



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026

Don't Miss!



50/50 RAFFLE

Tickets are **\$1** each and can be purchased from **Conni Strittmatter** or **David Dahl!** The winner takes home half the pot.



PUB QUIZ

Thursday, May 7
8:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Choptank Ballroom



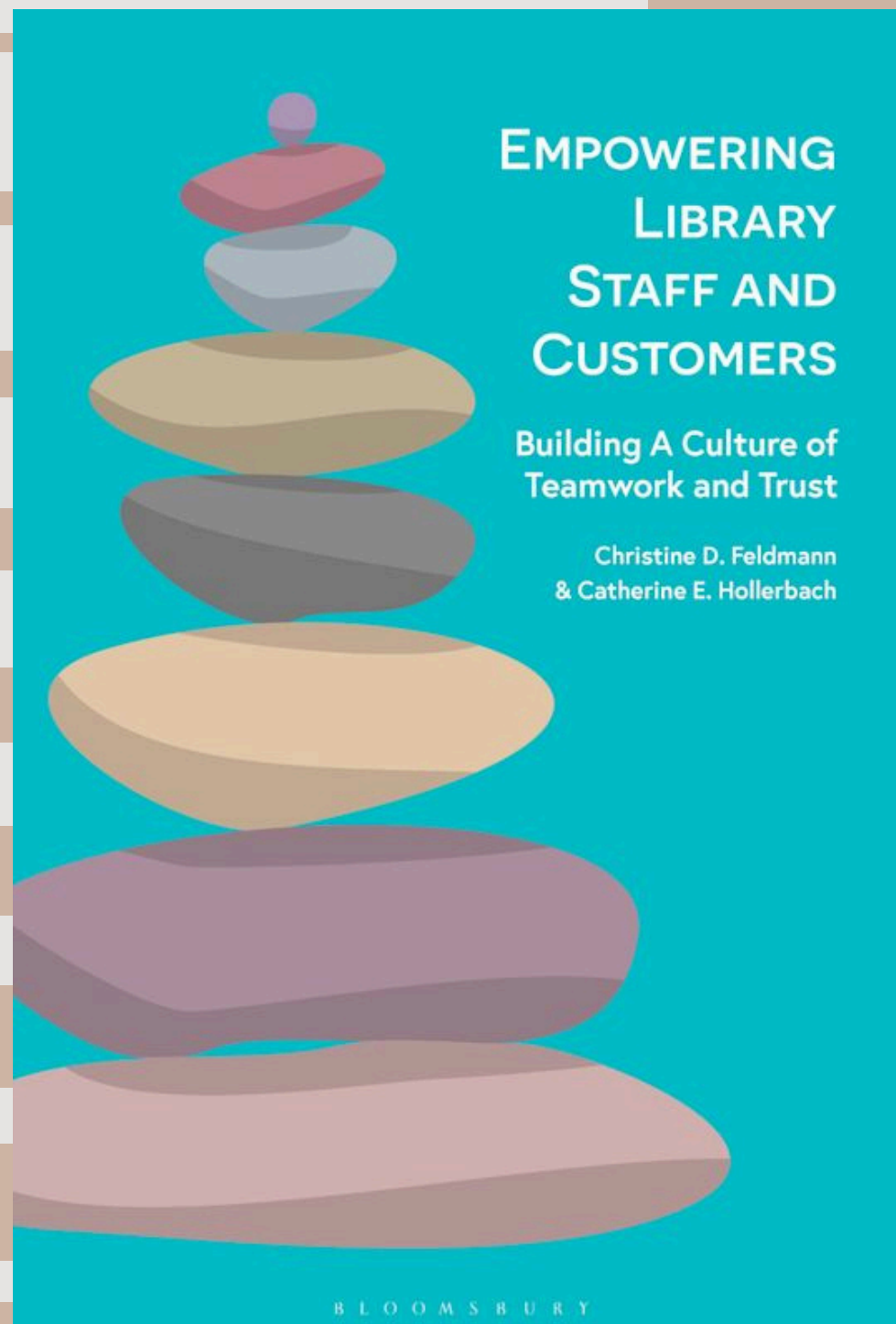
SILENT AUCTION

Visit the Silent Auction in the exhibitor hall to place your bids **before 10 a.m. on Friday, May 8th.**



KARAOKE

Thursday, May 7
6:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Windjammer



BUILDING A CULTURE OF TEAMWORK & TRUST

Christine Feldmann & Catherine Hollerbach



EMPOWERED

 **STAFF** 

+ TRUSTED CUSTOMERS =

**VIBRANT,
RESILIENT**



LIBRARIES



**& STRONGER
COMMUNITIES**



AGENDA

CHAPTERS 1-2	Building a Culture of Connection and the Power of Trust	CHAPTER 9	Strategies for Earning Trust with External Audiences
CHAPTER 4	Shaping Workplace Culture: Understanding, Defining, and Nurturing a Positive Environment	CHAPTER 15	Building Trust Through Social Media, Equity Work and Public Health Initiatives
CHAPTER 6	Building Trust from Within: Cultivating a Collaborative and Supportive Culture	CHAPTER 16	Building Trust through Community-Driven Innovative Programming
CHAPTERS 7-8	Dealing with Burnout and Trauma & Overcoming Staff Morale Challenges	CHAPTER 18	Moving Forward

AACPL BY THE NUMBERS

Library Cardholders



321,209

53% of County Residents

***1.64 Million**
Branch Visits

3.6 Million
Website Visits

6 Million
Items Used

*Nine libraries were closed for improvements in FY 25.

Programs: **7,143**



Attendance
254,332

BUILDING A CULTURE OF CONNECTION

CURRENT STATE
OF AFFAIRS

LIBRARIES COMBAT
LONELINESS & SOCIAL
ISOLATION

EMPOWERED STAFF =
EMPOWERED COMMUNITY



POWER OF TRUST

ENHANCED
COLLABORATION

INCREASED
PRODUCTIVITY

BETTER
COMMUNICATION

RETENTION OF
TALENT + LOWER
STAFF TURNOVER

INTERNAL
ADVANCEMENT

INNOVATION &
RISK TAKING

CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION

RESILIENCE



WAYS TO BUILD TRUST



**CULTURAL
HUMILITY**

**COMPASSIONATE
LEADERSHIP**

**PYSCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY**

CULTURAL HUMILITY IS

Being Open

Letting Go of Defensiveness

Decentering Yourself

Truly Listening

Recognizing Power Dynamics

Redressing Inequities

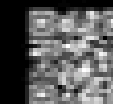
Embracing Hope

Taking Action to Make Things Better

Welcoming Positive Transformation

From *Cultural Humility* (2022) and *Hopeful Visions, Practical Actions: Cultural Humility in Library Work* (2023) by Sarah R. Kostelny, Lori Townsend, and David Hurley

ALA Editions
Neal-Schuman



WHAT ARE THE TRAITS OF A COMPASSIONATE LEADER?



ACTIVE LISTENING

They listen to their teams. But, they also communicate that they are fully aware of what they are told, being attentive and empathic at all times.



HUMILITY

A virtue attributed to those who have developed awareness of their own limitations and weaknesses, and act accordingly.



ACCEPTANCE

They accept that every person and client has a personal life with worries outside of work.



EMOTIONAL EMPATHY

They yearn to recognize other people and understand the pains people endure.



KINDNESS

They want to do good for other people.



ALTRUISM

They perform acts of kindness without expecting anything in return from others.

Four Stages Of Psychological Safety

Inclusion Safety



Feeling valued
and respected in the
group

Learner Safety



Comfortably admitting
lack of knowledge,
fostering learning

Contributor Safety



Confidently sharing
ideas without fear of
criticism

Challenger Safety




Comfortably
questioning norms and
decisions

HR Vision



SHAPING WORKPLACE CULTURE

	#01	Everyone plays a part- no matter your tenure or position
	#02	Missions and policies must align with values
	#03	Collect regular feedback
	#04	Look for opportunities to embed staff voices

DO IT NOW: Explore the mission & vision statements of libraries you respect. Consider updating your strategic plan.

BUILDING TRUST FROM WITHIN

- Clearly define & communicate organizational goals
- Encourage creativity and shared ownership
- Real world examples- flexible scheduling, book displays, making signs

DO IT NOW: What can you do that demonstrates your trust in staff?

ALA Code of Ethics:

"We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions."

OVERCOMING STAFF MORALE CHALLENGES



- Acknowledge stress and capacity
- Provide necessary resources: EAP, Debriefs, Counselors, Administrative leave
- Listen to front line reports
- What are the small wins you can achieve?
- Hours change example
- Strong whistleblower policy
- Build relationships with staff and between staff and management



DO IT NOW: Have ways for staff to express complaints & compliments.

BUILDING BRIDGES: STRATEGIES FOR EARNING TRUST WITH EXTERNAL AUDIENCES



The foundation of public libraries is trust: information integrity, bridging gaps in the community, physical safety, privacy and a welcoming environment.

POLICY TRANSPARENCY

- Code of Conduct
- Materials & program selection
- Circulation

CUSTOMERS

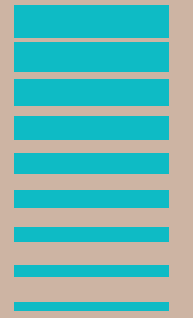
- Communicating with customers & protecting their privacy

COMPASSION

- Eating and sleeping in the library

DO IT NOW: Consider what might go right if you allow food or drink and sleeping in the library.

BUILDING TRUST, SAVING LIVES: LIBRARIES AT THE INTERSECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITY CARE



OPIOID EPIDEMIC



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



PERIOD POVERTY



COVID TEST KITS



GUN LOCKS

DO IT NOW: Reach out to your local health department or similar non-profit to start conversations about partnerships.

TANGIBLE STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING TRUST THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

- Risk vs reward
- Review internal social media policies
- Learning opportunities
- Encourage sharing of library events/programs/services by staff on personal pages – pride in library work

DO IT NOW: Consider what would happen if you allowed postings from all levels of staff.



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

- What is your community asking for and are you asking?
- Are policies standing in the way?
- Create a mindset of entrepreneurial staff and tailored services
- Example: PGCMML's "These Books Made Me" podcast
- Combo of staff interests/expertise & customer demand
- Encourage innovation

DO IT NOW: Do your staff have special talents? How can you encourage them to share those talents?

MOVING FORWARD- WHAT WILL WE FACE?

Recognize that progress may be slow at first & staff will make mistakes

Some customers/board might not be happy with changes

Resistance might arise internally

MOVING FORWARD - WAYS TO ENSURE SUCCESS



FOCUS ON INTERNAL MARKETING



WHAT DO I DO IF I'M READY TO MAKE CHANGES, BUT OTHERS AREN'T?

- Start with small wins
- Try a pilot
- Use data to make your case
- Encourage collaboration with other systems
- Find internal champions
- Frame change around leadership priorities
- Be ready for pushback and don't be discouraged by challenges

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS



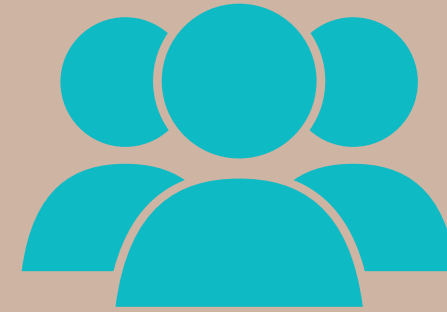
DO IT NOW



**ACT WITH
URGENCY**



**LEAD WITH
COMPASSION**



**FOSTER A CULTURE
OF RISK TAKING**



**BUILD TRUST
DAILY**

CONTACT US & BUY THE BOOK



20 % OFF CODE- GLR BD8



CHRISTINE FELDMANN

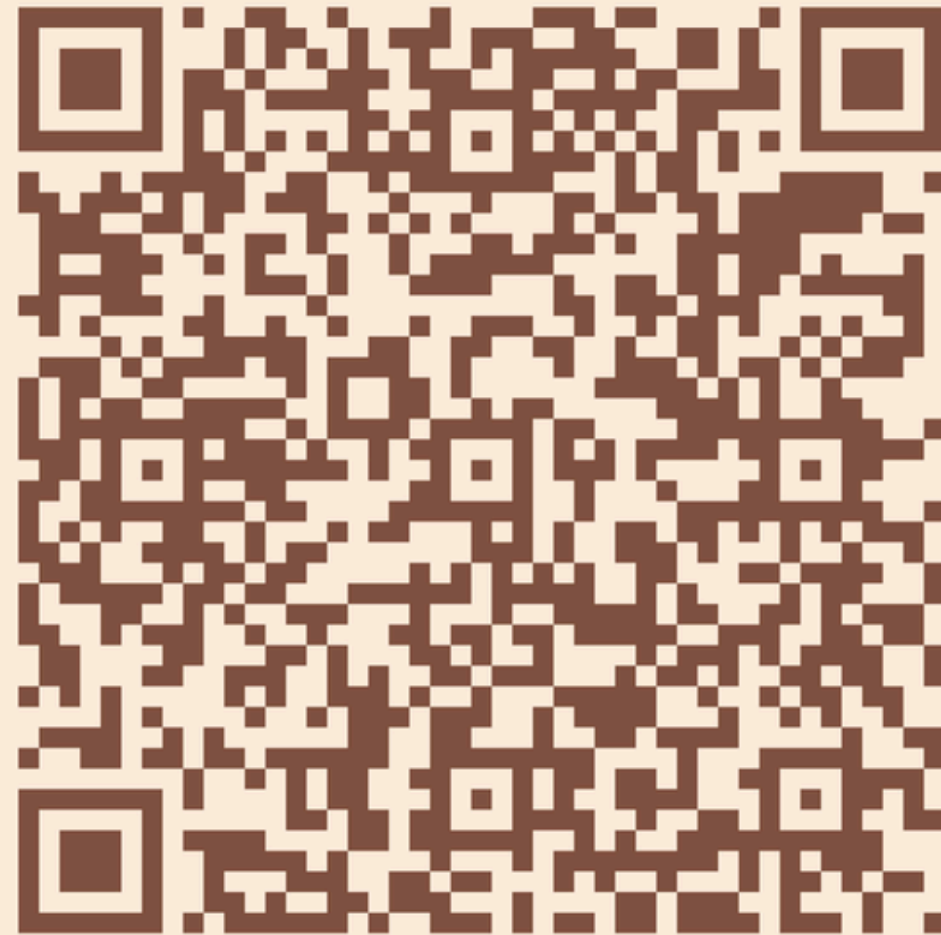
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**Please take a moment to
complete the program survey.**



SCAN ME!



OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

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