



Maryland Youth Services Librarian Receives National Recognition

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BALTIMORE – The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is pleased to announce that Youth Services Librarian LaShawn Myles today was named a recipient of [Library Journal's 2024 Movers & Shakers](#) award. Myles has served since 2017 at the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD), a division of MSLA that provides valuable resources to more than 6,000 active users throughout the state. A former teacher and librarian in the Baltimore City Public Schools system, Myles prioritizes diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion as part of a concerted effort to serve all members of the community.

“I am extremely honored to be recognized as a 2024 LJ Mover and Shaker,” Myles said. “To be a ‘Mover’, you need force. Within my years at the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, that force has come from conversations, shared knowledge, handshakes and partnerships from the community I serve. It is a privilege to work alongside others to remove barriers to access. Onward and upward!”

Library Journal is a national trade publication, founded in 1876, that serves librarians and library workers with news and perspectives that shape the field, including best practices, innovations, emerging leaders, guidance on purchasing decisions and advocacy. The 2024 class of Movers & Shakers, showcased in *Library Journal's* May 2024 edition, includes 50 leaders who have demonstrated 50 different ways to move libraries forward. They are developing programs for patrons with disabilities, providing after-school options for teenagers, connecting libraries with federal funding, designing sustainable facilities and battling censorship attempts, among many other efforts.

“Our 2024 Movers represent a range of innovative, proactive and supportive work; they are imaginative and kind and brave in a world that needs those qualities—and the results they produce—very much,” said *Library Journal* Executive Editor Lisa Peet.

Myles leads the Inclusion and Accessibility Community of Practice, a statewide group of public and school library staff who share resources, ideas and strategies to increase inclusiveness and accessibility in their library services to youth and families. When Myles recognized an increasing number of Spanish-speaking students, she worked with a language service to ensure LBPD applications and fliers were available in Spanish. When she wanted to offer the American Red Cross' Babysitters Course to blind and print disabled youth, she worked with the Red Cross to obtain their materials and have them professionally embossed in hard copy and electronic braille.

Among Myles' other accomplishments, she has advised the NASA “@ My Library” program on adding accessible elements to kits distributed to public libraries, and advised Cornerstones of Science

on ways to make their “Test the Waters” kits accessible. Myles sends care packages in the fall to Teachers of the Visually Impaired to inform them about LBPDP resources and give them a boost to start the school year. In addition, Myles has collaborated with libraries in Baltimore County, Montgomery County and Worcester County to provide braille overlays for story walks, creating a more accessible experience for the blind.

To coincide with the nationwide Summer Reading Program theme “Oceans of Possibilities” in 2022, Myles brought the Whalemobile to Maryland’s blind and print disabled youth, giving them and their families the opportunity to explore a 40-foot inflatable model of a humpback whale. Then in 2023, Myles brought “All Together Now,” the Summer Reading Program theme, to LBPDP for a question-and-answer session about the newest release of the accessible handheld media player Victor Reader Stream. After lunch, the participants joined together for a drum circle with Katy Gaughan’s Drumming for Wellness.

Demonstrating dedication and expertise, Myles and MSLA Youth Services Coordinator Carrie Sanders brought Project Ready, focusing on racism, and Project Enable, focusing on disabilities, to library staff across the state. Myles served as a facilitator of a Project Ready small group during a statewide study. Her longtime commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility has been recognized nationally as she was invited to participate on the National Library Service’s Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee and the Service’s inaugural Summer Reading Program.

Myles’ recognition today comes three years after Nini Beegan, Organizational Learning and Innovation Coordinator at MSLA, was named a [Library Journal Mover & Shaker in 2021](#). State Librarian Irene Padilla is proud to see MSLA represented on the national stage once again.

“LaShawn is an expert in her field and works hard to serve the blind and print disabled residents of Maryland,” Padilla said. “The State and our residents are lucky to have her, and I’m thrilled to see her receive the recognition she deserves.”

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