

2025 Virtual Power Up Schedule

February 13 & 14, 2025
Online, Zoom, all times are in US Central Time

Thursday, February 13		Friday, February 14	
9:50-10:00	Welcome	9:00-9:45	Programming Lightning Talks
10:00-11:00	Keynote	10:00-11:00	Concurrent session 3
11:30-12:30	Concurrent session 1	11:30-12:30	Concurrent session 4
1:00-2:00	Concurrent session 2	1:00-2:00	Concurrent session 5

Keynote Session

Thursday Keynote: Kyle Lukoff, 10:00-11:00 AM CST

Kyle Lukoff is the author of many books for young readers. His debut middle-grade novel, *Too Bright To See*, received a Newbery honor, the Stonewall award, and was a National Book Award finalist. His picture book *When Aidan Became A Brother* also won the Stonewall, and his book *Call Me Max* has been banned in schools across the country. He is the recipient of the 2025 Children's Literature Lecture award, and has forthcoming books for all ages on a variety of topics. While becoming a writer he worked as a bookseller for ten years, and then nine more years as a school librarian.

Concurrent Sessions

Concurrent Session 1, Thursday 11:30-12:30 PM CST

Data-driven to distraction: Reconsidering the role of vulnerability in a healthy library workplace
Jessica Jones, Library Director, Takoma Park Maryland Library

While workplace mental health and burnout are topics that library workers frequently discuss in professional development settings, vulnerability rarely garners the same attention. However, in order to meaningfully address the presence and impact of burnout and mental health challenges in the workplace, we have to be vulnerable enough to talk about them - not in abstract terms, but in ways that our specific workplaces create barriers to wellness.

This session will focus on three key areas and how to implement them in a library workplace: 1) Why vulnerability can be an asset in the workplace, 2) Leading by example, and 3) Reconciling the need to be "data driven" while embracing more holistic practices.

Giving Great Service

Jamie Matczak, Education Consultant, Wisconsin Valley Library Service

Providing great customer service in any business is no longer a "nice to have." It's a MUST have. Given that libraries put their customers first, they have an incredible opportunity to shine when it comes to giving the best service possible at every interaction. In this session, learn tips on assessing and improving your library's commitment to great service, how to deliver it, and steps to take when customer service fails.

Concurrent Session 2, Thursday 1:00-2:00 PM CST

Play-Based Learning in Libraries: Spaces That Support Development in Young Children

Kelsey Johnson-Kaiser, Youth and Family Services Manager, Saint Paul Public Library

Play is an essential part of healthy development and public libraries are a perfect place to support high-quality play experiences for young children and their families; we are welcoming, free, safe and available year-round. How can you create more intentional opportunities for play in your library? This session will help you better understand the role of play in learning and inspire you to look at your children's area with a fresh perspective on play as an essential library service for children.

The Right to Inclusion: How Libraries can Extend Privilege's to the Underserved

Georgette Spratling, Youth Services Librarian, North Miami Public Library

In this session, we will explore how libraries can serve underserved communities by extending privileges that aren't typical to smaller or underfunded Libraries. We will examine the critical role libraries play in providing access to people, places and location, thereby breaking cycles of inequity. Through innovative thinking and partnerships, libraries can provide experiences that will benefit all of our underserved families.

Session takeaways:

- Understand the barriers underserved communities face in accessing library resources and how libraries can address these challenges.
- Learn about successful initiatives from progressive libraries worldwide that promote inclusivity and diversity.
- Gain actionable insights to transform your library into an inclusive, empathetic space that empowers underserved individuals and communities.

CANCELED - Leading Staff Through Change to Elevate Youth Services

Joyce Arellano, Children's Services Manager, Fountaindale Public Library District

All too often, youth services departments find themselves set in a routine, recommending the same go-to titles and offering the same programs. As libraries work to make their services, collections and programs more inclusive, how do managers effectively make the changes to move beyond legacy practices and move their departments forward?

Implementing change can be a long and challenging process. Using examples from a Children's Services Manager's library and experience, this session will cover the basics for leading through change when you're a new manager and employees push back and push hard. From implementing new ideas to letting go of outdated processes, we'll explore ways to show staff how to embrace change, encourage out-of-the-box thinking and gain staff buy-in.

Programming Lightning Talks, Friday 9:00-9:45 AM

Talk #1 - Empowering 'Terrific Talkers': Connecting Health Literacy, Local Early Childhood Experts and the Public Library

Tessa Fox-Pawlaczyk, Early Literacy Librarian, Kenosha Public Library

Hear how one library's success pairing health literacy programs with existing children's library programs on a budget inspired a month-long program series centering on language and speech development in babies and toddlers. "Terrific Talkers" free program series provides book giveaways, early childhood developmental screenings; themed programs with pediatric speech and occupational therapists; classes from a local music school and art educator; and an author visit featuring workshops for parents and caregivers, and Early Childhood Educators who can earn continuing education credit.

Talk #2 - Monster Medical: A Studio NPL Intensive

Mariano Hayes, Program Supervisor - Lead Mentor, Studio NPL

The Monster Medical Camp is an immersive, hands-on experience where students role-play as veterinarians in the Monster Medical Corp, responsible for treating magical creatures. Through an engaging RPG campaign, participants build and embody unique characters, collaborating to solve creative and medical challenges. The camp features various fabrication stations where students use advanced technology, including laser cutting, 3D design, 3D printing, and audio production, alongside sewing, cardboard sculpting, and painting to craft costumes and props. Emphasizing safety, teamwork, and technical skills, the camp nurtures creativity and problem-solving while providing practical experience in both crafting and technology.

Talk #3 - Teen Advisory Boards: Creating and Sustaining a Connection to Teens at Your Library

Linda Jerome, Teen Librarian, La Crosse Public Library

Teen advisory boards help create a vital connection to the teens in your community but how do you start one and then maintain it? Hear from a veteran teen librarian who has sustained a teen advisory board for over twenty years about why they are crucial to your success working with teens as well as tips on where to start and how to keep teens interested.

Concurrent Session 3, Friday 10:00-11:00 AM CST

Belonging at Work: An Inspiring Environment for Neurodivergent Employees

Kate Thompson, West Des Moines Public Library

Diversity in how employees think makes for a creative and dynamic staff. How can we recruit and train neurodivergent employees to give them a great start? And how can libraries retain and empower all employees? Learn strategies to improve your interview process and onboarding, and tips and tricks for managers and coworkers. You'll leave this session with practical ideas for making your library more welcoming to all employees.

Mastering the Art of Middle Management: Real Talk, Hacks, and Humor from the Front Lines

Brooke Newberry, Youth Services Manager, La Crosse Public Library & Kendra Jones, Deputy Director, Timberland Regional Library

Join Brooke Newberry for a session packed with practical tips, candid advice, and a dash of humor for anyone navigating the world of middle management. Whether you're putting out fires, juggling personalities, or just trying to stay afloat, she's got you covered with insights from a seasoned pro who has weathered the chaos and lived to tell the tale.

Concurrent Session 4, Friday 11:30-12:30 PM CST

Crafting Communication: Tools for Effective Youth Services Management

Ashley McHose, Knowledge & Research Librarian, Social Current

Managing a Youth Services team is a complex and rewarding puzzle. How do you keep the whole team on the same page across multiple shifts? How do you manage team members with a variety of roles and responsibilities? How can you position yourself to advocate for your team to upper management? At the end of the day, a lot of our struggles as managers come down to inefficiency in our internal communication structures.

In this session, we'll examine common communication issues that Youth Services managers face - from the unique challenges of middle management to coordinating communication across multiple shifts. We'll explore evidence-based strategies for strengthening communication practices on your team, including recognizing implicit communication rituals, developing shared communication expectations, and creating sustainable, effective internal communication channels.

Whether you oversee a single part-time assistant or a large team, the best practices we'll explore in this session will equip you to better support your direct reports and encourage a more inclusive, collaborative, effective workplace.

Using Critical Literacy to Decolonize your Collections

Nisa Kessler, Teen Services Librarian, Petoskey District Library & Meredith Kennedy, Executive Director, Miigwech Inc.

In this session, we will delve into the impact of colonization on Indigenous youth, with a specific focus on stereotypes and tropes perpetuated in children's literature. With this knowledge in mind, we explore how youth librarians can use the principles of critical literacy to decolonize their collections and center children's literature that is inclusive and affirming of our Indigenous patrons. Attendees will leave with an understanding of how to complete a diversity audit, the ability to identify tropes and stereotypes to guard against, and an understanding of when items should be removed from the collection.

Concurrent Session 5, Friday 1:00-2:00 PM CST

Implementing Trauma-Informed Principles in Your Library

Bryce Kozla, Partnerships Librarian, Washington County Cooperative Library Services

A trauma-informed library is a place where the perspectives of people who have experienced trauma are honored, and one that provides positive spaces, services, and work culture. Trauma-Informed Principles can equip libraries to best serve our complex communities. All the decisions we make are opportunities for retraumatization or healing; so we might as well make them deliberately! Explore the six principles of trauma-informed organizations, and how we can implement them in libraries.

Pushing Boundaries Without Pushing Buttons

Kevin Kelly, Associate Director for School Age Programs and Services & Alexandria Abenshon, Director of Children's Services, New York Public Library

In 2023 NYPL organized a large drag queen story hour program across the city that received pushback from local and extra-local organizations. Many of the programs were picketed by a small but militant religious group that protested, and in some cases, turned violent. In this presentation, we will discuss the strategies we implemented as leaders in the NYPL Children's department, including: ensuring physical security and safety of staff and branches before, during, and after the events, equipping staff with adequate resources and support to navigate the situation (both personnel and institutional support and policy), collaborating with the city council to support, promote, and accomplish the events.