

Join the Campaign for America's Libraries

Celebrate National Library Week @ your library

by Sara Groves

Academic and college and research libraries are encouraged to participate in National Library Week (April 1–7, 2001), which will kick off the public launch of the Campaign for America's Libraries. The Campaign is ALA's new five-year public education effort to remind people about the value of libraries and librarians in the 21st century.

The theme for National Library Week 2001 is @ your library™, which is also the umbrella brand for the campaign. National Library Week will feature a national kickoff event and a host of local events to introduce the @ your library™ theme to the public.

"National Library Week is a perfect time to launch the Campaign for America's Libraries to our communities," said ALA President Nancy Kranich. "National Library Week is our national holiday—a time to celebrate and remind everyone about our various programs, services, and technologies. It's also a time to say 'Come see what's new at your library.'"

The campaign kickoff will be designed to introduce the campaign, attract media attention, and begin the process of reminding consumers that libraries are dynamic, modern community centers for learning, research, information, and entertainment.

"As the ALA's largest division, ACRL and its 11,000 members are a key part of telling the story of America's libraries," said Betsy Wilson, president of ACRL. "And we are really on the cutting edge for the campaign's main ideas: libraries are changing and dynamic, they are places of opportunity and achievement, and they connect you to a world of ideas. The campaign offers exciting opportunities to bring all libraries to the forefront of our users' consciousness."

To illustrate and personalize the campaign themes, libraries are encouraged to identify a local "celebrity" campaign chairperson (or chairpersons) for their individual library or library organization who embodies the spirit and principles of today's libraries.

Libraries are urged to present their campaign chair with a giant



Photography: George F. Johnson/ALAC

About the author

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@ your library™ card at a special event. A template with artwork for this card is available on the campaign Web site at <http://www.ala.org/@yourlibrary>, under “National Library Week.” The Web site also offers a range of ideas for organizing a local campaign launch.

Ideal candidates for campaign chairs are people who have benefited from their experiences at the library, such as a celebrity originally/currently from your community, your college or university president, a popular faculty member or dean, the student body president or the editor of your college or university newspaper, a non-traditional student who has returned to school after a long hiatus, or someone who has a story about how the library has made a difference in his or her life.

Libraries also may want to use National Library Week as a time to focus on the ALA’s five key action areas—21st-century literacy, diversity, education and continuous learning, equity of access, and intellectual freedom. Programs, events, and displays can highlight these ideas throughout the week. Programming suggestions for each of these five key action areas are discussed below.

21st-century literacy

Highlight your library’s efforts to advance literacy in all forms, including “information literacy.”

• **Whole wide world @ your library:**

Take out ads in your campus paper about technology resources and programming at your library that can help your users get connected to the wide world of information. Promote Internet access and Internet classes, online catalogs, databases, and other resources that can help users get connected.

• **Your final answer @ your library:**

Host a “library bowl” (akin to a college bowl) or a scavenger hunt where students divide into teams and have to find information by using all the resources of your library. The librarian serves as the expert/moderator of the event.

Diversity

Demonstrate that the library has resources for everyone on campus and that its collections reflect many voices, cultures, and languages.

• **Many faces, many voices @ your library:** Invite international students to dis-

Participate in the campaign

This is an historic moment for libraries and librarians. ALA has made a five-year commitment to speak loudly and clearly about the value of libraries and librarians in our information society.

The goal of the Campaign for America’s Libraries is to capture the public’s imagination about the critical importance of libraries and librarians in the information age. We will work to increase funding, attract talented people to the profession, and influence public policy.

This is *your* campaign. In a 1999 ALA survey, members stated, “ALA needs to do more to educate the public about the value of libraries and librarians.” Now, to be successful, we need every library and every librarian to participate.

We are asking you to join us in this new public education campaign by:

- using the campaign brand, @ your library™, on your publicity materials and integrating it into new and existing programs;
- displaying and using ALA Graphics @ your library™ promotional items in your library and beyond; and
- advocating for your library by adapting ALA’s campaign messages for your own use.

More detailed information about our campaign is available on the ALA Web site at <http://www.ala.org/@yourlibrary>.

The Campaign for America’s Libraries is an unprecedented opportunity for our diverse profession to come together and speak with a unified voice. We encourage every library to adopt and use the @ your library™ brand and become actively involved in the Campaign for America’s Libraries. Working together, we can and will make a difference.

play books, dress, food, and music from their home countries. Invite a local theater or dance troupe to perform. Host book readings, lectures, and/or art exhibits that focus on different cultures and populations.

- **Picture this @ your library:** Create a photo display celebrating the history and diversity of your college and research library community. Include archive materials or work with your local historical society to showcase the development of your college or university.

Education and continuous learning

Communicate that the library is a place for self-help and lifelong learning.

- **Set your sites! @ your library:** Create lists of useful Web sites that can help foster continuous learning for every library user. Examples include sites for job seekers, students who are applying to law or

processing the information you offer, such as talking computers with scanners, on-screen or freestanding magnifiers, multilingual software, or accessible Web sites. Offer to host multilingual computer classes. Highlight the accessibility of your library to people with disabilities. Offer information on the Americans with Disability Act and other disability rights legislation to supplement your efforts.

Intellectual freedom

Communicate that the library makes information available to everyone and provides a forum for expressing all points of view.

- **Freedom to read, hear, view, think @ your library:** Create a display of banned books, banned recordings or films, and authors whose works have been banned over the course of the last century.

- **The choice is yours @ your library:** Invite members of school groups or professors who are concerned with free expression and free access to ideas to speak on the history of censorship or modern-day censorship issues.



The ultimate search engine is
@your library

Nancy McGinnis, Reference Services, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Memorial Library

medical schools, students who are pursuing graduate education or postdoctoral opportunities, vegetarian students, or students who are looking for summer employment overseas or in a national park, etc.

- **Find free money @ your library:** Host a scholarship search seminar with a financial aid officer and showcase books, videos, magazines, CDs, and Web sites that help students learn about scholarship money that applies to their situation.

Equity of access

Show how your library helps bridge the digital divide.

- **Something for everyone @ your library:** Showcase the variety of resources your library provides, including laptop connectivity throughout the library or high-end equipment for students to produce résumés, newsletters, digital art, and photography. Highlight alternative ways of ac-

Additional programming suggestions for each of these five key action areas are featured on the campaign's Web site at <http://www.ala.org/@yourlibrary>. Additional tools for National Library Week, including PSAs, op-eds, letters to the editor, and downloadable graphics are also available on the campaign's Web site.

The Web site, which is part of the "living campaign," also features general information on how to get involved in the campaign, including suggestions on how to use the logo, key messages, talking points, programming ideas, and more. Libraries can also sign up for the campaign and join an e-mail newsletter to be the first to receive campaign news and updates.

For more information about The Campaign for America's Libraries, or to tell ALA your library is participating in the campaign, call (866)-4LIBRARY or send an e-mail to atyourlibrary@ala.org. ■

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