

# ARRT Program: RA Hacks Notes

Glendale Heights, IL | The Glenside Public Library District Tuesday, November 15, 2016  
from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM

Attendees divided into breakout groups on Whole Collection RA, Training, Social Media, Marketing, and In-person RA and were asked to share an idea or “hack” that would be helpful to other librarians. Their amazing ideas are recorded here!

## Whole Collection RA - Moderated by Karen Toonen

- Festivus Displays
  - Users asking what Festivus is creates interactivity
  - Use those weird books from the 800s
- Display of any movies based on a books
- 80s Pop Culture displays
- Display of “last chance” or “on the chopping block” before weeding items
- Staff picks: give each staff member a different shelf
- National events: Pearl Harbor, Star Trek 50 year anniversary, National Parks
- Bring books to every program!
  - Space books at the planetarium event
  - Mini display at knitting club
  - “You might like” at book club
- Take adult materials to the children’s department, especially for after storytime
- Girl on a Train - multiple formats as well as read-alikes
- TV Show & Book pairings: Don’t forget Graphic novel or soundtracks
  - Stranger Things work well
  - Downton Abbey work well
- Holiday/Seasonal/Monthly displays--be sure to mix media
- Tie podcasts and online videos to online booklists
- “Candy aisle” displays near the checkout for those last minute grabs
- Don’t forget video games and graphic novels (especially when pairing with topics like Star Wars or Marvel)
- Quick reactions to news events is attention grabbing
- BINGO card summer reading program - designate shelves to meet the different bingo square suggestions
- A problem mentioned was if you have to get display graphics from a different department
  - A “Trending Topics” display sign lets you put out any topic without changing the graphic
  - Create a template for display signage from PR so anyone can fill in the blanks
- Local events and locations:

- Museum
- Book store
- Comic book store
- What music events are happening? Move materials on hand to make displays.
- Use Hoopla or Freegal for hot items and topics
  - Shelf-takers to highlight or faux case on display
- Arm Chair Travel allows for fiction, travel guides, language learning, world music, etc

## Training - Moderated by Becky Spratford

- Poll staff on reading preferences to see where your knowledge gaps are
- Describe a book in three words. Staff need to do it to help them think about appeal first. Then you can use the descriptions to make a passive RA display
- League of Extraordinary Librarians (Tulsa) training module adapted for staff <http://leagueofextraordinarylibrarians.weebly.com/start-here-how-it-works.html>
- Use what you already know and share it to get started
- Staff genre studies
- Make RA training a priority for the WHOLE library
- Pick something off the bestseller list that you've never read and discuss its appeal.
- Assign staff to read at work - have to give time to read at work (remember the Fair Labor Standards Act!)
- Staff picks - real life or virtual? It's a sneaky way to see what your staff likes.
- Train adult staff to help with children's requests
- Close on a Friday morning until 1 for a quick training more often.
- Train Circ staff to do RA and make Circ into a Reader's Services desk
- "Circulation Recommends" can be a popular picks display
- "Librarian's Favorite" bookmark - each staff asked to give one title, which was made into a bookmark. Staff were dying to give more titles!
- Circ staff may want to talk about books but don't know how - help them learn!
- "My circ staff doesn't want my training" - try asking.
- Find easier entry points for involvement
- Getting staff involved in sharing their reads/watches is a form of training.
- Get staff involved in displays and RA in any way that there is training
- Brown Bag Lunch every two months - people come and talk about what they are reading and watching. People rotate, come and go through their lunch break. RA staff stay for the whole two hours. Make a Library Aware list after the fact to share with all staff. Even if staff come in and don't talk about something, they are listening.
- Take a few moments at All-Staff training to ask all staff how they can share reading
- Ask permission to use what staff have shared on Goodreads
- Encourage staff to share what they do on free time that can be checked out of the library
- Get core RA people on the same page and then you have a team - then you're not going it alone

- Staff meeting starts or ends with what you are reading and watching, then share the list.
- Hand out blank shelf talkers and markers and ask people to fill one out on a book/movie you like. She gives five at a time to staff from all departments.
- Start with what you love
- Invest the help of your “super patron”
- Booktalk every book you read to someone
- Find someone who reads “opposite” you and try to suggest a book to them
- Review or booktalk addresses the book’s “best” reader
- You have to know your employees and give them a language
- Invite other staff to participate - come to book talks, book discussions - they can cross-train and serve as backup

## Social Media and RA - Moderated by Mike Hominick and Tracy Gossage

- Book Riot: quick, timely lists of books and suggestions
- Timely displays are important (e.g. Leonard Cohen) Take a photo of it and post it to social media
- Remember that not everyone knows what we know in terms of appeal factors
- Remember that we are following a lot of libraries, authors, and publishers but our followers probably aren’t
- Skokie PL did a Hamilton display with a life-sized cutout of Lin Manuel Miranda which was more eye-grabbing than just a physical display or a picture of one
- Think of ways to utilize Facebook Live which is big right now, e.g. showing off a stack of new books
- Author John Scalzi posts pictures of ARCs. We could post a pic or video of a stack of new books
- Social media is reaching out to people who might not be coming in/promote what we’re doing for people who aren’t thinking of us during timely events
- When we post as the library we try to inject personality e.g. mentioning when a staff member really liked a title in a reply to a #AskALibrarian request
- One library encourages a variety of staff members to respond to #AskALibrarian on Twitter
- Try to balance self-promotion with fun things e.g. program promotion vs a BuzzFeed books link
- Try to use pictures of programs themselves, especially ongoing things
- People are really drawn to pictures on FB. Post fun things!
- CPL posts pictures of people signing up for library cards
- #PubLibChat for RA resources on Twitter #ReadAdv is another great hashtag talking about all things RA
- Follow local and different bookstores to see some creative ideas

- Spinning appeals into different mediums and suggestions: someone mentioned suggesting *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* to one patron who was interested in the medical aspects but another patron heard them talking and wanted to read it because she heard it was an Oprah pick and it was being made into an HBO movie
- [Somers Library posts really fun things and has over 7000 followers](#)
- If it's timely, it's important. Don't wait to write a post
- Don't always feel like you have to be trendy or jump on everything.
- Don't jump on every platform all at once (Vine, Snapchat) Do what you know and feel comfortable with
- If an author or figure is trending because they've died you can post a quote from them and link to the catalog (as opposed to a RIP message)
- Do staff members suggesting books or movies do better on social media?
- Social media can build connections to librarians and make us seem more approachable.
- Multnomah Library's [My Librarian](#) page features short bios of their librarians and their reading habits. You can also request book suggestions from a specific librarian featured on that page
- American Libraries or Booklist digital editions share fun articles - share them with our followers (again they aren't necessarily seeing this stuff but they might enjoy it)
- Books/links that are stale to us are now always stale to them
- One library did Friday Freebies on Facebook - get people to respond to something for a free ARC they could come pick up
- Chicago Public Library has posts about upcoming books their librarians are excited about
- Early Word has great pre-pub suggestions
- Take photos of the new arrivals?
- Libraries online (like in person) are a safe space and uplifting; sometimes people just really appreciate seeing positive posts from their local library
- Take current events and link to Hoopla or Zinio with information (e.g. mention the Leonard Cohen music available on there since all the physical items will check out ASAP)
- Timely quotes with a link to the book it's from
- Don't be afraid to share articles you find interesting if at all relevant to the library

## Marketing and Displays - Moderated by Debbie Walsh

- Create simple displays in high traffic areas because they will move by location
- How can technology help us with marketing and displays?
- E-newsletters have been successful in some libraries
- <https://shelfwiz.com/> for shelftalker recommendations
- Library Aware

- Use suggestions for displays and promotion from EVERYONE! All staff, but even patrons!
- Use shelf talkers with patron input
- Some displays need to be consistent
- Learn about traffic patterns by looking at where the rugs are worn
- Suggested sites: Vulture, BuzzFeed, Early Word
- Use a Virtual new book shelf
- Marketing is teasing people to want “it” or want “more”
- Book discussion displays: books that the community would want to discuss
- Staff picks
- Coming Soon
- Space issues
- Booktalking out in the community - make it a quarterly event in a coffee shop
- Goodreads
- Shelves/Displays need to be in high traffic areas
- Recently returned makes for easy picking for natural displays
- How do you promote your material? Ask questions using social media?
- Cube display with Graphics. Whole collection - connected with a snappy hook, not specifically theme related
- Should it be labor intensive?
- Displays around programs
- Some displays can be crafted lovingly and take time and creativity
- Share a photo of a cart of new books coming out of tech
- Book week - staff pose with a book; no extra work involved
- Outreach marketing to get out into the community
- Library Aware has examples of Pinterest use

## In-Person RA - Moderated by Emily Borsa

### Strategies

- Walk patrons over to a display and start a discussion while you walk
- Give a patron a few options. Let them know if they don't like one, start another.
- Invite people to come back and tell you what they thought
- Know what your colleagues read, use staff as resources
- Have staff favorites lists and displays
- Have recently return area for suggestions
- Provide bookmarks/lists at the desk or in an area like teen/mystery/sci-fi
- Patron picks! Binder of suggestions from patrons
- Have readalikes available for popular holds
- Have a list of books you've read on hand

- Have a list of Sure Bets
- Pinterest Boards for quick access (esp. Library Reads/IndieNext)
- Know what's on the shelf so they're not disappointed
- Have extra copies of Sure Bets
- Check shelf for readalikes before suggesting it
- Check with publishers to see what they're pushing
- Know what's popular and what it's about
- Go to bookstores and see what is DISPLAYED
- Mobility - have an iPad if possible, but also get info you need and let the patron browse while you search
- Follow Instagrams and other social media for bookstores, publishers, etc

## Sources

- LibraryReads.org
- BookRiot (good diversity focus too!)
- IndieNext
- Novelist
- CommonSenseMedia.org (video games included)
- BookRiot podcast
- All The Books
- Book recommendations for the week
- Bookbrowse.com
- Wikipedia.com for quick author info
- EarlyWord.com (what's coming, what's hot)
- FantasticFiction.uk
- KidsInMind (family content)
- Look to the bottom of web pages - people also use or like...
- MidContinent Library's Juvenile Series and Sequels is like KDL's What's Next
- Pop Culture Happy Hour podcast by NPR
- IMDB.COM
- RAForAll@blogspot

## Questions

- What do you like to read?
- Do you have a few minutes? How much time do you have?
- What authors have you enjoyed?"
- What are you in the mood to read?
- What about a book or author do they like or not like? Why?
- Have you tried audiobooks?
- What kind of TV shows do you watch?
- What do you *not* like?