



After a hiatus for “you know what,” the **NYLA-SSL Carol Kearney Leadership Institute returned for 2021**. Held at the Sheraton at Syracuse University from July 29-30, the focus of this year's annual Institute was **“Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Part 1: Breaking Down Bias”**. The Institute, **attended by 69 school librarians and library system directors**, was organized by **NYLA-SSL Ed Leadership chairs Sara Kelly Johns and Lisa Perkowski** and their team.

Author [Linda Sue Park](#) kicked off with a powerful keynote. Focusing on the power of story to “educate our kids on the honest truth of our country's past is the key to its successful future,” she challenged participants to make impactful connections and not be satisfied with the status quo in how history is taught. Her books are the perfect launchpad for this.



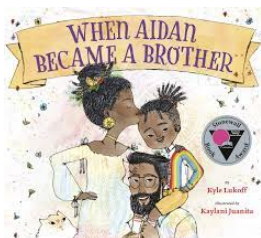
A vibrant panel discussed ***“How has bias affected your personal and professional life, as well as your work with students?”*** Facilitated by Tracey Wong and included

Linda Sue Park (author), and librarians Maegen Rose, Cicely Lewis, Arlene Laverde, Juan Rivera, Kathy Carroll and Tara Thibault-Edmonds, participants shared their

experiences with bias in life and work circles to share personal realities and empower a call to action for all to be a part of impactful change in our communities.

Melissa Jacobs, NYC Director of Library Services, presented **“Do You Really Want Green Eggs and Ham?”**. It has long been known that some of Dr. Seuss's work is blatantly racist. Jacobs led the group through a historical and contemporary perspective of changes in literature. She implored librarians to move beyond diversity audits by actively taking the lead to recognize and address systemic racism in children's literature.





Book discussion groups were led by school librarians **Mary Lou O'Connor, Annarose Foley, and Livia Sabourin**. Participants engaged in in-depth conversations about representation in books for students in K-12. A follow up panel on Day 2 allowed all to collectively reflect on the key aspects of the evening booktalks and the role of librarians in growing a representative collection. Booklist of titles discussed is [here](#).

A keynote address by **Kathy Carroll, AASL President 2020-21 and South Carolina school librarian**, continued the focus on the librarian as a leader on topics of accessibility, inclusion, and voice for all. Her personal story and insight from the perspective as a national leader humanized issues related to bias and shared how involvement in [AASL](#) empowers librarians to grow together. ([Knowledge Quest resources](#))



Cicely Lewis, Georgia school librarian and founder of the [Read Woke movement](#), dazzled the crowd with her passion for using books as the foundation for conversation, understanding, and representation. She also challenged each participant to be the voice and leader for making powerful connections in their communities to reach ALL students and make changes that matter for all.

NY librarian Maegen Rose facilitated a group activity to explore the role of **implicit bias** in personal and professional worlds. She guided all in conversations using the [QFT technique](#) to better understand implicit bias and **reframe teaching and programming** through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens.



A basket auction was held and **members raised funds (\$1700)** for scholarships to attend next year's Leadership Institute. The [NYLA-SSL Board](#), led by President Dawn Pressimone, met on 7/30 and 7/31 to conduct organizational business and strategic planning to continue to serve our membership.

Resources curated here on this [WAKELET](#). For more information, reach out to ssledleadership@gmail.com. Planning is in progress for the 2022 event. Please share ideas with this email.