Letter from the Chair

Marianne Martens, Ph.D.
Chair, IFLA Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings from Kent, Ohio (USA), where winter has arrived with temperatures well below zero. It was wonderful to see many of you at our Satellite in The Hague (we collaborated with LITREAD), and at the WLIC in Rotterdam. While there sadly will not be a WLIC this year, we look forward to perhaps seeing you at related conferences, such as at regional library conferences, or at the IBBY Congress in Trieste, Italy in August 2024.

Speaking of children's literature-related events, I just finished serving on the 2024 O'Dell Award for historical fiction that takes place in North America, and while it was very difficult to select a winner, we were pleased to award Bea and the New Deal Horse by L.M. Elliott, (Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers). This year, more relevant to my IFLA work, I’m chairing the 2025 Mildred L. Batchelder Award, which awards the best book from outside the United States translated into English and published in the US.

As far as our Section is concerned, we’re delighted to welcome new members: Kadijah Al-Saeed from Bahrain and Áurea Esquivel from Mexico. Our working groups are keeping busy: The World Through Picture Books 3rd Edition Catalog is available [well almost] in the repository; and our Guidelines Infographic will soon be available in 6 languages beyond English. Do watch for information about the ALMA award – our working group will soon be seeking nominees. And we’re also about to launch a brand-new Young Adult Sustainable Development Goals Book Club on Instagram. You can find it at https://www.instagram.com/ifla_cya/.

Our Section is having our annual Midyear meeting in Zadar, Croatia from March 25-29th. We’ll start with a one-day visit to Slovenia, visit libraries in both countries, have our Section’s business meetings, and participate in the Croatian Children's Library Association conference. A huge thank you to Alica Kolaric and Lavra Tinta for being the local organizers. Our business meetings will be hybrid, and all are welcome as observers.

In the meantime, please enjoy our newsletter. I know the theme, “I ❤️ My Library!,” is near and dear to our hearts!

Wishing you a peaceful and safe new year,
Marianne Martens
Innovative programs of the Children's Department of the Library "Nikola Zrinski" Cakovec

Helena Drvoderić
librarian, Čakovec, Croatia

Library "Nikola Zrinski" Čakovec has been open since 1974, when the book collection intended for children was separated into a special department. First users of the Children's Department were children from pre-school age to the seventh grade and on Friday afternoons, activities related to the popularization of books and reading are organized for them, such as meetings with children's writers, listening to stories and creative workshops.

Contemporary trends in librarianship impose a need for a new organization of spaces for babies, children and young people, as well as for new approaches in working with users, new content and services that are adapted to their needs.

Librarians in their work with users, in addition to borrowing library materials, conduct numerous animation activities intended for children of preschool and elementary school age, young people and parents. In addition to regularly organizing themed exhibitions, various events are also celebrated (Book Night, Croatian Book Month). Good cooperation with schools and kindergartens is important in the overall work which is why the "Let's get to know the library" program was designed. The program is intended for organized visits by preschool and school groups to get to know the library. With professional guidance through the department, children get to know the library's collection and way of working. The goal of the program is to present the library as a place to acquire new knowledge and a pleasant place of entertainment. Thanks to this cooperation with kindergartens, schools and other institutions, programs have been designed to encourage reading, successful communication, learning new social skills, etc.

The goal of the program is to present the library as a place to acquire new knowledge and a pleasant place of entertainment.

In cooperation with the Institute for Public Health of Međimurje County, Activity for the Protection of Mental Health, Prevention and Outpatient Treatment of Addiction, the Library designed a program called “Procvjetajmo”. It is a series of workshops intended for children of primary school age, with the aim of improving and consolidating the knowledge and skills they need for successful adaptation to the social environment, school, peers and the challenges of society.
Library and preschool are “natural” partners because they share similarities in supporting early learning, reading and literacy, and engagement for young children and families in their communities. This is why the library became a preschool institution, specifically with the Kindergarten “Cvrčak” Čakovec and became partners in the “Čarobna knjižnica” program. The goal of the program is to adopt the habit of reading and develop a love for the written word. Expected outcomes are the expansion of receptive and expressive vocabulary, independent talking, retelling, making up stories and the development of phonological awareness, as well as the use of library services, getting to know the library and its possibilities for preschool children.

Workshops have been held since 2014, in agreement with the primary schools of the city of Čakovec, and are held once a month in the relaxed and positive atmosphere of the library’s Playground. Topics of workshops relate to the promotion of non-violence and healthy lifestyles in such a way that certain topics are addressed through the reading of literary texts. Through a guided conversation, after reading, children present their views and thoughts on the topics presented (tolerance, emotions, solidarity, conflict resolution, family, nature around us, healthy food). The atmosphere at the workshops is very uninhibited, and its dynamics are close to children. Therefore, they spontaneously and gladly cooperate and express their thoughts. Through reading and talking about what has been read, they learn social and healthy living skills, general and specific knowledge and self-help skills, and are provided with the capacity to successfully assert their own strengths through the possibility of making good and positive decisions in life. Workshops were evaluated, and the need for continuous implementation and development of the “Procvjetajmo” program was noted.

Through reading and talking about what has been read, they learn social and healthy living skills, general and specific knowledge and self-help skills, and are provided with the capacity to successfully assert their own strengths through the possibility of making good and positive decisions in life.
Through creative activities, we want to encourage the development of numerous abilities in children, such as:

- the ability to perform precise movements and eye-hand coordination,
- tactile sensitivity and the creation of sensory integration,
- independence and the development of a sense of success,
- the ability to socialize and communicate with others: the desire to live in proximity to another child,
- establishing contact and communication,
- calling for joint work,
- agreement,
- planning,
- cooperation,
- contribution to joint work,
- desire to share equipment,
- respecting rules at work,
- taking responsibility for success/failure,
- recognizing the need to help others,
- harmonizing individual and social tasks,
- the ability to self-control,
- self-esteem,
- positive self-image,
- stimulation of cognitive processes - better perception,
- recognition of space and objects (size, depth, texture, distance, shapes, color, weight, orientation, smell, taste, sound),
- recognition of movement (circular, linear), etc.

Library has been conducting “Summer Workshops” for three decades. Summer holidays are ideal for creatively spending free time at summer workshops, which have been held continuously since 1992. Every year, during the summer school holidays, for a period of one week, one workshop is held for elementary school students, under the expert guidance of external collaborators and our employees. Main goal of the Summer Workshops is to involve children and young people in additional activities during the summer period. Wish is for children and young people to spend their free time usefully and constructively, and above all to socialize with each other and make new friends.

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So far, workshops have been held for:

- learning various foreign languages (Italian, French, etc.),
- creative physics and Chemistry,
- little scouts, architects and photographers,
- the world of artists, music and reading workshop,
- caricature and comics drawing workshop
- mathematical games,
- ecological workshop,
- workshop of myths and legends,
- creative art workshops (origami, making ornaments, handicrafts with wool, making lace, crocheting, knitting checkers, Glagolitic letters, etc.),
- a walk through history,
- “First of all - the enigmatic tree” creative workshop
- and many others.
Nørrebro Bibliotek (The Nørrebro Library): Serving the future, reflecting the past

Marianne Martens, PhD
Chair, IFLA Libraries for Children & Young Adults Section

One of my favorite libraries in Copenhagen is Nørrebro Bibliotek. Nørrebro is an ethnically diverse neighborhood close to the city center and located along the famous “Superkilen” park. This half-mile long park was designed by Bjarke Ingels Group, Superflex, and Topotek (Arch Daily, 2008-2024). “It is conceived as a giant exhibition of urban best practice – a sort of collection of global found objects that come from 60 different nationalities of the people inhabiting the area surrounding it” (Arch Daily, Para. 2).

The library is housed in an old streetcar depot and is connected to Nørrebrohallen (a sports arena). Inside, the enormous space feels warm and inviting. It’s decorated with giant, colorful murals by the Danish painter Eske Kath, and the children’s area features a wooden pyramid for play, that can be climbed on. There’s a café called “Send More Spices” that serves reasonably priced healthy meals. Aside from books, access to the internet, and computers, the library has art exhibits, resources for legal help, access to government resources, conversation groups in different languages with volunteer linguists, activities for schools and daycares, and a Repair Café, where community members can get help from skilled volunteers with fixing anything from clothing to electronics. The Danish Repair Café concept is about sustainability—getting people to work together to fix things, rather than discard them.

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) provides guidelines for children’s access to culture. In fact, the Danish Ministry of Culture mandates young people’s access to culture. Professor Beth Juncker’s (2007) work on aesthetics and culture provides a foundation for the understanding of values inherent in Danish library service.

According to Juncker, “children have their own needs for agency and empowerment around consuming and creating culture” (Juncker in Martens, 2016). When I brought Kent State University students to Denmark in 2014 and 2016 for a class on International Children’s Literature and Librarianship, students learned that for children in Denmark, culture encompasses “a) exposure to the arts (literature, fine art, theater, and music); b) children’s participation in culture (as in their own creative endeavors, both using physical and online media); and c) children’s play—all of which can be experienced at the library” (Martens, 2015, p. 72).
With a holistic focus on the life of a person, combining access to culture, access to art, technology, play, fitness, food, and sustainability, Nørrebro bibliotek provides an excellent example of all that libraries can be—for children and adults of all ages.

References


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Where Fairytales Come to Life: Exploring the Wonders of Tallinn's Literary Gem for Children

Brita Tuuling
Communication Manager, Tallinn, Estonia

Estonian Children’s Literature Centre, nestled in the enchanting heart of Tallinn’s old town (address Pikk st 73, Tallinn), is a haven for young readers and literature enthusiasts alike. Housed in a yellow fairytale-like building, it serves as a vibrant hub for children’s literature, fostering love for reading and storytelling.

The centre provides educational programmes to kindergarten and school groups, as well as for families with children. It welcomes children, teenagers, parents, and anyone with a passion for stories and interest in children’s literature. Engaging workshops and theme-based classes captivate young minds, introducing them to the colourful world of books. Imagine the joy on a child’s face as they participate in these interactive sessions, unlocking their imagination and fostering a lifelong love for literature.

Centre’s Library Collection and Services

There are treasures hidden in every collection. The older the collection, the more valuable and richer are its contents. A foundation was laid for piecing together the Estonian Children’s Literature Centre’s collections more than eight decades ago – on November 12, 1933, when the Youth Library was founded at the Tallinn Central Library. The wealth of books gathered has been well kept over the long years. As of December 8, 2023, there were 68,266 units in the Centre’s collections.

Beyond traditional book lending, it serves as an interactive space, inviting children to explore cozy reading corners and engage in captivating storytelling sessions.

Programmes for All Ages

The library at the Estonian Children’s Literature Centre is meant for young readers, offering a carefully curated collection that spans the realms of children’s literature. Beyond traditional book lending, it serves as an interactive space, inviting children to explore cozy reading corners and engage in captivating storytelling sessions. Librarians play a crucial role in tailoring selections to various age groups, ensuring that the library becomes a personalized journey for each young reader. Educational support, literacy programs, and a seamless integration of technology into the reading experience further enhance the library’s dynamic offerings. With a commitment to community engagement, the library extends its influence beyond its walls, fostering a love for reading that transcends boundaries and makes the Estonian Children's Literature Centre a beacon of literary discovery for young minds.
Families are invited to join the Saturday morning family sessions, a delightful way to bond over stories and activities. The little ones have their special moment during the weekday toddler sessions, creating a space where even the tiniest tots can begin their literary journey.

There are also concerts, performances, book premieres, festivals and other literary events happening often at the centre.

**Exhibitions and Museum at the Centre**

Inside this literary haven, there’s a treasure trove waiting to be discovered. The Edgar Valter Gallery pays homage to the renowned illustrator, creating a space where art and storytelling intertwine. For those eager to delve into the visual aspect of literature, there are illustration exhibitions both in the hall and staircase gallery that showcase the skill and creativity of Estonian and international well-known artists who bring stories to life. The historical chamber Varakamber provides a fascinating journey through the rich tapestry of Estonian children’s literature, inviting visitors to explore its roots and evolution. And let’s not forget the attic—a cozy space dedicated to the beloved Estonian children’s book character Nukitsamees (Bumpy), the centre’s mascot.

**About the Function of the Centre**

The Estonian Children’s Literature Centre is a passionate advocate for children’s literature on both local and global stages. Through the promotion of literary projects, illustration exhibitions, and active participation in international book fairs, the centre showcases the richness of Estonian children’s literature worldwide. In doing so, it not only uplifts the works of children’s writers, illustrators, and publishers but also acknowledges the crucial role of researchers, teachers, and librarians in fostering love for literature among the young readers. The centre promotes children’s literature at home and abroad, initiates literary projects and events, organises illustration exhibitions (biggest exhibition is Tallinn Illustrations Triennial happening in every three years) and participates in large-scale literature events and international book fairs (Bologna, Frankfurt, London, etc). It also encourages and commends the creators and mediators of children’s literature: children’s writers, illustrators, translators, publishers, researchers, teachers and librarians. Furthermore, the centre endeavours to coordinate and support their cooperation. The centre stands as a unifying force, encouraging collaboration and providing support for the diverse contributors who bring the magic of children’s literature to life.

In summary, the Estonian Children’s Literature Centre is not just a building—it’s a living, breathing celebration of stories. It’s a place where literature comes to life, and every page turned is a step into a world of imagination and wonder. Whether you’re a curious child, a teenager exploring new worlds, a parent sharing stories with your little ones, or a literature enthusiast of any age, the centre beckons you to embark on a literary journey that transcends time and captivates hearts.

Read more from our web page [www.elk.ee](http://www.elk.ee).
HiFi Library, NIBM, Pune, India

Anant Kulkarni

Research Scholar, Tamil Nadu, India
Librarian, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India

I appreciate HiFi Library as a Premier Literary Destination in NIBM, Pune, for several compelling reasons. Firstly, the library’s founder, Tasneem Gadiwala, brings a wealth of expertise to the project through KMLC, showcasing a commitment to quality knowledge management and library consultancy. This professional background instills confidence in the library’s ability to provide a well-curated and thoughtfully organized collection.

The library’s diverse collection is a standout feature. Catering to readers of all ages, from toddlers to adults, it spans genres and includes everything from general knowledge books to classics like Harry Potter, engaging series like Diary of a Wimpy Kid, and works by renowned authors such as Ruskin Bond and Roald Dahl. The inclusion of materials like “I Can Read” books for young readers and offerings from Hannah Montana to Agatha Christie for older kids ensures a comprehensive and inclusive selection.

HiFi Library’s commitment to being more than just a repository of books is commendable. It strives to create a cultural hub, encouraging people not only to read but also to participate in various events and networking opportunities. The inclusion of diverse activities such as Li’L BookWorms meetups, Philosophy and Literature Club gatherings, and training courses in vedic mathematics and abacus adds a dynamic dimension to the library’s role in fostering community engagement and continuous learning.

Moreover, the library’s provision of language classes in Spoken English, French, German, and Spanish, along with artistic pursuits like calligraphy, decoupage, and origami, demonstrates a commitment to holistic development beyond literature. The engagement of young minds through chess, Rubik’s Cube, and Sudoku training, as well as funtime activities during vacations, showcases an understanding of the importance of a well-rounded educational experience.

HiFi Library stands out as a premier literary destination due to its meticulously curated collection, commitment to accessibility, and its role as a dynamic cultural center fostering learning, creativity, and community engagement.

The accessibility of the library’s catalogue through HiFiLibrary.com, coupled with the option for online ordering and complimentary home delivery across Pune, adds a layer of convenience that enhances the overall reading experience. This feature is particularly beneficial in today’s digital age, making literature accessible to a wider audience.

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Welcome to the International Library of Children’s Literature (ILCL), Japan. I am eager to convey its charm to people around the world.

The captivating building that stands today, housing the ILCL, was originally constructed over a century ago as the Imperial Library of Japan, aspiring to be the best in the East. Renowned architect Tadao Ando brought his contemporary sensibilities to this historical structure, undertaking a brilliant renovation that has transformed it into an architectural masterpiece.

One of the library’s standout features is its commitment to hosting regular exhibitions that showcase the wonders of children's literature.

Recently, an exhibition titled "Yummy Children's Books" took place, introducing children's books from 57 countries, each highlighting the theme of “food”. The exhibition, divided into three sections—"Preparation", "Eating", and "Thinking"—provided a delightful journey through children's books from around the world, creating a captivating experience.

Moreover, the library houses a gallery that unravels the history of children’s books in Japan. From the inception of children's books over a century ago to the present day, the “Gallery of Children’s Literature” allows visitors to trace the fascinating evolution of Japanese children's literature.
The "Children's Room" invites both adults and children to leisurely revel in the world of books. This haven is adorned with a collection of enduring literary treasures, creating not just a resourceful room for families but also a delightful sanctuary for adults seeking to immerse themselves in captivating tales.

Furthermore, in keeping with the library’s global spirit as the "International Library," the "Meet the World" room beckons visitors. Here, shelves are adorned with children’s books from various corners of the globe, alongside volumes introducing the unique cultures and regions they represent. Also on view here are translations of classic Japanese picture books, allowing you to enjoy works that Japanese children are familiar with in various languages. This room serves as a gateway for all visitors to broaden their perspectives and embark on a literary journey around the world.

Whether you find yourself strolling through the corridors of history in the gallery, immersing in the diverse world of children’s literature in the exhibitions, or virtually exploring the reading rooms from the comfort of your home, the ILCL invites you to embark on a journey where every page turned unfolds a new chapter of discovery and joy.

ILCL is also accessible virtually through VR, allowing visitors to tour the historic building both in sunlight and under illuminated lights. [https://vr.kodomo.go.jp/](https://vr.kodomo.go.jp/) (in Japanese)

Whether you find yourself strolling through the corridors of history in the gallery, immersing in the diverse world of children’s literature in the exhibitions, or virtually exploring the reading rooms from the comfort of your home, the ILCL invites you to embark on a journey where every page turned unfolds a new chapter of discovery and joy.
Abadina Media Resource Centre

Dare Samuel Adeleke
Ibadan, Nigeria

Historical Background

The Abadina Media Resource Centre was established by the then Department of Library Studies and now Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies in October, 1974 as a research and public service unit for schools and children’s libraries. The centre opened its services to the public in January, 1975 comprising readers services, research, training, workshops for school library personnel and authors of children’s books as well as consultancy in school library development. In May 1978, the mother Department sought the approval of the University Development Committee for the expansion of the centre’s programme and constituting it into an autonomous academic centre within the Faculty of Education. The Senate at its meeting of 26th July, 1985 approved the recommendation of the Development Committee (Paper no. 3436) on the expansion and autonomy of the centre and reaffirmed same at its meeting of Friday 29th July, 1988 that:

i. Abadina Media Resource Centre be constituted as an autonomous centre within the Faculty of Education with an academic Director to be appointed by the Vice-chancellor on the recommendation of the Dean of Education;

ii. The centre would function as a research and public service unit for schools and children’s libraries with a Board to manage the affairs of the centre.

Unique Features of Abadina Media Resource Centre, University of Ibadan

Abadina Media Resource Centre is conceived and administered as a Community College, located on the Campus of University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. It is a Model School Library.

Media Centre Unit domiciled in the Department of School Media Technology that provides an organised multimedia collection of learning resources and the facilities for the full exploitation by children of all ages.

Picture I: Frontage of Centre
The centre coordinates the activities of other school library media resource centres in Nigeria. In addition, the Centre provides resources needed to prepare adequately for the TOEFL, GRE, SAT, GMAT and other related examination.

Established as a model school library media centre from inception has its focus on the development of the Nigerian schools library system. The centre was created to perform the following functions among others:

- Establishing the reading pattern of the Nigerian primary and secondary school students.
- Developing library use education syllabus to teach library use skills to students.
- Compiling lists of books and non-book media for use of school libraries in collection development.
- Conducting research into children’s literature and school library problems.
- Conducting and promoting educational research into books and learning resources production for Nigerian schools.
- Organising workshops and conferences for teacher-librarians, school librarians and writers of children’s books.
Services Rendered by the Centre

Abadina Media Resource Centre has been involved in the activities listed below:

- Readers Services: The centre acquires and organises books and non-book materials on all areas of knowledge that are relevant to the Nigerian school curriculum for the use of children for general information and recreational reading. Materials could either be used within the centre or borrowed.
- Audiovisual media and e-learning Services: The center has audiovisual media unit and e-library unit for users of the center.
- Saturday Story Hour: The centre organises story hour for children on Saturdays between 10.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m.
- Consultancy and Outreach Services: The centre offers a range of consultancy services to the public on such matters as establishment of school library media centres, organisation of learning resources, development of children's literature, and resource materials training of school library personnel, and others on the use of media in education.
- Research: The centre has produced a number of publications based on research projects carried out at the centre from inception. The centre also serves as the hub for coordinating activities relating to the publishing of the Nigerian School Library Association journal on a yearly basis.
- Loan of learning resources to schools: Teachers in nursery, primary and secondary schools borrow learning resources for use in the classroom while registered adult users working with children also borrow learning resources from the centre.
- Production of Instructional media: To provide the relevant resource materials for the school curriculum, efforts are being made to produce local instructional media which teachers could borrow for use in classrooms.
- Children's and Socio-Cultural Programme: The centre organises drama groups, science club and other hobby groups for children. The center also organizes children's carnival to develop the talents of the children in drama, poetry and other creative educational activities.
- Coordinating School Library Programme nationwide: The centre provides the Secretariat for Nigerian School Library Association and coordinates its annual conferences from 1977 to date.
- Counselling: The centre staff takes interest in the welfare of the children that uses the library. This has led to counselling of the children and their parents on diverse matters ranging from educational to health issues.

References

Abadina Media Resource Centre, University of Ibadan. - Community College at Nigeria (vymaps.com). Department of School Library and Media Technology, Faculty of Education, Postgraduate College, University of Ibadan 2020 Prospectus.


Sølvberget Library, Norway

Tone Larssen Rogne
Coordinator, Stavanger, Norway

We love libraries because:

All children carry dreams and ideas, thoughts and experiences. Expressing these is vital to life! How can we, as a public library in the heart of Stavanger, provide young voices with a space for expression and a place where their thoughts are taken seriously?

Saga Writing League at Sølvberget Library is a unique Norwegian adaptation of the 826 Valencia International writing movement. It originated as a serendipitous encounter between writers and educators in San Francisco and has since branched out across the United States and to over 50 locations globally. The essence is cross-generational meetings between volunteer adults and children, focusing on helping children tell their own stories.

Goal 10. Reduced Inequality-Saga Writing Club aims to contribute to social equality through writing training in a creative space with attentive adults who are curious and believe in children’s abilities. In Saga, we will provide children and youth with access to more engaged and present adults, in addition to teachers and parents, as these are prerequisites for active participation in society.

Goal 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities-By encouraging children to use their imagination, they develop creativity and critical thinking skills, which are crucial for our societal development.

Goal 17. Partnership for the Goals-We must collaborate to address climate issues. Therefore, we need to practice collaboration in a safe environment so that everyone can contribute to the conversation about how to care for nature and the environment. By providing children and youth with a larger space for expression and by researching a collaborative model to articulate thoughts and feelings, and then sharing them, we can equip the municipality, businesses, and others to engage in dialogue without having to defend themselves or have solutions ready in advance.

How can we, as a public library in the heart of Stavanger, provide young voices with a space for expression and a place where their thoughts are taken seriously?

Therefore, we have created our own writing space in the library where children can come to write their own stories and borrow the books afterward at their local library. Saga Writing League will work to promote the social sustainability goals and ensure equal access to resources for everyone. Saga aims to develop programs based on trust and security, thereby fostering a sense of belonging to the public library.

Goal 4. Quality Education-Proficient writing skills are the most crucial tool for success in life and for participating in society. We will ensure the quality of Saga Writing Club activities with findings from the research project “Write to Me” at the Reading Center in Stavanger and build on the experiences from international writing club models, such as 826 Valencia International.

In the anniversary year of 2025, Saga Writing League will be one of Sølvberget’s contributions to the celebration of Stavanger’s 900th anniversary. One of the highlights will be the burial of a time capsule containing texts written by the children themselves in SAGA Writing League. This capsule is not to be opened until 2125. The time capsule, housing texts about hopes and thoughts for the future, will be stored in an archive with a clause stipulating that it should not be opened until 100 years later.
Exploring the Wonders of Punggol Regional Library: A Playground for Children’s Creativity and Imagination

Shirley Tay
Manager/Librarian, Singapore, Singapore

Imagine stepping into a library and being transported to the magical world of stories. Reading nooks and beautifully illustrated books from almost every part of the world beckon you to explore real and imagined tales, without hopping on a plane. Feeling adventurous? Stretch your minds in the world of endless possibilities and create your own stories here!

Welcome to Punggol Regional Library!

Officially opened on 5 April 2023, it is the largest public library in Singapore and houses an exciting suite of services and features for both young and old. This library is one of the 28 libraries managed by the National Library Board (Singapore) and features accessible facilities suitable for persons with disabilities, including Calm Pods, quiet and safe spaces for adults and children with disabilities to go to when they need a private and calming sensorial experience, and Borrow-N-Go, a dedicated passageway for wheelchair users to borrow books.

Here are three unique spaces for school-going children in Punggol Regional Library: Spark!Lab™, World and Us Zone, and Storyteller Cove.

Spark!Lab™: A popular DIY tinkering space for children aged 7 to 12

Set up in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution from the United States of America, Spark!Lab™ at Punggol Regional Library is the first permanent international network site and the first site to be located within a public library. In this space, children are encouraged to put on their thinking caps and be creative in solving problems at the various activity stations, such as constructing a vehicle using pipes and wheels and creating a moving structure using gears.

This encourages children to collaborate and make friends while creating their inventions and learning together!

Since its opening, Spark!Lab™ has welcomed more than 80,000 visitors, including students from special education schools. Feedback received from our diverse range of visitors has been heartening:

“The Spark!Lab™ caught their attention the most as it enabled them to tinker with the materials fearlessly to satisfy their curiosities.” - Special Education teacher, first-time visitor

“The Spark!Lab™ was the best venue for us as it offers science workshop which allows creative thinking, mind-blowing inventions for the students to venture into. It was an amazing space for us.” - Special Education teacher, first-time visitor

“My daughters really enjoy all the activities at the Spark!Lab™. Very recommended!” - parent, first-time visitor

“I love Spark!Lab™ because I can create my own vehicle!” - 7-year-old child, repeat visitor
World and Us Zone: Children’s books from around the world

What is a library without an exciting collection of books?

In this Zone, books are arranged according to the countries and regions the stories are based in, and children are encouraged to explore the shelves and discover more about different cultures, traditions, and communities. This collection also contains a non-geographical region called “Future World” that houses books about digital and future concepts, and children can explore these books to learn more about the advancements of the world around them.

Some of the books in the World and Us Zone include Natural Wonders of Hungary by Áron Mirtse, A Thousand Wonders: A Journey to Discover Italy by Geronimo Stilton, The Inca Empire by Sarah Newman, and Florence: A Painted Dream by Michèle Fantoli.

A family also visited the Zone to borrow books about a specific country, to discover more about their upcoming holiday destination! Truly, books can take us anywhere.

Storyteller Cove: Be inspired to create your own stories!

An eye-catching installation that houses cosy reading corners, interactive displays, and eBook-making stations, the Storyteller Cove features interactive experiences for children to learn and appreciate the history, culture, and customs of different countries through stories. Through DIY prop-making kits, children can add their own spin to folk tales and be inspired to create their own stories.

Featured tales include The Jade Rabbit from China, Shingebiss from Native American folklore, and The Toy Goose from Denmark. They are also adapted into animations that are screened weekly in the “Stories Come Alive Room”, an immersive storytelling room fitted with 3-wall and floor projections.

Aspiring writers can join workshops led by local authors and illustrators and even have their creative works displayed at Storyteller Cove!

Exciting adventures await you at Punggol Regional Library. Drop by for a visit soon!
The moment I stepped into the Children's Library “Cika Jova Zmaj”, part of the Belgrade City Library in Serbia, enchantment embraced me. I felt like Alice in Wonderland! Colors, children's books, toys, and the space itself instantly transported me to childhood. I entered the children's library with a specific task-conducting weekly workshops for kids about Greek mythology. Thursdays became my favorite day, and I relished every aspect-working with kids, the warm and educated librarians, the overall atmosphere, and the wide range of activities organized for kids.

Secretly, I yearned to become a part of that library's story. As the saying goes, 'if you want something badly enough, the entire universe conspires to help you achieve it.' The magic happened! After a few months of running workshops, I was invited to join the team. 18 years later, I am still as excited as I was at the beginning.

Every day is a new adventure for librarians and kids alike. Kids explore the parallel world of books, gathering in the library to chill and have fun at the third place. We offer to them safe and quiet surroundings, away from potential distractions or unsafe environments. This ensures that children have a dedicated space for learning and exploration.

As librarians, we have the valuable opportunity to recommend 'The Book' to kids less interested in reading, finding the 'chosen one' that pulls them into wonderland. We assist parents as well with useful books on parenting. The most exciting part is organizing creative, educational, and fun programs for kids of different ages, sharing our knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm.

Activities include interactive Family Storytelling, LEGO Storytelling, Programming Robots and Micro Bits, 3D printing, Creative Writing, Reading club, Meet the Writer, Dinosaur in the Library, Arts and Crafts, Book Promotions, annual award-winning literary and artistic competition for children from Serbia and diaspora, Librarians as Mentors (for students of Librarianship, Faculty of Pedagogy, and high school students preparing to be preschool teachers), etc.

Our library offers numerous advantages that contribute to the holistic development of children. It plays a crucial role in fostering a love for reading from an early age. Exposure to a wide variety of age-appropriate books encourages literacy development and enhances language skills. Educational programs and workshops are tailored for children, providing an interactive and engaging learning environment.

We create a social space for children to interact with peers, fostering social skills and teamwork. By organizing group activities and events we contribute to a sense of community among young readers.
How I Fell in Love with the Library

My mom’s struggle against the technical slavery I often fall into isn’t very successful. I think Dad is right when he says it’s not good to hide remote controls, laptops, and phones from me. ‘That’s not a solution! You want to stop the wheels of progress!’ he says. I then nod triumphantly, satisfied that this imaginary wheel is on my side at the right moment. That’s why my mom could hardly wait when my friend Vuk invited me two years ago to attend a programming course at the ‘Cika Jova Zmaj’ library in the city center. It was really fun, and I liked it. But along the way, I picked up my first book, ‘The Spaghetti Tangle.’ Of course, I chose the thinnest one. I was surprised when I read it. It was as if someone knew my aunt and wrote a book about her. ‘Reading isn’t so boring,’ I thought then. I continued with my visits, and each trip to the library became our little family celebration. Especially, I enjoy creative writing workshops where I can express myself freely, without boundaries imposed in school.

To conclude, the work of a librarian is truly life-changing, and my library is how I envision wonderland.

Through storytelling sessions, creative writing workshops, and art activities we stimulate creativity and imagination. These experiences are vital for cognitive development and problem-solving skills. We encourage parental involvement through family-oriented activities. This strengthens the parent-child bond and promotes a supportive home learning environment.

We serve as a dynamic space that goes beyond book lending, contributing significantly to a child’s intellectual, social, and emotional development-laying the groundwork for a lifelong love of learning.

Since my library is located in an old building dating back to 1935, one more thing makes it special and unique - the antique fireplace, attracting both children and adults to take selfies in front!

But I deeply believe that librarians, atmosphere and thoughtfully designed activities are crucial factors in determining whether someone will develop love for the library. To support this, I will share here the shortened version of the essay ‘How I Fell in Love with the Library’ by Stanko Vicanovic, a fifth-grade student. Stanko discovered the library through programming workshops and has been coming regularly since then, delving deeper into the world of children’s literature. With great pleasure and success, he attends creative writing workshops, which he discovered ‘along the way’ at the library. Stanko’s work can be read as confirmation and encouragement for librarians all over the world!
C&YA Midyear Meeting with the Croatian Children’s Library Association – 25 to 29 March

The Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section cordially invites interested individuals to join them in Zagreb, Croatia for their midyear meeting 25 to 29 March.

Activities include:
- Trip to Slovenia to visit the Public Library Janez Vajkard Valvasor Krško
- Attendance at the Croatian Children’s Library Conference
- Business meetings with C&YA members to discuss promoting quality library services for youth
- Tour of the National and University Library
- Trip to the city of Rijeka and tour of the Rijeka City Library

There are only few slots available for participants. If you are interested, please email the section Information Coordinator (cyadn@gmail.com).