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2019 American Library Association Emerging Leader

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2019 American Library Association Emerging Leader

Abstract

Jade Geary is the 2019 American Library Association Emerging Leader sponsored by the South Carolina Library Association.

Keywords

American Library Association, emerging leader, intellectual freedom, South Carolina Library Association



I had the pleasure of participating in the American Library Association (ALA) Emerging Leader program in 2019. I was partially funded by the South Carolina Library Association (SCLA) and was able to share my experiences via a poster session at the 2019 SCLA annual conference.

The ALA Emerging Leader program is an intense program that lasts for roughly 6 months. During this time frame, you will have to attend ALA Midwinter for training and ALA Annual to present a poster about your project. During the conference, you will have at least one full day of training at both mid-winter and annual. You may also be asked to attend additional meetings depending on your Emerging Leader project. There is also a gathering of the ALA President and past ALA Emerging Leaders (see the picture below). This is a great time to network with other librarians and learn from their experiences in the program. I found this helpful as the conference began, because it allowed me to have a group of people to attend sessions, events, and vendors tables with. The ALA conferences can be very overwhelming if you don't know other people in attendance, so I found this very helpful.



In terms of training, the program content varies from year to year. The year that I participated it was not highly focused on leadership training. The program was more so geared as if we were already

leaders in our library and community. Although, most of us were indeed already leaders, I personally was hoping on developing my skills. The project portion of the program does hone in on your leadership skills.

In between the conference, you will be working in project teams of roughly five individuals. These projects vary widely but you do get some say in the project that you will be working on. For my project, I worked with four other women and the Intellectual Freedom Roundtable (see the picture of us from ALA Annual below).



They asked us to create four to five videos that talk about intellectual freedom. These were to be aimed at non-librarians in the hopes that they could be a resource for the community. It was a bit difficult to develop these videos when we were spread out all over the United States, and at times we had people out of the country! We created scripts, developed visuals, and recorded audio for the project. You can view the completed videos via the Office of Intellectual Freedom's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/OIFTube/videos>). Our completed poster is also in the picture below.



Commitment

You must attend both ALA mid-winter and ALA annual. It is important to note that not every emerging leader is sponsored. There is a hotel block for Emerging Leaders, but you will have to pay to attend both conferences. This can make for a big time and monetary commitment. I would strongly encourage you to talk with your home library and your supervisor before you apply to see what they will be willing to aid you with.

The project portion of ALA Emerging Leaders varies from project to project. Our project was very time intensive.

Application Process

The Emerging Leader program only accepts 50 participants. These participants come from a variety of library settings and can be a pretty competitive program. It is aimed at early career librarians, who have worked in a library for 5 years or less. The application typically opens in June or July and is due by August 30th.

If you are thinking about applying and have questions, feel free to reach out to me via email: gearyja@email.sc.edu or Twitter: bjaded.