

# Circle of Learning

The Falling Leaves Moon Month or Binaakwe-Giizis

by Lorie Roy

In traditional societies, members of clans were assigned educational responsibilities. Elders educated young people, who were also welcome to seek out and study under other knowledgeable tribal members.

In librarianship, our circle of learning often starts with formalized education within ALA-accredited master's programs in schools of library and information science. While there, most students complete 12 or 13 graduate classes in preparation for entry-level positions. Graduates may not start out with the body of experience and locally situated knowledge that their established colleagues do, but they bring to the workplace attributes and attitudes—flexibility, a willingness to learn, and a suite of recent skills—that they can exchange for mentoring and support.

Those of us who are librarian educators hand our students over to the capable hands of our colleagues as they step into their lifetime of work. We know that these graduates will be welcomed and assisted as they continue to discover and refine their strengths.

While I greatly enjoy teaching and working with students, my favorite part is when my students find satisfying employment. We then become peers in the circle of learning; they help me live multiple professional lives vicariously through their experiences. This year, among the best gifts that I receive as I travel as your ALA president is seeing the familiar faces of former students.

I have been fortunate to reconnect with graduates, including Penny Frere at Tenn-Share, a statewide library resource-sharing group in Nashville; Heidi Porth at the Alaska State Library in Juneau; Nackil Sung at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston; Tom Horne at Seattle Public Library; and Heather Nodler at the Holocaust Museum in Houston. These and others of my students now have position titles of librarian, executive director, professor, manager, and head of special collections.

The best employees seek job enrichment or enhancement to continue along the circle of learning. Within a few years of graduation, our former students seek leadership and administrative preparation; they ask for more information about human services, budgeting, and program management.

This month *American Libraries* celebrates these opportunities for continuing our education and discovering and enhancing skills. We do this by gathering together in face-to-face settings and finding ways to learn through other formats such as podcasts, streaming video, webinars and other online classes, and codeveloping wikis, blogs, and meetings in virtual space, such as Second Life.

The ALA-Allied Professional Association provides a certification



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program to recognize advanced preparation toward becoming a certified public library administrator. We are also starting to recognize the educational needs of library support staff as ALA and the Western Council of State Librarians explore a voluntary support-staff certification program with the assistance of a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

A number of special events will take place this month that help us continue our education. ALA's American Association of School Librarians will hold its 13th national conference in Reno, Nevada. Invitations from ALA members will take me to ALA chapter annual conferences in Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, and California. I also plan to attend "Guardians of Language, Memory, and Lifeways," the 3rd National Conference of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums October 23–25 in Oklahoma City. Additionally, we honor the 50th anniversary of ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association, the Association's fastest growing division.

I hope to cross paths with many of you over the next year. ■

ALA President **LORIE ROY** is professor at the University of Texas at Austin's School of Information. She is enrolled on the White Earth Reservation, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.