

# From the Guest Editor



ARLENE WEIBLE (she/her) is the 2021–22 OLA President and the Electronic Services Consultant at the State Library of Oregon, where she coordinates the Statewide Database Licensing Program and other library projects. She has worked in Oregon libraries for over 20 years and has been in the fortunate position to observe the commitment and hard work of library workers across the state. When she's not in meetings, she enjoys gardening, attending outdoor music events, and spending time with her extended family and elderly cat Dale. Contact her at [arlene.weible@slo.oregon.gov](mailto:arlene.weible@slo.oregon.gov).

The idea for Accelerated Change as the theme of this issue of the *OLA Quarterly* came from a question I have been contemplating for much of the last year—did anything good come out of the COVID-19 pandemic? In both my roles as OLA President and a library consultant at the State Library of Oregon, I observed how the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed frustrating barriers to library services. I also saw the creativity and adaptability of library workers who not only worked to alleviate those barriers, but also leveraged opportunities to innovate and think differently about policies and services. Did the pandemic, with all its disruption, actually accelerate and encourage positive changes in Oregon libraries?

The articles in this issue represent just a few of the interesting projects in Oregon libraries that got their legs through the catalyst of the pandemic.

- Jeanie Diaz makes the case for expanding library tutoring programs to reach youth in marginalized communities by telling the compelling story of Multnomah County Libraries' pandemic experience.
- Ashlei Emmons and Dylan DeLoe discover the value of the Blue Mountain Community College Library virtual reference chat service in maintaining connections among library staff and the greater college community.
- Michael Bradley illustrates how partner relationships were deepened and access needs were met by Eugene Public Library's Wi-Fi hotspot lending program for nonprofits.

OLAQ

- Jennifer McKenzie talks about using virtual programming and virtual field trips to help overcome geographic and economic barriers and to build connections for students in the Siuslaw School District.
- Adrienne Doman Calkins works with her colleagues at the Sherwood Public Library to leverage the stresses caused by pandemic conditions and to reimagine behavior policies and procedures with an eye toward equitable enforcement and more positive engagement with library users.
- Sarah Ralston describes the innovative Mobile Virtual Reality Lab at Eastern Oregon University and how it helped welcome students back to the library after the isolation of the pandemic shutdown.

These authors found that the conditions of the pandemic either created opportunities to implement new ideas, illuminated the need to address known barriers to access, or provided the challenge needed to think differently about the impact of library services.

A throughline among these articles is how powerfully they illustrate the importance of relationships—those with library users, with community members who do not already use the library, with departments in our own institutions, with community partners, and with our library coworkers. Strengthening connections that withered under pandemic conditions and forging new and different relationships are essential to building sustainable library services that can withstand the next global challenge thrown our way. I hope these articles inspire you to think about what you can do in your own work to build relationships and networks to battle the barriers that remain for many in our communities.

