

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
2020 MIDWINTER MEETING
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020
11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
DEAF CULTURE FORUM

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**Libraries: Inclusion of the Deaf Community: State Libraries
Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS)**

The segment kicking off the afternoon is libraries: inclusion of the deaf community and we have State Library first and then two videos from two Public Libraries who were doing two different kinds of things. First, we have Pat Herndon, she is the assistant State Librarian in Georgia, and she is director of the GLASS, Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services. So, Pat, let me turn it over to you.

>> PAT HERNDON: Hello. You did really good. It took my husband four years to know what GLASS stands for. I'm Pat Herndon, assistant State Librarian director of GLASS. I work for Georgia Public Library service, which is our State Library Agency, and as a lot of you understand, that means that our office intakes the IMLS, LSTA grants and we intake funds from the state of Georgia. Why is that important? Because we use that funding to provide scalable services to Georgia's Public Libraries. And we are very fortunate at our State Library in that we have a great relationship with staff and the directors from the 62 Public Library systems in Georgia that serve our 159

counties. In Georgia we have a collegial relationship with our libraries. We host live meetings with the library directors three times per year and additionally we sponsor a lot of training to keep libraries informed on new technologies and importantly on best practices.

As director of GLASS, part of my mission is to ensure that Georgia's Public Libraries understand the provision of accessible and inclusive library services. We address many different needs that patrons may have and provide resources for libraries to consult as they plan and provide services that are accessible and inclusive to all.

One of our agency's key tenets is as you see on the slide, libraries are for everyone. The GLASS focuses its services people with low vision or physical impairment that might prevent a person from being able to use standard print. As an agency, we broaden the focus to include many other disabilities, anything that keeps somebody from using the Public Library. We encourage our Public Libraries to consider the needs of persons with disabilities related to vision, mobility, atypical neuro development and, of course, hearing. This is my job, and this is my passion.

Ever since 2015, Georgia Public Library Service has offered a three-day conference called the Georgia Accessibility Conference. Staff are invited from Georgia's Public Libraries to attend to make this attractive and affordable and to get as many attendees as we have capacity to house, GLPS covers the cost of lodging and meals and charges no registration for at least one attendee per library system.

We host the conference at a state park conference center to keep the cost reasonable. It also gives us a captive audience. They have nowhere to go if they are in rural Georgia. Most all of our speakers come from other state agencies and local organizations that support services to persons with disabilities and last our year our state agency received a supporting grant from Georgia State ADA Coordinators Office. In other words, they were happy to give us money so they wouldn't have to put on a conference like this for state employees.

The 2019 conference included several presentations on services to patrons with hearing disabilities. We had a vendor come in and he had approached me to talk about hearing loop technology and he wanted to get hooked up with the guy in our office that helps libraries plan their space. So, what he did was come into the area, loop part of the room. He didn't have enough of a system to loop the entire room, but he looped part of it, provided assistive listening devices so that attendees of the meeting could get a sense of what it would be like to hear the speaker's voice so differentiated from the background

noises. And in 2019 we also hosted a presentation by an academic librarian who I happen to have gone to library school with but who happens to be deaf (and I didn't know that for about the first 15 years that I knew her) until she offered to speak at our conference.

She is dean of one of the libraries of one of our universities, and she gave some practical points for how library staff should be prepared to help people who have trouble hearing. And then she talked about best practices for staff to interact. She shared practical tips for effective communication.

We also hosted our state provider of TTY equipment so not so much tell staff exactly how to use TTY, but just to explain that if somebody calls the library that is using it, they might have a different experience on the phone call. And just to prep the front line staff on, you know, just don't be surprised. These things happen.

And we have an arrangement with this guy. He is willing to go do in services at libraries. He will be happy to go individually to a library and do staff training on talking to someone via TTY. We have also had a company that provides language translation services for third party ASL video interpretation. And the point of this is to create awareness among front line library staff. We encourage libraries to make sure if we have got video content posted on their websites that they have got that content captioned, and they need to be able to provide transcripts for any of their audio productions.

And our agency keeps resource lists and contacts across the state so that we can point people to local service providers for sign language interpretation or for transcription services. We at Georgia State Library do our best to point libraries in the right direction for including accessible services but we do have results to share. More than one new library has included sound loop technology in their new construction plan.

Another library informed me that they were going to acquire a one to one sound loop system to facilitate conversation at the library help desk. And one of the best stories that I heard of lately is one of our Public Libraries has partnered with a parent support group for parents of children who are deaf. They put her into resources to get sign language interpreter who would come to a story time, I think she is doing it once a quarter at least, and, of course, it's an inclusive story time, the entire family is invited, anybody else in the community is welcome to come. And this program has become so popular that people visit it from various parts of the state.

She is reaching people in the full quadrant of our state instead of just her single county. Another program, our State Library facilitates museum partnerships and one of our recent

projects is to make sure is that the display that some of the museums want to circulate to libraries that that is accessible for transcripts for any audio and other means of interpreting print for people who can't see. So, we are working hard and we really do a lot more and if you want to know more about what we do at Georgia Public Library Service, then just ask me and I will be glad to tell you.
