

From the President



Libraries: Reset and Reconnect

By Phyllis Gorshe

This has been an unprecedented time for all of us. We are still facing uncertainty, economic struggles, health and mental health issues, political issues and equality and race issues. Throughout this time, a constant has been the library. Whether providing online services, curbside services or getting out into our communities and campuses, library staff have been front-line in some capacity. Our collections have evolved with new technologies and we are continually reinventing ourselves.

My theme this year is Libraries: Reset and Reconnect.

Resetting makes me think of a remote. You can hit pause, rewind and then record again. Libraries throughout Florida had to hit the pause button on programs, services and initiatives that staff had spent time planning and creating. I see this year as our way to record again. We have learned so much throughout this past year and we are charged with the goal of becoming better.

We need to reset and focus on the things that make libraries so important to our community whether a public library, academic library, school media center or special library. During the pandemic, we had to evaluate which services were necessity and what would be best in serving our clientele. And we had to support our staff, peers and co-workers and take into consideration their well-being and safety. Library staff has an innate need to go above and beyond to serve our clientele and our services shined while we were closed and when we re-opened.

Most importantly, we need to reconnect. This can be the families from story time, students on campus, our stakeholder

groups and staff. Libraries are about connections. Patrons, students, users, customers are so happy to be back in our doors whatever the capacity. Let's give them what they love about libraries!

For the upcoming year, I ask that we take a dynamic approach to focusing on what makes libraries and library staff so exceptional. The Florida Library Association celebrated 100 years and now is the time to take advantage of all our organization has to offer. Our strategic plan was updated and with the pause we had, we need to reconnect with our membership and focus on our organization.

I am proposing this year to spend the time to update our bylaws which are so important to the foundation and mission of FLA. In addition, our membership has asked and we need to address the public library standards and outcomes as a working document that isn't just left on the shelf. We restructured committees to streamline our goals and this is our year to put those goals into action. We need to continue our focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) and be on the pulse to support our library workers. I truly feel reinvigorating our membership and reimagining our spaces is paramount in this coming year.

Libraries are the heart of every community. They are the one true enduring place where everyone is welcome. And they are the gateway to information, knowledge, culture, entertainment and so much more! Let us hit that reset button and reconnect with our patrons, students, customers and communities to showcase all the wonderful things happening in our Florida libraries!

**RESET &
RECONNECT**
MAY 23-25, 2022
FLORIDA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa