetings at our library, and I still have to say this weekly. Our biggest challenges have come about with efforts to keep the kids on track, letting them whine a little bit, providing encouragement to succeed, and problem solve, and tackle the workouts and missions in Prenda. The kids all want to code, but several have a bit of a disconnect with all that actually entails. The kids need to get to the creative side of it just underneath the consumer facade. Three unanticipated teachable moments that have stemmed from Code Club have been typing skills, laptop use, and spelling. Do we have fun in Code Club? Yes. Is it hard? Yes. Do the kids keep coming back? Yes.

What do you need to run a successful Code Club?

In a perfect world, I’d plan to visit Prenda’s website in advance of my class and be one step ahead of my students. However, this is not at all how it happens. Weekly, I jump back in Code Club mode and start from scratch. I facilitate; I don’t teach. I steer and encourage. I cheer, lead, inquire, “Google,” and ask the kids questions. Did I mention, I don’t teach this class. Prenda guides us, kids follow the prompts, and we stay active weekly in our Code Club. Would I like to do more prep each week? Yes! (I wish I could.) But, Prenda makes it work where I don’t absolutely have to do those extra steps. I simply start all over again the next week. If you have the time, go for it! If you don’t, that’s also OK.

As library director, I wrote and received the grant from Prenda. However, it’s been my team of colleagues and our dedication over the last seven months that’s made this weekly event the success it continues to be. Code Club marketing is essential, and Prenda also helps with that. Talking to parents about the club and how it works is also key. Our library has created a fun buzz about the club and the kids that attend weekly are all obviously excited to be there.

You do need computers, and our library does ask that club attendees bring in a charged laptop. Does that always happen? No, it doesn’t. Not every child has access to a laptop, and our library completely understands this. Workarounds are made so all students feel comfortable, and we’ve yet to hold a class where someone doesn’t have a device to code on. In extreme cases, we’ve pulled an extra work laptop out of the back office to make sure everyone has a device to use. I’ve also offered up my personal laptop that’s ten years old to use as a spare.

If you have an adult or teen volunteer to assist in the logistics and flow of the class, I highly recommend it. Typically, I run our Code Club solo. When we’ve had volunteers or a library staff person to assist, it helped tremendously. As the facilitator, you’re pulled in many directions as the kids are excited and need your attention. Having two facilitators in the room is ideal. Though it’s not required, it sure can assist in easing any potential issues.

The last step of running a successful code club is community partnership and buy-in from stakeholders. While this does take some time to grow and establish, it’s important and invaluable. Start early on this, and you can net some positive results. Just recently, SFPL had three laptop computers donated from a local State Farm agency here in our community, solely for our weekly club. This partnership conversation started last fall, and now it has helped our library sustain and grow the project. We also had a visit from Spanish Fort Mayor Michael McMillan, who dropped by to learn more about the Code Club. The kids were excited to show him many of the projects they had worked on over the past seven months.

So, now what?

A new challenge for SFPL will come in August when our year-long access to Prenda expires. Now what? Prenda has afforded our library community the luxury to explore for a year and to get a taste for coding. They’ve laid it all out for us and made it much easier than us trying to organize this on our own. Can it be done on your own? Sure it can. But after working with Prenda, I really don’t know how I’ll do that. Sure, there are many free resources.
do exist, but I would need to get started now to incorporate these free resources into our Code Club. Do the kids know that Prenda will be going away? No, they just want to come to Code Club. Will they be bummed that they can’t dress their avatar? Probably not. But would I need and miss the lesson planning and the hand holding of Prenda? You better believe it. I often think Prenda has been great for the kids, but it’s been even better for our staff beginning the Code Club journey. I simply would not have ever known where to start if we hadn’t received the Prenda grant. Thanks to Prenda, I’ve learned just enough about coding to help me realize I still have a million things to learn, conquer, and more to fully understand.

To Prenda or Not to Prenda?

The beauty of Prenda is the efficiency factor. If you’re a first timer—scared and nervous about how to facilitate and “teach”—then this is an amazing resource to fall back on and learn from. It provides busy libraries and staff necessary resources to dive deeper and fully explore the world of coding. Everything is right there for you, and Prenda makes it much easier to navigate. They provide training wheels to the massive world of coding. Of course, they aren’t the only solution to this undertaking. They are, however, a wonderful way to take that first step. If we could have Prenda forever I would. Alas, this will not be the case for SFPL. Our grant (and access to Prenda) expires this August. That next week, kids will still come to Code Club. It will then be on my shoulders to suddenly have a more structured plan in place for continuing. Prenda has allowed our library the freedom to explore while providing that structure. Prenda empowers any library to run a Code Club. We’ve had huge success with our Code Club, and now the question begs ... what will happen next? How will we go on? Will our small, busy, and understaffed library have the stamina it takes to continue without Prenda? Did Prenda give us the legs to stand on and problem solve? It will be a big decision our library has to make over the next few months, and it will be a lot of work without Prenda. I encourage anyone that has questions to please reach out to us, and if you can afford Prenda, please take full advantage of it. You will not be disappointed as it opens up a world you’ve only read about existing in larger libraries with an enormous staff and ample funding to support these types of experiences.

If you can’t afford Prenda, below is a list of wonderful and free resources to consider as you plan a code club at your library. Many of the resources listed below Prenda uses for the workout challenges they offer. The nice part about Prenda is all of the lesson planning and thinking about it has already been done for you, and they allow facilitators and kids to focus solely on the code and not stress everything else. These past seven months of Code Club have flown by. It’ll be interesting to see what happens next, and how our library can make that happen.

**Free coding skills resources for further consideration**

10. Typing Club <https://www.typingclub.com/>
11. W3Schools <https://www.w3schools.com/>
For those of you who are unaware, Alabama is one of five states participating in YALSA’s Transforming Youth Services Through Continuing Education Pilot Program. The other participating states are Maine, Minnesota, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. The Alabama people that Lance Simpson and Gail Sheldon have the opportunity to train will have a voice in how the training is shaped for the rest of the states in the next cohort.

Gail and Lance are taking a break from trainings until August to let you get ready and for — and through — your Summer Library Program. Some of the places we’re planning to offer trainings in the fall include: Jefferson County & Birmingham, Winfield, Opelika, and Andalusia, but no dates have been set yet. The training is designed for anyone who works with tweens and teens. If you work exclusively with that age group, that means you. If you’re a staff member who has had that age group just handed to them, this is also for you. If you’re a director who does it all or can’t get anyone else to work with tweens and teens, then this is for you, too. The training is very interactive and participatory. That means you won’t just be sitting around listening to us talk. We try to make the trainings fun, as well. We promise you won’t be bored.

So look for an email from Lance and/or Gail sometime during the summer for dates and times. We’ll also try to have them listed on the APLS calendar.
This time of year, Peeps® are everywhere. Whether you like to eat the marshmallow chicks or not, we can use them for the sake of science. And if you wait until after Easter, you can get those chicks on the cheep-cheep! Let’s have some peepin’ fun!

**Easter Peeps Slime**

courtesy of schoolingamonkey.com

01 **Gather Supplies**
Peeps®
Mason jar or other microwave safe container
Corn starch and a fork

02 **Melt, Mix, and Play**
Put some Peeps® in a mason jar or other microwave safe container and heat them for 30 seconds. You will want to keep heating the Peeps® until they puff up and start to melt, but not so much that the marshmallow starts to brown.

This can be a tricky line, so you may want to start with melting just one as a trial before melting a large batch.

Once the Peeps® are puffy, mix them with a fork and add corn starch a teaspoon at a time until the candies are dry enough to handle and stretch. Avoid adding too much corn starch or you’ll make the substance a playdough consistency. Wait until mixture is cool to the touch. Peeps slime remains stretchy for about 30 minutes. Afterwards, it hardens into a thick and taffy-like candy. Peeps slime is safe to eat.

**Bite-Sized Peeps Experiments**
courtesy of schoolingamonkey.com

01 **Will It Float?**
Ask children if they think Peeps® will float in water. Have a small container with water ready, and set the candies inside. Explain that it is the high air content in the Peeps® that makes them float in water. For even more floating action, try placing Peeps® in various liquids and see what happens with each fluid. Do the candies respond differently to different types of liquids?

02 **Temperature**
After floating the candies, ask the kids if they think frozen Peeps® will make a difference. Even though the Peeps® is denser, it will also float. Discuss how freezing the Peeps® changes the texture, hardness, and stickiness of the candy.

03 **Color Mixing Peeps**
Some kids will notice that when you float Peeps® in water, the water changes color from the candy dye. Ask them what might happen if you add yellow Peeps® to water that previously had blue Peeps® floating in it. Start by floating blue Peeps® in water for a few minutes. Remove the blue candy, and then float yellow Peeps® in the same water. In about 30 seconds, the water turns a bright turquoise. Ask them if they thought the color would be lighter or darker, and why. If you have different Peeps® colors, try as many color combinations you can think of!

**Peeps Soap Boat**
courtesy of schoolingamonkey.com

01 **Gather Supplies**
Peeps®
Liquid soap
Scissors and a shallow pan

02 **Sail Away**
Peeps® will float on their own, but soap alters the surface tension of the water to really make this experiment set sail. First, try to sail a bunny single Peep with a bit of soap between the ears. It may move, but with slight modifications, the candy will really move. Trim the candy ears to a narrow point close to the head (see image above). Cut the body off, and trim the chin into a sharp point. These modifications make Peeps® lighter and able to move by surface tension.

**Helpful tips**
Trimmed Peeps® should float across the water at a pretty quick pace. If they don’t, you may have too much soap in the water. Try swapping the water out with fresh water and try again. It might take a few attempts before getting the experiment to work properly. See this experiment in action at: https://youtu.be/2Skf3cUkolQ.

**STEAM reads**

*Candy Experiments 1*
Leavitt, Loralee; 978-1449418366

*Candy Experiments 2*
Leavitt, Loralee; 978-1449461034

*Candy Science*
Hirschmann, Chris; 978-1946426062
Seventh Grade vs. the Galaxy
written by Joshua S. Levy
Release date: March. 5, 2019

For the most part, seventh grade has sucked for Jack. Jack attends school on a spaceship, which SHOULD be fun and exciting, but it’s really like regular school - except there’s no escape. Their school sucks, too, especially for a school whose mascot is “The Champions.” They never win anything. Add to that, the ship itself is close to falling apart. Worst of all for Jack, his dad, the old science teacher, was fired a few months ago. He was found messing around in the engine room without permission, and, after refusing to give any explanation, was fired. Without him there, Jack has had to deal with everyone blaming him for his father’s endangering the lives of everyone on board. Jack wanted to believe in him, but his father wouldn’t even explain himself to Jack.

As bad as school is, Jack is dreading going home for summer to stay with his dad in their cramped apartment more. However, an attack during the final assembly was not what he’d been hoping for as a distraction. With no idea what’s happening, and at the urging of his best friend, Jack ends up reluctantly following his dad’s text messages to go to the engine room. Jack quickly finds out what his father was working on - an upgrade for the ship’s engines that made it capable of traveling at the speed of light. Jack activates it, making their school ship the first human ship to travel light years in seconds and saving them from the attack. Unfortunately, while escaping from one danger they run into another - they’ve violated the local laws of the aliens who live in this sector of space and soon everyone’s stuck in alien jail. Jack and his friends manage to escape, but they soon discover not only do they have to save their shipmates, but everyone back home.

This was a fun space adventure, and I don’t normally like those. It was very amusing how the author, Levy, made living in space seem mundane, while including hints towards how humans developed in his world. I found it particularly amusing when Jack was mentally kicking himself for previously getting a basic history test question wrong when he said Abraham Lincoln was responsible for freeing robots, not slaves. Jack didn’t feel like a cardboard cutout adventure hero, being neither a super genius or a good fighter. He made bad decisions at times, but they fit his character and didn’t feel like they were added in by the author to give his character flavor or because the plot called for it. Sometimes, kids can just be petty and jealous and act on it. I think we’ve all had those moments. Jack felt like a consistently real kid dealing with an overwhelming and crazy situation. It was the same for the other main characters - even without knowing a lot about them, they weren’t caricatures modified to fit this particular story. It didn’t surprise me to discover that Levy used to teach middle school. He knows his audience and he knows kids. Overall, the characterization was very good, especially for a plot driven book.

Speaking of the plot, it was really enjoyable. The story had good pacing, and it set things up well for the second book. The reader is not left with a cliffhanger, but they still have a lot to do to save the day. I think this is a great addition for any Juvenile Fiction section, whether for Summer Reading specifically, or just in general. This is Joshua S. Levy’s first book, and I think he’s off to a stellar start!

**Recommended for:** Fans of adventure and sci-fi.

**Things to watch out for:** This isn’t a graphic story. Romance is limited to one of the characters having a crush, no real swearing, and while there is theoretical off-screen death due to fighting, it remained purely theoretical.
April 2
Summer Library Programming and Library Moon Walk
The National Network of Libraries of Medicine has partnered with the Collaborative Summer Library Program to bring health programming to your library for Summer Reading! A Universe of Stories is coming to public libraries this summer in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. Explore DNA and family history, make Stardust, discover astronaut food, and more with our science programs for kids, teens, and adults. The NNLM Summer Health Programming Manual and other details of the project will be shared. (National Network of Libraries of Medicine) https://nnlm.gov/training/classes-by-availability.

April 3
Giving Storytime a Tune-Up: Music Activities to Support Engagement and Understanding
Music activities are more than fun! They’re a natural, developmentally appropriate way to build auditory processing skills, auditory memory, and other skills critical to early language and literacy. When children are actively engaged in helping to tell a story with music, their literacy experience is more meaningful and empowering. Learn how to use the power of music to increase children’s involvement and focus. (Association for Library Service to Children) http://www.ala.org/alsc/elearning/live-webinars

Music and Movement at the Library! An Interactive Music Based Program for Infants and Toddlers
In 2016, the Mt. Zion District Library (IL) realized that the community was lacking in activities and programs for children under 2 years old. The Library already offered ToddlerTime for children 18 months through 3 years old, but decided to add Music and Movement for children ages 6-24 months and their caregivers. Learn how to implement a similar program at your library; no background in music is required! (National Network of Libraries of Medicine) https://nnlm.gov/training/classes-by-availability-scheduled.

The Power of Manga, Comics, & Graphic Novels through the Lens of the AASL Standards Frameworks for Learners
Using the lens of the AASL Standards Frameworks for Learners, we will examine the role of manga, comics, and graphic novels to promote literacy and learning. Participants will not only learn about the power of these genres but they will also be exposed to the language of the AASL Shared Foundations. (American Association of School Librarians) http://www.ala.org/alsc/ecollab/upcoming

April 4
How to Stand Out from the Crowd in Online Grant Applications
In “How to Stand Out From the Crowd in Online Grant Applications” we will address how to create a concise, compelling and competitive application for online grant application scenarios. We will look at specific examples for tips that make reviewing your online grant proposal easier for reviewers. We will also explain how to avoid losing the power of your story when your application is broken up across numerous fields. (Charity How To) https://www.charityhowto.com/nonprofit-live-webinars/free

Supporting Developing Readers at the Library: Reader’s Advisory for K-3rd Graders
Learn how the Children’s Librarians at Denver Public Library are expanding their services to developing readers and the grown-ups in their lives using the five Grade Level Reading Skills. The importance of balancing reading level with interest will be discussed. You’ll walk away with more insight into the elements of an excellent developing reader book, as well as tips on how to navigate advisory interactions with kids and grown-ups. (Colorado State Library) https://create.coloradovirtuallibrary.org/calendar/

Celebrating Diversity & Multiculturalism through Crafts
In this webinar, we will define diversity and multiculturalism, cultural appropriateness, and highlight crafts and activities that will help teach children to respect and celebrate the differences in all people. By merging diversity and equity into our library programming we can build cultural relevance into any craft program. (Infopeople) https://infopeople.org/training/view/webinar

April 9
Middle-Grade Mania: Part One
Mad about middle grade? Join us as we kick off our first-ever month-long celebration of all things MG, Middle-Grade Mania! This is the first in a two-part webinar extravaganza. (Booklist) https://www.booklistonline.com/GeneralInfo.aspx?id=63

Early Childhood Expertise Beyond Libraryland: Serving Refugee and Immigrant Families
Librarians and early childhood educators are always looking ahead and responding to the current needs of their communities, including the provision of meaningful programming and services to our refugee and immigrant families. Join Jessica Dym Bartlett, Ph.D and Maria A. Ramos-Olazagasti, Ph.D to learn more about the challenges young children and their families face when leaving their home countries, including the trauma associated with family separations and strategies to support them. (Association for Library Service to Children) http://www.ala.org/alsc/elearning/live-webinars

Improving Educational Experiences for Diverse Learners: Valuing Culture While Combating Stress, Inequality, Bias, and Discrimination
In this webinar, panelists will explore how educators and school leaders can use a more comprehensive understanding of student learning environments to improve educational outcomes for diverse populations. Specifically, panelists will discuss why culture and identity matter in adolescent education; how stress affects learning and development; how technology influences student learning and relationship building; and how school leaders and educators help combat the effects of inequality, bias, and discrimination. (Future Ready Schools/Alliance for Excellent Education) https://a4ed.org/webinars-events/

April 10
NCompass Live: What is OER? Outstanding, Extraordinary Raw Materials?
The #GoOpen movement has impacted many conversations relating to digital resources for schools and public libraries. What is this OER phenomenon? How can a teacher/student/patron access these items and how can they be added to coursework or a collection? This webinar will focus on the premise of OER (Open Educational Resources) and provide an opportunity to discuss with other participants how an OER can benefit and enhance a course or collection. Users will be provided with a “starting” point of OER references that can be used for education. (Nebraska Library Commission) http://www.nlcs.state.ne.us/scripts/calendar/eventlist.asp?Mode=ALL

Making Lemonade: Teaching Young Children to Think Optimistically
Optimistic thinking requires focusing on the positive without denying the realistic existence of the negative. It helps people channel their energy to focus on what they can control in their lives. The best thing about optimism is that it can be taught and learned. A child who thinks optimistically is positioned to reap the myriad benefits associated with an optimistic approach to life—beginning with doing better in school at all levels. (Early Childhood Investigations) https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/presentations

Partner with School Educators “Like a Boss”
Register for this webinar to hear how Future Ready Librarians successfully partnered with educators—and Gale—“like a boss” to positively impact each student by supporting curriculum, improving inquiry, and enhancing equity. (Booklist) https://www.booklistonline.com/GeneralInfo.aspx?id=63

Addressing the Gatekeepers: How to Turn Comic and Graphic Novel Skeptics Into Believers
This webinar will give you tools to address concerns, dispel myths, and show the benefits that comics and graphic novels bring to classrooms and libraries. Learn how creators, publishers, and librarians have dealt with these issues. Panelists include Betsy Gomez from the Banned Books Coalition and the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund and Chloe Ramos Peterson from Image Comics. Emily Ratcavage, a high school Teacher Librarian in San Bernardino, CA and member of AASL’s Induction Program will moderate. (American Association of School Librarians) http://www.ala.org/aasl/ecollab/upcoming
April 16
Impact Discussion: The Challenges and Strategies of Reaching Hard to Reach Girls with STEM Education

This interactive discussion is hosted by the National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP) and is facilitated by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). The goal of this conversation is to help inform the work being done by AISES and others in their efforts to reach girls that are hard to reach with STEM learning opportunities. This hour has been designed to crowd-source and share broadly the lessons learned from girl-serving STEM programs reaching girls with additional barriers to STEM education. (National Girl's Collaborative Project) https://ngcproject.org/events

April 17
Inquiry, Exploration, Problem-solving: Nurturing STEM Thinking in All Young Learners

Get on board on an adventure trip to capitalize on young children's natural inclinations. Ask questions and exploration – to prepare them to be 21st century STEM thinkers. This session will build educator knowledge and skills on how to create learning environments and experiences that will support investigation, problem-solving and critical thinking in all young children (from preschool to grade one) to promote their higher order thinking and concept development. (AbleNet) https://www.ablenetinc.com/resources/live_webinars/

How to Effectively Use Your Digital Library

Are you considering building a digital library for your school? If you don’t have anyone on your staff that’s comfortable with technology, it can seem intimidating. But it’s not as hard as you may think. In this webinar, we’ll show you how Cucamonga School District in California was able to quickly and easily upgrade their digital library with the help of OverDrive – and the fantastic educational benefits their students gained as a result of the new program. (School Library Journal) https://www.slj.com/?subpage=Events

April 18
The Power of Small: How Rural Libraries Help Their Communities Thrive

Addressing the challenges faced by rural areas may seem daunting to a library with few staff and limited resources, but any tiny library can find more ways to support the needs of their community by thinking strategically and creating new connections with their stakeholders, patrons, and other library staff. Learn how small library director and 2018 Library Journal Mover & Shaker, Allie Stevens, applied the concept of growth mindsets to set her priorities, use resources and volunteers smartly, and avoid burnout as a solo librarian. Follow her lead to turn your library into a powerhouse for your community. (Webjunction) https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction.html

April 19
Library Love for LibraryReads


April 20
YA/Teen Book Buzz Spring 2019

Get ahead of the curve and discover the latest and greatest hot reads during SLJ's 2019 Teen Book Buzz webcast! Join us in conversation with publishing insiders to learn about their most buzz-worthy titles coming out this spring. You’ll hear about some can’t miss new reads, from a dystopian novel where girls are banished to the woods for their 16th year to an historical verse retelling of the last day of Joan of Arc’s life. Tackling everything from romance to gender identity to fantasy, these selections are loaded with teen appeal. Don’t miss out! (School Library Journal) https://www.slj.com/?subpage=Events

April 21
Don’t #%?$ My Graphic Novels: Conquering Challenges and Protecting the Right to Read

Are you trying to build a world of imagination without inciting a wild rumpus? Does your play environment foster skills for early literacy or for the monkey bars? Four Youth Services departments will lead a discussion of play space design and management. Bring your hits, your misses, and your burning questions to this informative exchange of ideas. A list of recommended vendors and play items will be provided. (Association for Library Service to Children) http://www.ala.org/asl/ecollab/live-webinars

April 22
Check It Out! New Books for Ages 0-18

Join us on the last Thursday of each month for a review of brand new titles published for ages 0-18. You’ll hear short booktalks of new titles (and new entries in ongoing series) from major and indie publishers and get ideas on how to keep up with the endless tide of what’s new in kidlit and young adult literature. (State Library of Iowa) https://zoom.us/j/8752622591

April 23
Helping Children Succeed Through Family Engagement

Research shows that when parents are engaged in their children’s learning, students succeed. Educators often need support in helping families integrate into their local school communities, where they can learn about the education practices and policies that impact their children. The challenge is figuring out the best methods for building these relationships. In this free webinar, learn about the five high-leverage areas identified in the report: attendence, data sharing, academic and social development, digital media, and transition points. (Education Week) https://www.edweek.org/ew/marketplace/webinars/webinars.html

April 24
Where's My Cape? Managing a Youth Services Department

You were a hard-working youth librarian. Now, you're a youth services manager moving at the speed of light. Experienced or just starting out, everyone needs a support network. Join us for this Q&A-based webinar, where three current youth services managers (and one children’s consultant/ex-manager) share their tips & tricks about time management, coping with staffing dynamics, and handling change. (Indiана State Library) https://continuinged isl.in.gov/find-training/online-training-series/

Where the Wild Things Learn and Play

Are you intrigued by a discussion in all young children (from preschool to grade one) to promote their higher order thinking and concept development. (AbleNet) https://www.ablenetinc.com/resources/live_webinars/

April 25
Library Love for LibraryReads


Library Love for LibraryReads

Have you heard of esports but want to learn more? Interested in reaching and engaging more patrons through gaming and esports? Are you intrigued by a discussion in all young children (from preschool to grade one) to promote their higher order thinking and concept development. (AbleNet) https://www.ablenetinc.com/resources/live_webinars/