



# OUTRIDER



WYOMING STATE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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## Make a New Year's Resolution to Read, Learn, and Grow with the WSL in 2026



Many people set goals or make resolutions for the new year. Why not use the wealth of resources at the [Wyoming State Library](#), along with those at your local Wyoming library to help you and your patrons reach your goals for the new year?

Help your patrons find recipe books, resources pertaining to fitness, and both fiction and non-fiction books about nearly every topic imaginable digitally on [Libby](#), or in print form at their local Wyoming library using the [WYLDcat catalog](#).

Did you know GoWYLD has an e-learning tool to help patrons with a Wyoming library card learn a new language? Choose from 163 different languages on [Pronunciator](#). Read more about this resource in this [blog post](#).

[LinkedIn Learning](#) and [Mometrix](#) on GoWYLD can help Wyoming patrons learn new skills, as well as prepare for important exams. Check them out on [GoWYLD's e-Learning Resources page](#).

Maybe your goals include connecting with other professionals in the library field. Did you know there is an online community especially for Wyoming library professionals? Contact the WSL's Marketing Lead, [Greg Moshammer](#) for more details or to sign up!

Whatever you've chosen to focus on in 2026, the WSL wishes you a prosperous new year full of learning, growth, and fun. We look forward to serving you this year!

## Upcoming Celebrations/Events

Here is a list of celebrations in February pertaining to libraries and literacy:

February 1-28—[Black History Month](#)

February 1-7—[Children's Authors and Illustrators Week](#)

February 1—[World Read Aloud Day](#)

February 7—[Take Your Child to the Library Day](#)

February 10—[Safer Internet Day](#)

February 14—[Library Lovers Day](#)

February 26—[Digital Learning Day](#)

February 26—[Tell a Fairy Tale Day](#)

February 27—[Big Talk from Small Libraries](#)

# Wyoming Library Association

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES SPOTLIGHT



*Michelle Ottoes*

This month, we are thrilled to feature an educator who brings a diverse professional background and a deep passion for literacy to the Wyoming library ecosystem—Michelle Ottoes, Elementary Library TOSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) for Laramie County School District #1 in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

## Famous Quotes

"The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library". - Albert Einstein

## The Path to the Library

Michelle's journey to the library has been paved with a wealth of unique experiences in many different arenas. Before finding her home in school librarianship, she taught secondary history, political science, and English. Her career has also included time as a paralegal and serving as the head of the Wyoming State Bar Foundation.

Her transition into the library world began quite close to home. While her two daughters were in school, Michelle served as president of their school's Parent Teacher Organization, as well as a dedicated library volunteer. Today, she is furthering her expertise by working toward a Master's of Education in K-5 Literacy at the University of Wyoming.



## A Fun Fact: Life on the Road

When she isn't in the library, Michelle spends her summers on a national tour! For many years, she has worked with the Troopers Drum and Bugle Corps out of Casper. During their 3½-month tour across the U.S., Michelle helps feed the corps from a commercial kitchen built into the back of a semi-truck!

## Insights from the Library—The "Why" Behind the Work

For Michelle, the magic of the job lies in two specific moments:

1. The Connection: Finding the "just right" book for a student at the exact moment they need it
2. The Story: Engaging students with the sheer beauty and power of storytelling

## What Parents and Students Should Know

"The school library" isn't just an elective or place where books are shelved—it's a class! The library is a classroom and is a core part of the academic day. Students spend three hours a week in the library, which includes dedicated time for quality instruction in essential lessons. Unlike public libraries, school libraries have a "captive audience," ensuring every child receives these foundational skills. Students' time in the school library has numerous benefits, including the acquisition of literacy, research, and critical thinking skills and responsible digital citizenship.

## Michelle's Curated Recommendations

- For the Modern Parent: *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt and *Digital Delusion* by Jared Cooney Horvath
- For Literacy Lovers: *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease and *Thirty Million Words* by Dana Suskind
- Michelle's Tech Pick: Novel Effect—This brilliant app uses voice-recognition to play music and sound effects that sync perfectly with your voice while reading aloud to children. It also includes lesson plans and activities.

## Library Jobs

### Library Development Manager

Wyoming State Library  
Cheyenne, WY  
Open until filled  
This listing will soon be posted on the [State of Wyoming's employment website](#).

### Office Support Specialist-Law Librarian

State of Wyoming—Department of Corrections  
Rawlins, WY  
Open until filled  
Posted January 9, 2026

### Circulation Clerk

Converse County Library  
Glenrock, WY  
Open until filled  
Posted January 12, 2026

### Senior Library Assistant

Teton County Library System  
Jackson, WY  
Closes January 30, 2026  
Posted January 12, 2026

### Library Assistant

Niobrara County Library System  
Lusk, WY  
Open until filled  
Posted January 12, 2026

### Library Director

Carbon County Library System  
Rawlins, WY  
Open until filled  
Posted October 24, 2025

## What's Up?

If you have great happenings at your library, we'd like to know! Send news to Christi Weinzierl at [christi.weinzierl1@wyo.gov](mailto:christi.weinzierl1@wyo.gov)

## People News



**Roxanne Everhard** joined the Fremont County School District #2 this school year as the Dubois school librarian, bringing 30 years of experience in education to this position. She has served as a school librarian in Gillette, Basin, and Greybull prior to accepting this position.

She enjoys working with the students and staff in Dubois and says they have all been very welcoming and helpful during her first semester there.

"I am so excited to be a full-time school librarian again," said Roxanne. I look forward to working both in person and virtually with other librarians around Wyoming."

## Youth Services

### TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE LIBRARY 2026 IS FEBRUARY 7



Libraries across the globe will celebrate Take Your Child to the Library Day (TYCLD) 2026 on Saturday, February 7. Several Wyoming libraries are already signed up to take part in this worldwide celebration of libraries and reading. Check out the map on the [TYCLD website](#) to find out if your library has signed up yet!

If this is your first time participating or you are looking to try something new this year, there are numerous ways for libraries to celebrate TYCLD, including:

- hosting a special event, performer, or story time
- offering a craft project, a scavenger hunt, or a door prize
- putting up special decorations and serving party snacks
- another spectacular idea your library dreams up

Your library and community are free to celebrate any way you like, so long as it encourages people to take their child(ren) to the library! TYCLD has been celebrated annually the first Saturday of February since 2011, making this year's TYCLD the sixteenth annual celebration. If this date works well for your library, great! If February 7 isn't the best day for your library to celebrate, you can still be a part of the fun. TYCLD can be celebrated any day in February, so your library can choose a day that fits its unique schedule. You can sign up to be a part of this free international initiative here or get more information by visiting the TYCLD website using the link above.

# Wyoming Library Association

## WLA LEAD THANKS FORMER CHAIR AND WELCOMES NEW CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR

The new year has brought transitions in leadership for the Wyoming Library Association's (WLA) Leadership Excellence and Development (LEAD) interest group and thanks and congratulations are in order!

LEAD extends a heartfelt "thank you" to Stella Terrazas, their previous chair, for her leadership, time, and dedication to LEAD. Stella has enjoyed working with so many LEADers in Wyoming libraries, and her impact and commitment have meant so much to the program.

David Brown is the 2025-2026 chair of the WLA LEAD Interest Group. A five-year member of WLA, he currently serves as both a faculty librarian at the University of Wyoming and as an engagement specialist with the Network of the National Library of Medicine, Region 4. He looks forward to building leadership development opportunities within Wyoming libraries and the WLA.

Lori Sponhour, LEAD's 2025-2026 co-chair, is an experienced librarian with over two decades of service at the Laramie County Library in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Her passion for continuous professional development and her dedication to serving the community are central to her career.

The WLA LEAD Interest Group is looking forward to a great year of learning, leadership, and library excellence! To learn more, follow LEAD on their new social media platforms:

- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/lead.wyoming>)
- Instagram (@lead.wyoming)

Read more in the [full blog post](#).



*Stella Terrazas*



*David Brown*



*Lori Sponhour*

**PB&J WEBINAR SERIES:  
SEASON 2, EPISODE 2:  
"TAKING A (BREATH)  
BREAK WITH NEESHA"**



What if finding calm wasn't just a "vibe"—but a science?

What if you could hack your own biology to lower stress?

What if you were fueling your brain with focus, instead of just fueling your body with caffeine?

In this session, Taking a (Breath) Break with Neesha, practice how you can use breathwork and movement to reclaim your day!

Stop holding your breath. Start using it.

Join us for the LIVE Session on February 18, 2026 at 1:30 p.m. (MST).

Click [here](#) to register now!

# Training and Professional Opportunities

## SUN, STORIES, AND STRATEGY: INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING, PRIZE STRATEGIES, AND PEER PERSPECTIVES!



Calling all Wyoming library professionals! It's winter now, but it will soon be summer and time for your library's Summer Reading Program!

Start getting ready now to make yours the best it can be with this free webinar hosted by the Wyoming State Library (WSL)!!! "Sun, Stories, and Strategy: Innovative Programming, Prize Strategies, and Peer Perspectives," a 2-hour online training, will be held online on February 17, 2026, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (MST).

This training will introduce the purpose and flexibility of Summer Reading Programs (SRPs) and how they support libraries and communities.

Topics will include:

- collaborative breakout sessions led by your fellow Wyoming library professionals
- community partnerships through the Sweetwater County Museum
- what the WSL provides
- what can be tailored to local needs,
- how SRPs can serve as a powerful way to reach new patrons—especially children and families—during the summer months.

Register [here](#) for this exciting event!

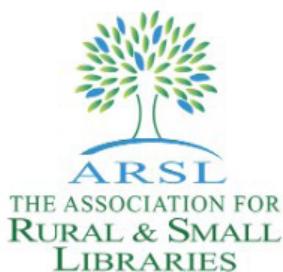
## 2026 AI SUMMIT SEEKS PROPOSALS--DEADLINE EXTENDED TO FEBRUARY 13



The University of Wyoming Libraries, the Wyoming State Archives, and the Wyoming State Library invite you to submit session proposals for the upcoming 2026 AI Summit. This event will be held Friday, May 29, 2026, at the University of

Wyoming Conference Center in Laramie, WY. More details and a link to submit session proposals can be found on the [2026 AI Summit website](#), and proposals are due by February 13, 2026.

## ARSL SEEKS PROPOSALS FOR 2026 CONFERENCE IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA



Small libraries are some of the most creative, innovative spaces around—and the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Conference is your place to shine! ARSL invites you to submit proposals for Preconference Workshops and

Conference Sessions for the 2026 ARSL Conference in Montgomery, Alabama, September 16-19, 2026. They are seeking proposals on all topics relevant to small and rural libraries, from practical how-to sessions to broader explorations of the changing library landscape. Share your unique programs, collections, and initiatives with fellow library professionals! Find out more or submit your proposal on the [ARSL website](#).

## People News



**Linda Helzer** will retire from her position as Library Specialist at the Natrona County Library after more than 15 years of service. Her last day will be February 6. Linda began her career at the library in August 2010 as a Circulation Clerk and Substitute Bookmobile Driver. In 2012, she transitioned to Tech Services, where her role became a true potpourri of daily responsibilities.

“We’ll miss Linda’s dedication to our Library and community,” said Tech Services Manager Conrrado Saldivar. “Most importantly, we’ll miss her smile and her daily ‘Good morning!’ as staff walk into the building each day.”

In retirement, Linda looks forward to spending more time with her grandkids and returning to her passion for photography.

## SPECIAL 250TH GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM IMLS



To help kick off the celebration of America's 250th birthday, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is now accepting applications for its FY26 discretionary grant cycle. Libraries across the United States are encouraged to apply to the agency's programs by **March 13, 2026**. Program descriptions and available applicant resources are listed below:

- [Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program](#) - Supports the training and professional development of library and archives professionals to meet the information needs of their communities.
- [National Leadership Grants for Libraries](#) - Supports projects that develop, enhance, or disseminate replicable practices, programs, models, or tools to strengthen library and archival services for the American public.
- [Native American Library Services: Basic Grants](#) - Assists eligible Native Communities in establishing, sustaining, and improving library services and operations with their communities.

# Grant and Award Opportunities

### [Snapdragon Book Foundation](#)

Deadline: February 8, 2026

The Snapdragon Book Foundation was started in December, 2008 to provide funds to improve school libraries for disadvantaged children. Grants will be awarded to public, private, and experimental schools. Grants typically range from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

### [National Endowment for the Arts](#)

Deadline: February 12, 2026

The National Endowment for the Arts' Grants for Arts Projects (GAP) program provides project-based funding to nonprofit organizations, government units, and federally recognized tribes across the U.S. Awards range from \$10,000 to \$150,000 and require a 1:1 cost share.

### [The ARSL Awards for Libraries and Library Workers](#)

Deadline: February 13, 2026

Each year, ARSL honors outstanding rural and small library workers and libraries whose work demonstrates leadership, innovation, equity, and service. These awards celebrate meaningful community impact and recognize individuals and organizations advancing ARSL's Organizational Values.

### [McMurry Library Endowment Grants](#)

Deadline: March 15, 2026

The Carol McMurry Library Endowment was established in 2000 within the Wyoming Community Foundation to provide support to Wyoming library staff and volunteers and to publicly accessible Wyoming libraries in three areas: Education and Training (Library and individual), Library Resources, and Library Foundation Development. There are multiple grant cycles per year. Visit the link above for specific application and deadline information.

### [The Coretta Scott King Book Awards Donation Grant](#)

Deadline: Rolling

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards Donation Grant from the American Library Association provides donated collections of Coretta Scott King Award-winning and honor books to organizations serving children and youth. The grant supports libraries, schools, and community organizations that need high-quality, culturally relevant books by African American authors and illustrators. These titles celebrate Black voices and experiences while supporting literacy, representation, and engagement for young readers.

### [Daniels Fund Grant](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The Daniels Fund provides grants to organizations delivering programs in Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Utah that align with their funding areas, as defined by their founder (Aging, Amateur Sports, Disabilities, Drug & Alcohol Addiction, Early Childhood Education, Homeless & Disadvantaged, K-12 Education Reform, and Youth Development).

### [The Courage Project](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The Courage Project seeks to recognize individuals and organizations that embody the foundational values of our nation through acts of courage that strengthen our communities, our democracy, and our shared future. The award amounts will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Whether it's a librarian defending free speech, a teacher protecting vulnerable students, or a local leader bridging divides, these recipients embody core national values: kindness, empathy, and community. For individual honorees, The Courage Project also provides an opportunity to "pay it forward" by directing funds to nonprofit organizations aligned with their values – helping to foster long-term impact at the grassroots level.

## News in Brief

### [The Importance of Evaluation: How to Check In on New Services](#)

Evaluation can help children's librarians get to the "why" something is important when implementing new programs or services.

[Library of Congress Offers U.S. Law Webinars](#)-In February, the Library of Congress will be offering an Orientation to Legal Research Webinar, focusing on federal legislative history. In addition, they will be hosting another entry into the Introduction to Congress.gov series. Read this blog post for more information.

[Deep Reading Can Boost Your Critical Thinking and Help You Resist Misinformation](#)-Simply being aware of how digital reading practices shape your brain can encourage new attitudes and habits toward how you consume information.

### [Self-Care Practices for Librarians](#)

[During the Winter Slump](#)-Self-care doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming. Small, intentional strategies can help you stay steady, healthy, and energized—even during the darkest months of the year.

[Resolutions You Can Use](#)-As we turn the page into 2026, it's an opportunity to refresh programs and processes. Should we open a new chapter for community needs or professional growth? Read how one library professional is approaching this question this year.

# News in Brief

## [Making Library Leadership Visible](#)

In this podcast, PLA President Dr. Brandy McNeil shares why visibility, storytelling, and speaking up matter for libraries and library workers alike.

## [A Paws-itively Amazing](#)

[Partnership](#)-Learn about some of the “fur-real” amazing programming that are a real “treat” and that prove, through partnerships, anything is “paws-ible.”

## [New Literacy with Baby Raves and](#)

[Toddler Technos](#)-Whether you read as a part of your program, or lean solely into dance and activities, you’re empowering caregivers to try something new and shake off preconceived notions about what literacy looks like in a library. This blog post discusses how one library has jazzed up their programming for young children with movement and music.

## Share the News!

Do you have colleagues who aren't on the *Outrider* mailing list? Encourage them to [sign up](#) and catch all the library news.

## [Believe in Reading – Grants for Literacy Program](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

Grants are made to organizations with 501(c)(3) status or its equivalent for educational institutions, including public libraries. Currently, the maximum grant amount is \$10,000; however, the vast majority of grants are for \$3,000 or less. First-time applicants will not be funded for more than \$3,000.

## [Rural Technology Education & Assistive Technology \(AT\) Grants](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

Grants are typically \$500 - \$2,500 for staff and student-led projects in public schools and libraries. The projects funded are designed to help spark student interest in technology-based careers like computer science, computer engineering, information technology, programming, cyber security, robotics, or similar areas.

## [Wyoming Humanities' Indian Education for All Program](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

Wyoming Humanities is offering funds for K-12 educators in Wyoming to bring an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper into their school, classroom, or field trip. All requests for support should help fulfill Indian Education for All standards and requirements. Wyoming Humanities will offer one-time compensation to support the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge Keeper in the classroom, including a \$350 honorarium and \$200 in travel funds (if 100+ miles roundtrip.)

## [Wish You Well Foundation](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The Wish You Well Foundation supports adult and family literacy in the United States by fostering the development and expansion of new and existing adult literacy and educational programs. Grants amounts range from \$200 to \$10,000.

## [Scholastic Possible Fund](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The Scholastic Possible Fund was established to provide a single repository of quality children's books to be donated to charity partners that share the Company's mission to improve global literacy and put books into the hands of children who might otherwise have none.

[Jan Stauber-Sherlock Holmes Literacy Grant](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

The mission of the Jan Stauber Grant is to provide needed financial assistance to persons and organizations developing literacy programs and other educational experiences that will introduce young people to Sherlock Holmes. Educators or librarians can be awarded up to \$1,000 for a project that encourages young people to read and introduces them to Sherlock Holmes.

[Art Resources Transfer's Library Program](#)

Deadline: Ongoing

This program provides free books on contemporary art to public institutions nationwide. Public libraries, public schools, prisons, and reading centers that self-define as under-served are eligible to order free books through our Library Program. Institutions can order anytime throughout the year. Books are entirely free and shipped free of charge.

[The Pilcrow Foundations Children's Book Project Program Grant](#)

DEADLINE: Rolling

The Pilcrow Foundation, a national non-profit public charity, provides a 2-to-1 match to rural public libraries that receive a grant through its Children's Book Project and contribute \$200-\$400 through a local sponsors for the purchase of up to \$1,200 worth (at retail value) of new, quality, hardcover children's books.

[Black Hills Corporation Community Giving](#)

DEADLINE: Ongoing

Areas of focus are arts and culture, civic and community development, education, environment, human services, and youth development. Giving limited to Black Hills Energy service areas.

[BNSF Railway Foundation Grants](#)

DEADLINE: Ongoing

These grants are given to organizations and programs that support and improve the general welfare and quality of life in the communities in which BNSF Railway Company operates. See their website for qualifying categories.

[T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program](#)

DEADLINE: Ongoing

T-Mobile is investing \$25M in 500 rural towns over 5 years to jumpstart projects and build stronger communities. These grants can be used to help upgrade tech at your local library, build new hiking trails, revitalize historic buildings, and more.